

Algeria

In 1998, Executive Decree no. 98-69 established the Algerian Institute for Normalization (IANOR) as the appropriate government body handling standardization issues. IANOR has since worked toward the goal of assisting Algeria's economic sector to cope with globalization and international standards.

At the request of the business community, IANOR sets the relevant reference scheme and assists them in order to qualify and apply vis-à-vis the appropriate standards. IANOR may be able to assist companies by providing the business sector with a certificate of authenticity. The focus has been on quality of products, data requirements and packaging.

The government expressed its interest in complying with global standards on various occasions. It tries to implement the standards which would require the shortest delay. Unfortunately, it has appeared so far that human resource and financial constraints remain an impediment to the above-mentioned goal.

IANOR has so far tried to gather all qualified parties around its constructive efforts towards their expressed target and to date has been managing to identify most of the national norms and their ISO counterparts.

Although the WTO negotiations are lagging behind, it is clear that IANOR has made norms and standards a priority. The remaining question is whether the government will provide the controlling body sufficient authority and establish reasonable sanctions to parties defaulting on the new rules and standards.

Standards Organizations

There are three main official Algerian governmental organizations involved in developing and enforcing the standards used and applied in Algeria. These organizations are: **ALGERAC (Agence Algérienne de l'Accréditation)**

This organization is under the authority of the Ministry of Industry. Algeria officially wishes to be able to sign association agreements with the EU in order to reach equal treatment concerning norms, accreditation and certification.

ALGERAC is the only Algerian accreditation organism. It ensures that the national regulations concerning accreditation of the laboratories and the organization of certification inspections meet international norms.

INAPI (Algerian National Institute of the Industrial Property)

INAPI is responsible for industrial and intellectual property rights protections. This entity handles mainly the deposit and registration of Patents, Trademarks & Copyrights.

INAPI tries to promote innovation through distributing the technological information contained in the patents' documents.

INAPI also tries to ensure a control on licensees' contracts and the implications on the protection of intellectual property rights. Enforcement of these protections, however, remains weak.

Algeria is party to several international organizations and agreements, including:

- The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO);
- The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property;
- The Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks;
- The Madrid Agreement for the Repression of False or Deceptive Indications of Source on Goods; and
- The Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin.

Facts about INAPI:

Over 2,000 inventions are protected through patents. Over 80,000 brands are protected and over 195,000 registered. Over 1000 drawings and illustrations are registered. INAPI produces a bimonthly publication: the Official Bulletin of Industrial Property (BOPI).

IANOR : Algerian Institute of Normalization

This body is in charge of elaborating, publishing and distributing all relevant data on Algerian norms. It is also responsible for providing conformity certifications to Algerian norms, issuing quality labels and delivering appropriate authorizations to use brands according to the applicable regulations.

IANOR officials have participated in research seminars both in Algeria and abroad. The institute provides the appropriate environment to enable the establishment of norms and their application. IANOR's efforts, however, are not providing enough substance to enforcement efforts, and the length of a litigation process can exceed most reasonable expectations.

Conformity Assessment

Products in general are not subject to the same authority and depending on their category and nature might be subject to a specific regulatory environment. For example, FMCG will have specific requirements; as food related products and many others will have to deliver relevant Health & Safety certificates as well as provide complete information to the customer before being officially accepted for distribution.

Unfortunately, illegal activity still enables many products to be distributed without any of those previous requirements being met. For products containing toxicity elements, a "preliminary authorization" is necessary to manufacture or import them, suggesting that the conformity process for those products are similar to those required under WTO rules.

For cosmetic and hygiene related products, a "compulsory declaration" is required. The formula must be submitted to a poison center, which will in turn seal the formula. Should the production be completed abroad, the exact details of the relevant poison center handling the tests must be forwarded to the appropriate Algerian authorities.

For other imported products, the following documents should be presented to the customs service upon entry:

- _ Customs documents
- _ Banking documentation (invoice, banking domiciliation,)
- _ If required, the specific authorization from police services (e.g., certain telecom products)
- _ If required, the health& safety authorization for selected products.

Customs will either provide an admission certificate or a non-admission certificate in the case which the product has failed any of the required criteria. (Packaging quality, warehousing environment mainly for frozen goods, data provided for end-customer).

Product Certification

IANOR establishes and publishes norms which must be respected. Algerian norms prevail in the country, and if a norm does not exist or if a disagreement must be settled, then the ISO norm will prevail.

ISO norms available in Algeria are principally ISO norms 14000, 14001 version 1996, 9001 version 2000 and 9000. For example, ISO norm 14001 version 1996 is about environmental management. It reduces to a minimum the negative effects of one's activity on the environment.

In 2000, the government initiated a program enabling companies to go through the certification process. The result was that 167 of the 178 registered companies owned by the private sector or the State have been awarded ISO 9001 2000 compliance. These companies have firmly expressed their commitments towards quality, pricing and minimum delays.

To date, Algeria respects ISO norms in the following areas:

- _ Papers, cardboard and its raw materials,
- _ Food,
- _ Packaging,
- _ Toys' safety,
- _ Cosmetics.

Accreditation

ALGERAC, a government body established through the French-Algerian cooperation, is responsible for certifying quality. It has not really entered into activity yet, so the relevant ministries -- Agriculture, Commerce & Industry -- remain in charge of their respective portfolios for the time being.

Once ALGERAC is takes over this process, it should enable the customer to benefit from the relevant protections and ease of data availability.

Publication of Technical Regulations Technical regulations are all published in editions of the Official Gazette of the Republic of Algeria (Journal Officiel). These regulations are available online in French at <http://www.joradp.dz/HFR/Index.htm>.

Foreign entities may send any comments to the responsible division at the Ministry of Commerce or the Ministry of Agriculture. INAPI also produces a bimonthly publication called the Official Bulletin of the Industrial Property (BOPI).

Labeling and Marking

Algerian government regulations stipulate that imported products, particularly consumer goods, must be labeled in Arabic. This regulation is strictly enforced. Though not required, it is helpful to also label products in French.

While specific regulations exist for a few products, in general all products must be in conformity with the standards defined in the Codex Alimentarius.

Standards Contact Information

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Trade Agreements

Bilateral Trade Agreements: There are currently no bilateral trade agreements between the U.S. and Algeria. In 2001, the two countries signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) that creates a platform for discussions on Algeria's WTO accession. TIFA council meetings have been held to assess the status of trade relations and to encourage closer cooperation; the last such meeting was held in 2004.

For more general information on the TIFA, BIT, and FTA, please visit the Department of State's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs at <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tpp/>.

Multilateral Trade Agreements: Algeria ratified the EU Association Agreement in September 2005. Algeria continues to work towards accession into the WTO.

For more information on Algeria's WTO accession, please visit

http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/acc_e.htm.

Web Resources

Specific Algerian import tariff rates (in French):

<http://www.douane.gov.dz/cnis/tarif/sections.asp>.

Products subject to U.S. export controls: <http://www.export.gov/exportcontrols.html>

Algerian customs requirements (in French): <http://www.douane.gov.dz/>.

The Official Gazette of the Republic of Algeria (Journal Officiel)
<http://www.joradp.dz/HFR/Index.htm>.

Department of State's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs:
<http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tpp/>.

Efforts towards Algeria's WTO accession:

- http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/acc_e.htm.