

Egypt

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Standardization's official application in Egypt started in 1957, when presidential decree number 29/1957 established the Egyptian Organization for Standardization (EOS). Presidential Decree 83/2005 changed EOS name to the Egyptian Organization for Standards and Quality. Of Egypt's 8,500 standards, 5000 are Egyptian technical regulations or mandatory standards. EOS reports that it has harmonized mandatory standards with international standards and that about 80 percent of its mandatory standards are based on standards issued by international institutions such as the Geneva-based International Organization for Standardization. In the absence of a mandatory Egyptian standard, Ministerial Decree Number 180/1996 allows importers to choose a relevant standard from seven international systems including ISO, European, American, Japanese, British, German, and for food, Codex standards. Most of these specifications are optional except for those related to general health, public security, and consumer protection. A ministerial decision issued by the Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade is needed to require compliance to these specifications. Obligatory standards constitute around 15 percent of the total number of Egyptian specifications.

Standards Organizations

There are three main official Egyptian governmental organizations involved in developing and enforcing the standards used and applied in Egypt. They are:

Egyptian Organization for Standards and Quality Control (EOS):

The EOS was established in 1957 and is affiliated with the Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade and issues standards and technical regulations through a consultative process with other ministries and the private sector. Verification of compliance with standards and technical regulations is the responsibility of agencies including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and, for imported goods, the General Organization for Import Export Control (GOEIC) in the Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade.

General Authority of Export and Import Control (GOEIC):

GOIEC is affiliated to the Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade. GOIEC currently has 26 offices and laboratories located at all the major sea and airports for import inspection as well as 11 others located throughout the country for export inspection. GOIEC has the responsibility for testing imported and exported products to ensure they meet the stipulations of EOS standards. Moreover, GOEIC may also indirectly generate standards through the use of an "*ad hoc*" technical committee. This committee provides recommendations for either creating or modifying a standard accordingly, and these recommendations are then passed on to the Ministry Industry and Foreign Trade to be authorized and formalized. Similarly, GOEIC also tests products for consumer protection against economic fraud and deceptive practices- not solely for quality purposes. A 1999 Presidential Decree assigned GOIEC as the coordinator for all import inspections.

In 2005, new import/export regulations increased transparency and liberalized procedures to facilitate trade. The new regulations reduced the number of imported goods subject to inspection by GOEIC and allowed importers to use certifications of conformity from any

internationally accredited laboratory inside or outside of Egypt for those goods still subject to inspection by GOEIC.

The National Institute for Standards (NIS):

NIS is affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. NIS is Egypt's primary standards laboratory. NIS is mostly concerned with measurements, testing, calibration, accreditation and consultation, and it also provides laboratory accreditation services.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Conformity Assessment

For an imported shipment to be accepted at customs in Egypt, the shipment must have the following documents: Commercial Invoice, Certificate of Origin, Packing List, Bill of Lading, Pro Forma Invoice, and Letter of Credit.

The current import regulations require that every component of a product be inspected, regardless of the compliance history of the product, country of origin, exporter, shipper, or importer. All products that fall under the category of obligatory standards cannot be put up for direct sale on the Egyptian market without first conforming to Egyptian specifications. If there are no Egyptian standards that suit the imported product then it must be defined using the standards of one of the international organizations that Egypt is affiliated with e.g. ISO, IEC, and Codex Alimentarius. On arrival of a shipment to the Egyptian ports, the process that takes place is as follows:

- . A committee from both the customs and security bodies checks the shipment for security reasons and for any illegal imports.

- . The importer presents the customs officials with the documentation required to clear the shipment.

- . After reviewing these documents, customs either clears the shipments for release to the importer directly or directs the consignment to other bodies, usually the GOIEC for testing and inspection. Customs duties are then assigned, and are paid in Egyptian pounds.

A problem that often takes place at customs is the process of what can be called "standard creation at port." When a new product enters the country that has not previously been imported, customs officials will often insist that there must be a written description or standard to qualify a product for import. Hence, even if there is no such standard for the new product, the customs inspectors will try to fit the product into a previously existing standards category. The EOS often tries to apply the same standards to products that seem to be "historically" common in nature.

Inspection and testing of the imported goods will differ according to the nature of the consignment. Agricultural products for example, are sent to special agricultural authorities for detailed chemical inspection in the Ministry of Agriculture. Industrial and manufactured commodities may be directed for control at the Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade. Some medical products, for example, will be directed to the Ministry of Health, EOS and other accredited laboratories. Since the establishment of GOIEC, it is mandatory that a sample be sent to the institute, most of the time for the sole purpose of classifying the product according to HS codes. This process is a vital procedure in many cases where customs is unsure about product classification and tariffs due. Therefore, a number of different bodies legally have the rights to take samples of the imported shipment for further inspection and testing. A large number of items are repeatedly imported into Egypt. Previous rules specified that every shipment must be tested to verify its conformity to standards requirements, irrespective of whether the preceding shipments were accepted or rejected, meaning inspection and testing must be repeated each time. The EOS has recently used past history of products, manufacturers, exporters and importers for clearing imported goods. When the product is first imported, it has to go through full inspection. If it is imported frequently within a year and each time all inspection procedures are cleared, then the product has a history file leading to reduced inspection afterwards. The exporter gains accreditation the more shipments are imported into Egypt.

Product Certification

The Egyptian Quality Mark scheme is based on the international standards listed in the ISO/IEC Guide 28/1982.

Presidential Decree No. 392/1979 stipulates that EOS is the national authority in the Arab Republic of Egypt to grant licenses permitting the application of the quality to industrial goods and products. Such licenses are only available for domestically produced goods, since acquiring such a quality mark involves not only the testing of the product, but also the inspection of the whole production line, similar to ISO accreditation. Hence, it is not viable for imported products, since inspection of the actual production company will have to take place.

In 1996, a Ministerial Decree No. 180 stated that all imports must abide by Egyptian product standards. In the case where there are no Egyptian standards that fit in with a specific imported product then the international standards listed below, in order of precedence, are acceptable:

International Standards- ISO/IEC

European Standards (EN)- if there are none, then British Standards (BS), German (DIN), French (NF) standards are applied

American Standards (ANS)

Japanese Standards (JIS)

Codex Standards for food products.

In the absence of an Egyptian or international standard, authorities often will refer to the Analysis Certificate accompanying the product.

Certification:

All certificates issued concerning the shipment's details, must be countersigned by the Chamber of Commerce and notarized by the Egyptian Embassy or Consulate in the country of origin.

Accreditation

Presidential Decree 312/1996 established the Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC), a governmental organization, as the sole national body for the assessment and accreditation of conformity assessment bodies performing testing/ calibration Laboratories, inspection and certification of products & systems as well as personnel. EGAC is headed by the Minister of Trade & Industry and governed by a board of 14 members, representing all stakeholders and concerned bodies. EGAC has contracted with UKAS of the United Kingdom who provides technical assistance.

EGAC/UKAS joint accreditation will be practiced for a transition period. The accreditation activity is to be carried out according to the relevant international requirements (ISO/IES guides 58,61,62,65 and 66 as well as ISO/IEC TR 17010 and 17020). Accreditation activity covers: product certification, system certifiers, inspection bodies, and testing and calibration laboratories and personnel certifiers.

Publication of Technical Regulations

The Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC) plans on publishing a directory for all the companies that have been accredited for ISO 9000 or ISO 14000 certificates.

The EOS library is the only library in Egypt specializing in the field of Standard Specifications and its related publications.

The library has more than 160,000 standard specifications in the form of complete groups; among these are 5000 Egyptian standards, and standards groups of more than 30 countries and regional and international organizations such as ISO, IEC, CODEX, and AIDMO as well as foreign standardization organizations. The library has also a large collection of catalogues, specification guides, bulletins, and magazines in the field of Standardization and its related activities alongside some references, books, and specialized dictionaries.

Labeling and Marking

Please refer to Labeling and Marking Requirements under Import Requirements and Documentations.

Contacts

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General Authority of Export and Import Control (GOEIC):
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Trade Agreements

Egypt is involved globally in several intra and inter-regional trade agreements, both multilateral and unilateral, including preferential trade agreements with the E.U., the U.S., and Arab, African and European countries, some of which are:

- The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT);
- The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS);
- Egyptian-European Mediterranean Partnership Agreement;
- The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA);
- Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA);
- Pan Arab Free Trade Area (PAFTA);
- Free Trade Agreement between Egypt and Turkey, signed in 2005.

Moreover, Egypt has signed several bilateral agreements with Arab Countries: Jordan (December 1999), Lebanon (March 1999), Libya (January 1991), Morocco (April 1999), Syria (December 1991), Tunisia (March 1999). Additionally, in 1995, Egypt and China entered into a trade accord. Egypt also signed an economic treaty with Russia.

Web Resources

Commercial Service in Egypt: <http://export.gov/egypt/>

American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt: <http://www.amcham.org.eg/>

U.S. Embassy: <http://cairo.usembassy.gov/>

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security:

<http://www.bis.doc.gov/index.htm>

U.S. Department of Commerce's Denied Persons List: <http://www.bis.doc.gov/dpl/Default.shtm>

U.S. Department of Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals List:

<http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/sdn/>

Egyptian Organization for Standards and Quality Control (EOS): <http://www.eos.org.eg/>

Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade: <http://www.mfti.gov.eg/>

Egyptian Accreditation Council: <http://www.egac.gov.eg/>

Egypt's National Institute of Standards: <http://www.nis.sci.eg>