

Lebanon

Overview

The Lebanese Standards Institution, known as LIBNOR, is the sole authority in Lebanon charged with issuing, publishing, and amending Lebanese standards. A number of state bodies (including the Ministries of Telecommunications, Energy and Water, Industry, Public Health, Environment, Agriculture, Economy and Trade, and Transport and Public Works) issue technical regulations related to products in the form of ministerial decisions and decrees issued by the cabinet. LIBNOR develops an annual update of standards.

Standards Organizations

LIBNOR is the sole authority to give the right to use the Lebanese Conformity Mark (NL Mark). Programs for drafting standards are set annually. LIBNOR's board of directors approves the annual plans, submitted by LIBNOR's director general, for preparing new standards or amending existing ones. The annual program for drafting standards is also available through LIBNOR's website at <http://www.libnor.org>.

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

The following six laboratories are the main national testing bodies in Lebanon:

- The laboratories of the Industrial Research Institute (IRI), affiliated with the Ministry of Industry, test for all types of products.
- The central laboratory at the Ministry of Public Health (for food products).
- The laboratory of the Agricultural Research Institute at the Ministry of Agriculture (for food products).
- The American University of Beirut laboratory of chemistry and pharmacology.
- The French Medical Institute laboratory of chemistry and pharmacology at Saint Joseph University.
- The nuclear medicine laboratory at Notre Dame du Liban Hospital.
- The National Council for Scientific Research laboratory under the Lebanese Atomic Energy Commission.
- The Quality Control Center laboratory at the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture of Tripoli and North Lebanon.
- The Food Quality Center laboratory at the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture of Zahle and the Bekaa.

Product Certification

The Industrial Research Institute provides certificates of quality or conformity with standards and purchase requirements. Certificates of conformity or quality issued by foreign companies, such as SGS and Veritas, are also honored in Lebanon. In addition, several ministries issue certificates of conformity. The Ministry of Agriculture has the authority to issue certificates of conformity for exported agricultural products. The Ministry of Economy and Trade issues

conformity and export certificates at the request of the exporter. The Ministry of Public Health issues health certificates at the request of the exporter. There are no mutual responsibility agreements with U.S. organizations.

Accreditation

Conseil Libanais D"Accreditation (Colibac), which is part of the Ministry of Industry, is the only accreditation body in Lebanon. The IRI laboratories are the authorized chemical and micro-biological laboratory used for accreditation.

Publication of Technical Regulations

Once the LIBNOR board committee agrees on draft standards, LIBNOR announces a trial period of two months. This announcement is sent directly to the National News Agency, several local newspapers, all members of the technical committee, local state television and LIBNOR"s website. Board members may also publish the draft standard or make it known to the relevant bodies they represent. Once adopted, all standards and decrees are published in Lebanon"s official gazette. Because Lebanon is not yet a WTO member, there is no formal procedure for notification. U.S. entities can comment on technical regulations via e-mail to LIBNOR.

Labeling and Marking

Labels on containers and packages require the display of the size, weight or quantity of the goods contained therein, manufacture, production and expiry date, ingredients, and the country of origin. The consumer protection division at the Ministry of Economy and Trade currently enforces the law. Failure to comply with the requirements subjects the violator to penalties.

Contacts

LIBNOR is the national inquiry point in Lebanon on standards and technical regulations resulting from conversion of standards.

LIBNOR

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The standards point of contact at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut can be reached at

<http://www.export.gov/lebanon>

Trade Agreements

Lebanon is traditionally a country with a free and open trade regime. Efforts towards trade liberalization have been focused on the European Union (EU), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Arab world.

Lebanon has neither a free trade arrangement nor a bilateral investment treaty with the United States, although on December 1, 2006, the two countries signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). The TIFA helps both countries promote an attractive investment climate, expand trade relations, and remove impediments to trade and investment.

Lebanon is seeking to accede to the WTO. Having gained observer status in 1999, Lebanon held its seventh working party meeting in October 2009.

Lebanon's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership agreement came into force in April 2006. The agreement provides for reciprocal free trade on the majority of industrial goods. It also liberalizes trade on a large basket of agricultural and processed agricultural goods. The Euro-Med Partnership aims at establishing a free trade area for the Mediterranean region; efforts to achieve this goal are ongoing.

In 2004, Lebanon and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) signed a free trade agreement (FTA). In November 2010, Lebanon and Turkey signed an association agreement establishing a free trade area that will reduce barriers to the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people between the two countries over the next ten years. Lebanon has also signed the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA), which gradually replaced the bilateral FTAs signed with Arab countries including Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and the Gulf Cooperation Council states. A regional Economic and Trade Association Council between Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey was announced in July 2010.

Lebanon has signed bilateral investment agreements with the following countries (in alphabetical order): Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium/Luxemburg, Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, OPEC Fund, Pakistan, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Sudan, Sultanate of Oman, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirate, the United Kingdom, and Yemen.

Lebanon has signed bilateral tax conventions with 32 countries, but not with the United States. More information about trade agreements can be found at the Ministry of Economy and Trade's website at <http://www.economy.gov.lb>.

Web Resources

Lebanese Customs Authority: <http://www.customs.gov.lb>.

LIBNOR: <http://www.libnor.org>.

Ministry of Economy and Trade (MoET): <http://www.economy.gov.lb>.

Ministry of Industry: <http://www.industry.gov.lb>.

Bureau of Industrial Security (BIS): <http://www.bis.doc.gov>.