

## **THE 10<sup>th</sup> ARSO CONTINENTAL ESSAY COMPETITION 2022-2023**

**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”**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

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, ARSO undertaken all necessary efforts contributing to eradicate poverty and to ensure youth are engaged and enlightened in all continental initiatives where ARSO plays an important role. Creation of a culture of quality among the youth is in line with its mandate, vision and mission, on annual basis ARSO organizes an essay competition to serve as a platform for the youth to provide innovative ideas in the area of standardization which may support the industrial development in Africa.

The First Continental Essay Competition was held in 2013-2014, and since 2014 up to now Rwanda has joined other African members states in raising standardization culture among the youth through essay competition. It is against this background that ARSO is organizing and inviting members to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> Continental Essay Competition under 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”***

The Competition is organized in way that contestants compete at National Level, where the winning essays at National level are evaluated at Regional Level and finally the finalists at regional level will be evaluated at continental level.

In this regard, the National Standards Bodies (NSB) in Africa are requested to organise the competition at the National level and share the attached documents (10th Continental Essay Concept Paper and Registration Form) to various Universities /Colleges or any other higher learning institution having candidates with an interest to participate in this competition.

The NSB mandated to organize the competition at National level is required to:

- Sharing out the relevant documents to Colleges/ Universities or any other higher learning institution having candidates with an interest to participate in the competition,
- Receiving, assessing and marking the essays from the participants, and

- Awarding or giving recognition to the winners as appropriate to the NSB.

The organizers at National level (NSBs) are required to invite students from Higher Learning Institutions in Africa (Colleges/ Universities approved by their local organs mandated to regulate 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) to the communicated email addresses in a given timeframe

## 2. KEY ASPECTS TO CONSIDER

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.

Contestants should focus on:

- Proposing how to reduce poor Market Access to SMEs in order to address challenges hindering market accessibility due to non-compliance with the Market regulatory Requirements and poor-quality of products.
- Identifying the problems faced by the Micro, Small and Medium-sized enterprises.
- Proposing solutions to be provided to MSMEs through the Implementation of Standards in MSMEs to improve their competitive advantage,
- General understanding of standards and specific issues affecting the players performance in MSMEs development,
- Policy and Strategies developed to address problems facing the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Africa.

## 3. ENTRY RULES AND CONDITIONS

This competition is open to Citizens of all African Countries below the age of 35 years old, living in Africa and studying in university/college or any other higher learning institution recognised by the local competent organs mandated to regulate higher education.

- **Length of essays:** Essays should be between **1000- and 1200-words** Presentation;
- **Presentation:** Essays should be double spaced and presented in Century Gothic, size 12;
- **Language of essays:** Essays must be submitted in English or French
- **Information on the author:** Authors may use up to 50 words to describe themselves. Information should include their names, course and year of study, town and country in which their university is located.  
N. B: this will not be part of the 1000- 1200 words
- **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.

While transmitting your Essay Competition 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>).

#### **4. ELIGIBILITY LIMITATIONS**

The following essays are not eligible for this competition if:

- i. Essays that have been availed in any form of publication;
- 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;
- v. Deadline for submission of Essay at national level is 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, essay submitted after the deadline will be excluded from the competition;
- vi. Deadline for submitting the five winners by National Standards Bureaus (NSBs) to ARSO is not later than 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023; NSB submission after this date will not be considered.

#### **5. 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 **1<sup>st</sup> 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 receive the prize money.

#### **6. 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.

##### **PREPARED BY:**

**Marlene KANYANGE, Ag. Director - Standards Publication Training and Technical Assistance Unit.**

##### **APPROVED BY:**

**Emmanuel GATERA, Ag. Manager - National Standards Division**

## Annex I: Proposed competition roadmap

S/NO	Activity to be done	Description	Timeframe	Responsible
1	Post the competition document on the website	Prepare announcement and flyer to be posted on the website	10 January 2023	NSD- selected team
2	Post the information on twitter	Post the information	10 January 2023	Francois
3	Invitation letters to University/Colleges to attend the competition	-Identify Universities to work with and invite them to the awareness activities -Prepared and send invitations	10 January 2023	Damascene and Francois
4	Raise awareness of the competition	Workshop with Dean of Students to support the competition	By 19 Jan 2023	Marlene & Francois
		-Workshop with the registered students about the competition		
	Coaching students on how to do dissertation	-Assist students and find the competent ones to pursue the competition	By 10 Feb 2023	
6	Receive submitted essays and marking	Mark the submitted essays and ranking the 3 best students to be submitted to ARSO	By 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	Entire Organizing team
7	Report of the competition	Prepare the report and submit the 3 best students to be submitted to ARSO	By 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	Entire Organizing team
8	Award the students who participated in the competition	Prepare certificate and provide awards for the winners	By 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	RSB management