

THE 11th ARSO CONTINENTAL ESSAY COMPETITION 2023-2024

Theme: "Empowering Consumers through Standardisation to achieve their rights to safe Quality Goods & Services"

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. Furthermore, ARSO is responsible for ensuring the well-being and safety of the African Community.

Therefore, being an African organization, ARSO undertakes all necessary efforts to bring on all stakeholders in the journey to shape sustainable solutions towards consumers' safety and trade promotion. To promote the standardization culture and ensure youth are engaged and enlightened in all continental initiatives where ARSO plays an important role, ARSO organises Essay competitions on Standardisation on annual basis. This essay competition serves as a platform for the youth to provide innovative ideas in the area of standardization which may support the industrial development in Africa and consumer safety.

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 11th Continental Essay Competition under the theme, *"Empowering Consumers through Standardisation to achieve their rights to safe Quality Goods & Services"*

The Competition is organized at different levels starting with national level. Essays of the winning contestants are then forwarded to the regional level for evaluation. Selected essays are finally submitted to the continental level for evaluation and selection of the final completion winners.

In this regard, the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) is entrusted to organise the competition at the National level. In the running of this competition, RSB is responsible for:

- Sharing out the relevant documents to Colleges/ Universities or any other legible higher learning institution having candidates with an interest to participate in the competition,
- Receiving, assessing and marking the essays from the participants at national level, and
- Awarding or giving recognition to the winners as appropriate.

For better and improved organization of the competition at national level, RSB will contact High Council of Education (HEC) and ADECOR (Rwanda Consumer's Rights Protection Organization) for getting further inputs on how the competition may be done smoothly.

2. KEY ASPECTS TO CONSIDER

While developing essays, contestants should focus on following key aspects:

1. Access to basic goods and services necessary for survival
2. Protection from hazardous products or services
3. Information about products and services
4. Freedom to choose from a variety of quality products and services
5. Voice a complaint about a product or service
6. Consumer education and representation

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 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

4. ELIGIBILITY LIMITATIONS

The following essays are not eligible for this competition:

- 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;

5. SUBMISSION TIMEFRAME

- i. Deadline for submission of Essay at national level is **31 January 2024**, essay submitted after the deadline will be excluded from the competition;
- ii. Deadline for submitting the five winners by National Standards Bureaus (NSBs) to ARSO is not later than 28th April 2024; NSB submission after this date will not be considered.
- iii. Participants are only allowed to submit one essay;

6. PRIZES FOR WINNERS

At Continental Level

- 1st position – (male and female) each USD 1000
- 2nd position – USD 800
- 3rd position – USD 500

In addition, the **1st 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 2024 to receive the prize money.

7. 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.

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	3 rd November 2023	Standards publication & marketing Officer
2	Post the information on Twitter(X)	Post the information	17 th November 2023	Standards publication & marketing Officer
3	Consult HEC & ADECOR	Explain to the institutions the purpose of the competition and request their commitment in its organization	20-24 November 2023	Standards publication & marketing Officer Other assigned staff
4	Raise awareness of the competition	Visit Universities/colleges to raise awareness	27 November – 10 December 2023	Standards publication & marketing Officer
	Fill in registration forms	The contestants fill the forms and send them back via arsocompetition@rsb.gov.rw	11 -15 December 2023	Other assigned staff
5	Assisting completion candidates on how to do dissertation	-Direct students on how to write essay	18 - 30 December 2023	
	Write essays	Interested students write essays in accordance with the provided guidance	By 01 -31 January 2024	Essay writers
6	Submission of essays	The essays sent via the provided email: arsocompetition@rsb.gov.rw	By 31 January 2024	Standards publication & marketing Officer
7	Correction of submitted essays	The assigned team will correct the essays and mark them	By 12 -16 February 2024	Standards publication & marketing Officer/Assigned team
8	Report of the competition	Prepare the report and submit it to the RSB DG Office for approval. This report includes how the competition was done and the winners at national level that will represent Rwanda at regional/continental level	By 28 th February 2024	Standards publication & marketing Officer Director of SPTTA
9	Submit the report to ARSO secretariat	The approved report will be submitted to ARSO highlighting the list of contestants selected to represent Rwanda at Regional level.	By 15 March 2024	Standards publication & marketing Officer Director of SPTTA NSD Manager
	Award the students who participated in the competition	Prepare certificate and provide awards for the winners	By 14 th October 2024	RSB management

