The Role of GSO on GCC Food Safety

by
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GCC Standardization Organization (GSO)
Regional standardization organization established under the umbrella of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC).

Succeeding the GSMO (Est. 1984).

Assumed operation in May 2004.

Headquarter: Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Members: United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait.

GSO Members are member bodies of AIDMO, ISO, Codex …etc. All are signatory to Annex III of the TBT Agreement; Code of Good Practice for preparation, adoption and application of standards.
**GSO Main Functions**

- Formulation, preparation and publication of GCC Standards and Technical Regulations.

- Formulation of GCC Conformity Assessment Procedures, legal and industrial Metrology, Quality and other related standardization activities on the GCC level.

- Facilitation of the intra GCC trade as well as international trade through elimination of technical barriers to trade.

- Protection of the consumer, health and environment.

- Assisting GCC Industry through harmonization of GCC Standards, Specifications and Conformity Assessment procedures with their international equivalents.

- Serving the needs and requirements of the GCC Customs Union; single entry point.
GSO Structure

GSO is managed and administered by the following bodies:

- **Board of Directors**: GCC Ministers of Trade & Industry + Asst. Sec. Gen. (GCC Gen. Sect.) + Sec. Gen. GSO
- **Technical Council**: Directors-general of GCC Nat’l Std. Bodies
- **General Secretariat**
Standardization Activities in the GCC

Gulf Standards and Technical Regulations.
- Numbers of GCC Standards and Technical Regulations ~ 1800 (600 pending Board’s approval).
  - 35% Technical Regulations (mandatory)
  - 65% Standards (voluntary)
- Degree of relevance: 40% (ISO), 80% (IEC), 60% Codex
- Covering major economic sectors.
- Prepared by Technical Committees through consensus of all stakeholders.
- Approved by GSO Board of Directors on recommendations by GSO Technical Council.
- Eventually adopted as National Standards/Tech. Reg. by GSO Member States.
Standards Formulation:

GCC Standards and Technical Regulations are formulated with a view to meet:

- Requirements of health, safety, performance, protection of the environment and consumer.

- Requirements of industry, import, export, public procurement and international trade.

- Requirements of the GCC Committee for Food Safety (a dedicated committee of GCC Food Control Authorities).

- TBT&SPS Agreements.
Standards Development & Management

GSO Standards are developed by GCC Standards Technical Committees guided by the following principles:

- Consideration of available international standards for adoption.
- No National standard is developed if there is an identical GCC standard in existence.
- Avoidance of creating any trade barriers.
- Consideration of de facto standards i.e. widely applicable internationally and national foreign standards.

Work of the GCC Standards Technical Committees is managed and overseen by the GSO General Secretariat.
Role of GSO In Food Standardization

GSO’s Food Safety Policy:
It is integrated with and geared to cater for the needs of GCC food control authorities for the protection of the health and safety of people in GCC through the maintenance of a safe food supply via:

- Preventing food borne diseases.
- Preventing chemical hazards and food contamination at any stage of the food chain.
- Meeting the food safety expectations of GCC States.
- Providing for more effective and unified GCC food safety regulations
- Transparency.
Food Safety Challenges

- New pathogens and pathogens not previously associated with food consumption are increasing the risk of food borne illness.
- Modern technologies (agriculture, animal, etc.) to increase production; risks to human, plant & animal health and the Environment.
- Globalization of food trade
- The need to constantly review and update International and national food safety standards, laws, and regulations to ensure consumer health and confidence within the food supply chain - from the farm to the table.
Food Safety: From Farm To Table

- Animal and Agricultural Products, Pesticides, GMO, veterinary Drugs ...etc.
- Loading and transportation.
- Processing: Contaminants and Hygiene.
- Packing: Packaging and Wrapping materials, emigration of Contaminants ..etc
- Preparation: Biological and microbial Contaminants, Environment and Hygienic requirements.
- Storage, Handling and Presentation: Storage conditions (Temperature, Humidity, Environment ...etc)
- Consumption: Bad habits. Type of consumption (National Data)
GCC Standards for Food and Agricultural Products

GSO Food Standards in Figures:

- Around 550 GCC Standards and technical regulations, Food and Agricultural Products, ~ 30% of the total number of GCC Std. & Tech. Reg. (1800).
- Over 170 Draft GCC Standards and technical regulations in GSO plan for 2007, (18% of the 925 planned).
GCC Standards in Food and Agricultural Products

- Meat and Meat Products
- Milk and Milk Products
- Fruits and Vegetables and Their Products.
- Oils and Fat and Their Products.
- Water and Drinks
- Cereals Products.
- Animal Feeds.
- Tobacco & Tobacco Products.
Scope of GCC Food Standards

- Food Labeling
- Food Additives
- Food Contaminants
- Processing aids
- Hygienic Requirements
- Storage and transportation
- Food Packaging
- Shelf-life
- Microbiological Criteria
- Test Methods
GCC Food Standards:
Standards are based on International Standards and in line with WTO agreements

- SPS agreement
  - Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex)
  - Office International des Epizooties (OIE)
  - International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

- TBT agreement
  - Relevant standards

- Also based on scientific assessment of any risk to public health and safety conducted in the region.
GCC Food Standards:
Regional Input on Risk Assessment/Risk Analysis

- GSO 1016/2000 "MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA FOR FOODSTUFFS – PART 1".
- GSO 851/1997 "MAXIMUM LIMITS OF MYCOTOXINS PERMITTED IN FOODS AND ANIMAL FEEDS – AFLATOXINS"
- GSO 382 & 383 Maximum limits for pesticide residues in agricultural food products - Parts 1 & 2.
- GSO 150/1993 & 1023/2002" Expiration periods of food products Parts 1&2
Challenges; GCC Risk Assessment Approach

- Awareness.
- Food legislation should keep abreast of international standards and should not constitute any trade barriers.
- Quality Infrastructure; laboratories, Inspection Bodies, Market Surveillance, (Sampling) ….etc.
- Participation in International Activities.
- Lack of national (Regional) Consumption Behavior.
- Variation in technical capabilities and competence (i.e. laboratories) and difficulty of conducting risk analysis studies.
- Weak quality supporting infrastructure: accreditation, metrology, market surveillance systems ,..etc
Looking Forward to:

- Developing a GCC food safety Strategy based on a holistic approach “From Farm to Table” involving all the relevant stakeholders (government officials, food industry, the media and consumer associations)
- Implementation (Mandatory) of large-scale Food Safety Management Systems; ISO22000/HACCP,……etc.
- Creation of Specialized Food Safety institutions; SAFDA
- The process of development of GSO Standards Specifications and Technical Regulations should serve (contribute to) upgrading the quality of products which are put into circulation
- Unifying (Harmonizing) of conformity assessment procedures.
- Encouraging Good Manufacturing Practices as a basis for quality control and quality assurance practices.
Looking Forward to:

- Encouraging and qualifying for “Supplier Declaration of Conformity”.
- Upgrading the technical competence of laboratories, Inspection Bodies...
- Civil responsibility and the judicial right (consumer rights).
- **Active & Effective International Participation.**
GSO : On-Going Projects

- Regional Conformity Assessment Scheme (JAS-ANZ).
- Standards Making Process (UNIDO).
- Metrology.
- E-services ([www.gso.org.sa](http://www.gso.org.sa))
نتجه إلى عمل دراسات بحثية حول الأغذية والتغذية والدواء السعودية تتبنى "دستور الأغذية العالمي" جدة إيمان الخطايف

كشفت الهيئة العامة للغذاء والدواء عن ملاحظات استراتجية جديدة بخصوص التغيرات في النظام البيئي. وفقًا لرئيس الهيئة، أحمد المسماري، فإن الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو تحقيق الأهداف المرجوة، وتحسين جودة الأغذية والدواء.

وأضاف المسماري أن الهيئة مهتمة بالتعاون مع المنظمات الدولية، مثلCodex Alimentarius، لتعزيز صحة المستهلك وسلامة الأغذية. وتتفق الهيئة مع القوانين العالمية وخدمات الجودة، وتعزز من التعاون الدولي.

وقد وجه المسماري أيضًا بطريقتيين مختلفين للعمل: الدراسة والبحث. يهدف العمل إلى جمع المعلومات والبحثية لوضع مخطط للعمل في مجال الأغذية والتغذية.

أما بالنسبة للدواء، فقد أشار المسماري إلى أهمية إصدار إرشادات جديدة تتعلق بالدواء، لضمان جودته وسلامته.

وأخيراً، أوضح المسماري أن الهيئة تواصل جهودها للمساعدة في إعداد الأغذية والدواء بشكل أفضل وحول تطبيقات الدوائر الرقمية، وذلك من خلال التعاون مع المنظمات الدولية وتصنيف المنتجات وتحقيق الأهداف المرجوة.
Thank You

GSO: Building for Integration

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