



## EXPORTER AND IMPORTER GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

The **Nigerian Standards Organisation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** is responsible for the preparation; adoption and application of Standards for both imported and domestically manufactured products.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005, **Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON)** have implemented the **SON Conformity Assessment Programme (SONCAP)** to ensure that certain regulated imports comply with the approved Nigerian technical regulations i.e., Nigerian or other approved international standards prior to shipment. These technical regulations are designed to protect Nigerian consumers from unsafe and/or sub-standard products.

Compliance with the SONCAP is a two-stage process. The first stage, Product Certification, is applicable only the first time that you wish to export a particular type or model of product. The resulting Product Certificate can be valid for up to one year only. The second stage, SONCAP Certification, is applicable on a shipment-by-shipment basis.

All Certification will be performed by your local SON Country Office (SONCO).

The SONCAP Certificate is a mandatory Customs Clearance document in Nigeria and Regulated Products arriving without this document will be subject to delays and possibly denied importation. SONCAP is applicable to Regulated Products in addition to any other existing import processes such as PSI.

### OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

**The primary objectives of the programme are: -**

- To ensure that products imported into Nigeria meet the security, safety, health and environment requirements as per the sanctioned standards and technical regulations approved by SON (Standards Organization of Nigeria).
- Provide assurance to the Nigerian consumer that the products imported into Nigeria are free from potential hazards and fit for use.
- To avoid costly delays at the ports and rejection of shipments if the shipments are found to include dangerous and unsafe products.
- To help genuine and complying Exporters and Importers to quickly clear Customs process without the risk of rejection of shipments
- To streamline Custom clearance procedures, promote healthy and fair competition and fight against unsafe and dangerous goods.

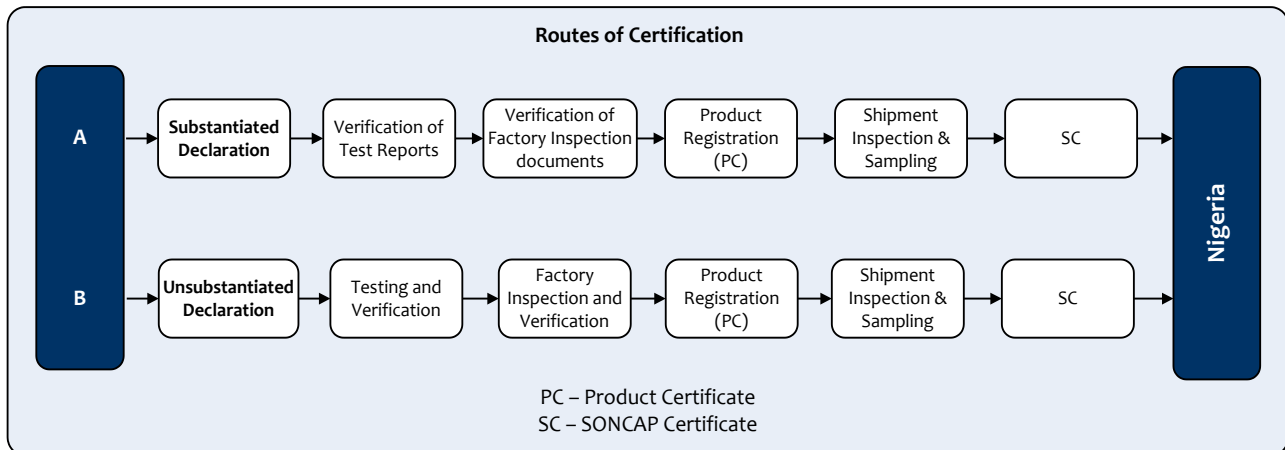


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**SONCAP COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES**

The SONCAP compliance procedures are designed to provide maximum flexibility to Exporters and Importers by providing two (2) possible routes for obtaining a SONCAP Certificate for their shipments of Regulated Products.

The method utilized is at the Exporters' discretion and will depend on the level of compliance they are able to demonstrate initially when applying for certification. **The 2 routes are explained below:-**



**Figure 1 - Flowchart Depicting the Certification Routes**

**ROUTE A: SUBSTANTIATED DECLARATION**

This route is considered appropriate for Exporters of Regulated Products who can demonstrate full product compliance to the applicable Nigerian Standards/regulations in advance of the supply of the consignment from the country of export.

- The Exporter is required to submit to the Country Office (CO) in their location, a test report, photographs of the product(s) for which the PC is being applied for and a Request for Product Certification (RFPC). **Note: Photographs submitted should be clear and cover the full image of the product including the country of origin/manufacture and other relevant markings. Pictures of electrical products should also cover the product's rating plate**
- Upon successful verification of the test report, a product certificate will be issued to the Exporter with a validity period of one year from the date of issue of the test report used for substantiating the declaration.
- For each subsequent individual shipment, the Exporter is required to submit a completed Request for Shipment Certification and a final invoice. A SONCAP certificate will then be issued to the Exporter for Customs clearance.

**ROUTE B: UNSUBSTANTIATED DECLARATION**

This route is available for Exporters who cannot supply the necessary substantiating test report to qualify for Route 1.

- The SON Country Office should be initially contacted by the Exporter to provide the location of an approved laboratory, whose testing scope covers that product.
- Upon a satisfactory test result, the Exporter should provide the test report, photographs of the product(s) for which the PC is being applied for and Request for Product Certification (RFPC), to the Country Office. **Note: Photographs submitted should be clear and cover the full image of the product including the country of origin/manufacture and other relevant markings. Pictures of electrical products should also cover the product's rating plate**
- Upon successful verification of the test reports, a product certificate will be issued to the Exporter with a validity period of one year from the date of issue of the test report used for substantiating the declaration.
- For each subsequent individual shipment, the Exporter is required to submit a completed Request for Shipment Certification and a final invoice. A SONCAP certificate will then be issued to the Exporter for Customs clearance purposes in Nigeria.



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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1. How do I start the process for product certification?**

When you have a shipment of regulated products destined for Nigeria, contact your nearest SON Country Office and submit the following documentation:

- a. Request for Product Certification
- b. Test Report.

If your products fall into more than one regulated category, then an application must be received per category.

**2. What if I cannot provide a test report covering the products?**

Your products will need to be tested against the relevant Nigerian Technical Regulations prior to shipment by an approved laboratory. The location of a suitable SON laboratory capable of testing the products can be provided by your nearest SON Country Office.

**3. What is the product certification process?**

Upon receipt of all required documentation, the SON Country Office will review the test report to ensure compliance with the applicable Nigerian Technical requirements. Following a successful verification of the test report, a Product Certificate will be issued to the Exporter.

**4. How long is the product certificate valid for?**

The validity date stated on the product certificate will be up to 1 year only. Please ensure that you renew your product certificate prior to the expiry date by submitting a new test report, to avoid the possibility of delays to your shipment schedules.

**5. What is the SONCAP certification process?**

Once you have successfully received your product certificate, please provide the following documents to our SON Country Office to facilitate the SONCAP certification process.

- a. Request for SONCAP Certification (RFSC)
- b. A copy of the final invoice
- c. A packing list covering the goods shipped
- d. Pictures of the regulated products in the consignment

Please ensure that the RFSC is completed correctly with the applicable product certificate reference number provided. Our office will review the documentation for accuracy and issue the SONCAP certificate to the Exporter. You are required to provide the SONCAP Certificate to your Importer for Customs clearance purposes.

**6. How much does it cost?**

Full details of product and SONCAP certification fees are available overleaf.

**7. Can the Importer initiate this process?**

The Importer may initiate this process by completing the RFSC form and faxing it to the SONCAP Programme Manager. The SONCAP Programme Manager will then fax the form to the relevant SONCO and the Exporter will then be contacted to clarify the Programme processes and requirements.

**8. What are the products regulated under SONCAP?**

According to a SON Circular, all products/ goods (except those regulated by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control-NAFDAC and those import prohibited/ particularly exempted) will be covered under the SONCAP programme effective 5<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Products that are exempt from compliance to SONCAP are listed as a separate section in this document.



**STANDARDS ORGANISATION OF NIGERIA**  
Standards Organisation of Nigeria Conformity  
Assessment Programme

The Federal Republic  
of Nigeria



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**FEES**

PRODUCT CERTIFICATION	SONCAP CERTIFICATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product Certification fees are related to the validity period of the Product Certificate and can be valid for up to 1 year.</li> <li>Where there is more than one model to be included on a Product Certificate and these models are covered in the same Test Report then there is an additional monthly fee of <b>US\$2 per model</b>.</li> <li>For all other scenarios, a quotation will be provided by the local SON Country Office upon receipt of a completed Request for Product Certification (RFPC). It should be noted that the Product Certificate fee is always subject to a minimum of <b>US\$216</b></li> <li>Product Certificate amendment/reissue fees: <b>US\$50</b></li> <li>Fees for Duplicate Product Certificates: <b>US\$50</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each SONCAP Certificate will be charged at <b>US\$300</b></li> <li>SONCAP Certificate Amendment Fees: <b>US\$100</b></li> <li>Fees for Duplicate SONCAP Certificate: <b>US\$100</b></li> <li>Partial Shipments. The fee for SONCAP certificates issued for partials is <b>US\$300</b> and would apply to every SONCAP certificate issued</li> </ul>

**APPENDICES\***

<b>Appendix A</b>	SONCAP Exempted Products List
<b>Appendix B</b>	SON Country Offices
<b>Appendix C</b>	Zone of Responsibilities of SON Country Offices
<b>Appendix D</b>	Request For Product Certification (RFPC)
<b>Appendix E</b>	Request For SONCAP Certification (RFSC)

\*These Appendices are available at <http://www.exports2nigeria.com/downloads/index.htm>

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