

Guidelines on Product/Service Specifications

General Specifications

This is the list of characteristics a product should present to ensure the requirements for this product are satisfied.

- These characteristics must be supported by realistic applicable control methods. This, in most cases, will be an international or a national standard or sometimes an “in house” procedure.

National specifications

- National states impose national specifications for all products imported in their market. This follows several preoccupations like protection of the consumers, of the local market, and of the national producers. It also requires exporters to conform to the required specifications, this promotes products on export.
- Our concern should always be to ensure goods intended for importation in a country:
 - Conform to The national specifications of that country. If they do not, they have to be exceptionally
 - Authorised by the appropriate national body.

International specifications

- For specific products, international specifications are in place (size of freight containers, quality of fuels, etc). These internationally recognised specifications are presented in ISO standards.
- Other internationally recognised bodies have set up specifications. I.e.: GAFTA for international
- Trade contract for cereals, CEI for international standard on electricals, ECHO for humanitarian
- Aid food product from the EU, etc.

We try to conform, as much as possible, to international specifications for all our standard products.

Product/Service Inspection

If the above specification issues are well respected, there should be no major problem to manage the specifications with the given standard control procedures, provided the inspection company is well chosen.

These inspections are either performed by external services or internally.

Note:

- Legal aspects may impose inspections to be performed by state certified companies.
- Certified Inspection reports are required for most imports and exports.
- Certified inspection reports are also essential to support arbitration with suppliers.

Conclusion

It is most important for us to have:

- Well defined requirements,
 - With clear specifications, checked against national specifications of country of destination and/or
 - Based on well known standards in the country of purchase and destination.

This provides comparable information from the suppliers and from the control companies.