



## Kenya Re ISO 9001:2015



# Decade-long ride with ISO QMS is taking Kenya Re places

Company operates in an environment where high customer demands must not just be met but exceeded through continual improvements in service delivery

By **EVANS ONGWAE**

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For nearly a decade now, Kenya Re has used the ISO 9001 quality management system (QMS) in its operations and strategies, with positive results.

Hence, on August 1, 2018, the company gladly received its most recent certification under this system after successfully transitioning from ISO 9001:2008 to ISO 9001:2015 QMS – the latest in the ISO 9001 series.

Kenya Re first decided to seek ISO 9001 certification way back in 2008. It identified a consultancy firm to prepare and advise it on the journey. Millennium Management Consultants (MMC) won the bid and successfully undertook the process. Kenya Re was subsequently certified for the ISO 9001:2008 QMS in May 2010.

Quality Management Representative (QMR) Charles Abebe, who is also the Assistant ICT Manager, says that initially, the ISO champions were mainly heads of departments, who were trained on the requirements of the standard. They were tasked with the responsibility of preparing the requisite policies, procedures and operational manuals as well as the standard operating procedures. They also had to undergo ISO internal Auditors training.

The team successfully conducted the requisite internal audits and management



Kenya Re MD Jadhiah Mwarania (centre) receives the ISO Certification Award from SGS Kenya Business Manager, Mr. Kioko Ndolo. Looking on is Kenya Re QMR, Mr. Charles Abebe.

review meeting prior to the certification audits. Eventually, the Corporation was recommended for certification by SGS, the certifying agency, in February 2010.

The beauty about the standards requirement is that organisations identify the key processes and document procedures on how the processes are to be carried out. To maintain the certification, consistency, compliance and continual improvement

must be observed.

Mr Abebe says that through the awareness promoted by the champions, the majority of staff have embraced the ISO QMS and now there is little resistance to the operations of the standard, such as the internal and surveillance audits, as staff know these benefit the Corporation in a big way.

Kenya Re is a service oriented organisation in the financial sector,

offering risk management solutions that secure the future and create value for stakeholders. The operating environment is therefore largely customer centric, where high satisfaction demand must not just be met but exceeded through continual improvements in service delivery.

To achieve this in an increasingly competitive environment owing to entry of more reinsurance companies; and in a market whose growth has been marginal at an average of below three percent of the gross domestic product, Kenya Re opted for the ISO quality management system as a step to gaining a competitive edge.

This has borne fruit as confirmed by the surveys conducted over the years.

According to Strategic Public Relations and Research Limited exit survey report of 2013, the overall customer satisfaction was 45 per cent. Annual polls by Ipsos show that this has improved over the years to hit a high of 78 per cent.

The brand equity, which among other deliverables also focuses on brand perception, service delivery and customer feedback, has improved over the years from 40 per cent in 2012 to 81 per cent in 2017.

The ISO initiative has further positively impacted productivity and customer retention.

Overall, Kenya Re has achieved a sustained business growth over the years. Gross profits have been registered at Ksh27.6 billion, Ksh32.3 billion, Ksh36 billion, Ksh38.5 billion, and Ksh42.7 billion in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively.

**The team successfully conducted the requisite internal audits and management review meeting prior to the certification audits.**

## Why reinsurer is going for more standards

By **EVANS ONGWAE**

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Kenya Re is looking beyond its needs today and aims to secure its future by embracing more ISO standards. The reinsurance company sees such globally recognised standards giving it an edge in a fiercely competitive market with razor-thin growth margins.

Certification for ISO 9001:2015 is the first step in this journey.

Quality Management Representative (QMR) Charles Abebe, who is also the ICT Assistant Manager, says the Corporation has further identified the need to be certified on the ISO 27001:2013 Information Security Management Standard.

The risk management services firm is at an advanced stage of attaining the



Kenya Re MD Mr. Jadhiah Mwarania (r) acts as the Supply Chain Manager during a job switch role and serves Internal Auditor Peter Rop (l) during the 2017 Customer Service Week.

standard, having gone through the requisite processes.

The key objective is to sustain good governance in providing ICT services. "This will also help Kenya Re to proactively protect the information it holds from all threats – whether internal or external, deliberate or accidental. Ultimately, this will ensure business continuity, including public access to information. It will also guarantee the integrity and authenticity of the records we hold and minimise business damage," says Mr Abebe.

He adds that Kenya Re's property department is also currently reviewing prospects of seeking certification for the

ISO 5001 energy management standard. This standard will specifically focus on enhancing the company's ability to better manage its energy sources.

Mr Abebe further expresses a general concern in relation to the importance of standards: "As we go through the disruptive phases of the 4th Industrial Revolution, which is currently characterised by the disruptive technologies and trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality and artificial intelligence, all changing the way we live and work, the only tool to bring sanity in the digital explosion is standardisation... Standards give us direction and order of doing things systematically."

Kenya Re is ISO 9001:2015 Certified, Rated B (Fair) by A M Best International Rating Agency, and AA by Global Credit Rating (GCR).

