



AfriCert

SUSTAINABILITY
REPORT



Chairmans Foreword

Sustainability at Africert Limited

AfriCert's Board of Directors remains firm in its resolve to provide hands-on governance, financial oversight and leadership that supports effective and efficient management. It is a privilege to serve an Internationally recognized Certification Body working with partners to entrench safe, secure, and sustainable agricultural production systems that will guarantee achievement of universal living income benchmarks for smallholder farmers in Africa and beyond.

I am delighted to have performed the role of Chairman of the Board over the past ten years, during which time, the company has experienced unprecedented expansion and growth. In each of those years, I've had exciting news to share with respect to the evolution of the company.

In 2021 the company undertook a radical review of our proposed annual work plan and budget in appreciation of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. We considered how resources could be conserved until we could resume full capacity. As a result, our development plans and expenditure programmes were significantly reduced. In spite of the impairing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Certification body has continued to gain ground in accomplishing our strategic objective of delivering impact at scale. AfriCert set a target of giving clients in 18 African Countries a relatable experience through establishment of subsidiary offices that hire and retain the best local talent. Today, we have offices in Nairobi, Accra, Abidjan, and Kigali. Plans are afoot to set up a fifth in 2022.

I would like to recognize and express gratitude to my fellow board members Mr. Geoffrey Wathigo and Mrs. Betty-Anne Mboche as they continue to serve with tireless dedication and commitment to excellence. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our accreditation partners, standard owners, and the Committee of Related Members for their contribution and support. I also extend my gratitude to AfriCert's management and staff for their service and loyalty to the organization and its important mission.

Wishing you a prosperous 2022.

Sincerely Yours,

Zabby Chege

Ceo's Foreword

Seeding the Future of Sustainability

Our medium to long term strategic direction represents our resolute and ambitious response to the main trends in our industry i.e., innovation and technology, as well as climate change and sustainability. AfriCert's big-picture vision of promoting sustainable production and market development for small-holder African farmers in support local and export food trade cannot be gainsaid.

I remain confident that market-driven certification programs shall continue to create beneficial linkages between smallholder farmers and consumers of certified produce, effectively harnessing the power of markets to create rewards for all actors in different agricultural value chains. It helps that certified produce is now labelled and marketed and such and consumer's attitude and inclination to pay a premium for such products has been extensively researched and empirically confirmed. As a Certification Body, we will continue to play a prominent role in aligning the interests of the producers with market demands in a bid to ensure that all players reap the dividends of synergy.

Wishing you a blessed 2022.

Sincerely Yours,



Anthony Nderitu





From the Chairman of the Committee of Related Members (C.O.R.M).

It has been my pleasure to serve as a member of the AfriCert Committee of Related Members (CORM) for the last 6 years. I am glad to note that the CB has grown to be a leader in its class. The last one year was a turbulent one to most businesses, with the COVID-19 pandemic testing our resilience. The CB was quick to mitigate the risk and was able to quickly adopt innovation to continue offering services to her clients without delay. Everyone is talking about sustainability and when I look around our agribusiness environment, I see a CB ready to join and guide the world in realizing this dream. The AfriCert team quickly embarked in digital transformation to ensure flawless quality service to her clients. On behalf of CORM, I am confident that the team understands the requirements of each standard owner and the expectations of the clients thus is ready to move into the future, which as we all know is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous.



Our Approach to sustainability

We believe that sustainability is not an end in itself, but a journey. The company endeavors to promote environmental, social, and governance practices that support our mission of operating in a competent, consistent, and impartial manner in order to safeguard and maintain the integrity of our accreditation as well as standards we subscribe to.

Certification has had a huge impact in giving sustainability prominence in business thinking. Attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires the cooperation of public and private partners, and the use of all available tools, including international standards and conformity assessment. Scientific experts have since collaborated to develop the international standards for voluntary certification programs.

As our teams carry out inspections and verifications towards certification, the various smallholder farmers and stakeholders also play a key role in the commitment to sustainable agriculture and finding the right balance between the need for food production and the preservation of environmental ecosystems.

Company profile

AfriCert Limited is a private Certification Body approved and accredited for product certification under ISO/IEC 17065.

The company's headquarters is located on 1st Floor, Plaza 2000, Mombasa Road in Nairobi, Kenya. AfriCert boasts of a regional head office established in Accra, Ghana in 2010. The year 2018 saw the establishment of a satellite unit in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, primarily to offer a relatable experience to our clients in Francophone West Africa. On 1st August, 2021 plans gave way to the 4th profit centre in Kigali, Rwanda, whose special focus will be organic produce Certification in the Great Lakes region.

CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY,
PROFESSIONALISM,
RESPECT



MISSION

TO PROVIDE COMPETITIVE
AND IMPARTIAL PRODUCT
AND PROCESS ASSURANCE
SERVICES TO PRODUCERS
AND PROCESSORS LOCALLY,
REGIONALLY AND
INTERNATIONALLY FOR
MARKET ACCESS AND
SUSTAINABILITY



VISION

TO PROVIDE TIMELY AND
PROFESSIONAL PRODUCT
AND PROCESS ASSURANCE
SERVICES THAT LEADS TO
VALUE ADDITION FOR
CUSTOMERS AND
CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO
THE GROWTH OF AFRICERT.





TRACTION

- 4 SATELLITE OFFICES
- 350,000 FARMERS
- 20+ VALUE CHAINS
- 30+ COUNTRIES (GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE)

AFRICERT IN NUMBERS

01

- CAFÉ PRACTICES - 166 VERIFICATIONS SINCE 2008.
- RAINFOREST ALLIANCE -108 CERTIFICATES ISSUED IN 2020 AND 118 CERTIFICATES ISSUED IN 2021
- 4C - 5 CERTIFICATES
- CMIA - 9 VERIFICATIONS DONE FOR FIELD LEVEL AND 7 VERIFICATIONS FOR GINNERY LEVEL
- GLOBALG.A.P - 22 CERTIFICATES ISSUED IN 2021
- GRASP - 17 CERTIFICATES ISSUED IN 2021



2003

Africert
Established in
Nairobi, Kenya



2004

Started Operations



2010

1st Satellite office
in Accra, Ghana
to serve West African
countries.



2018

2nd Satellite office in
Abidjan, Cote d ivoire
to serve Francophone
region



2021

3rd Satellite opened
in Kigali, Rwanda to Serve
Great Lakes Region

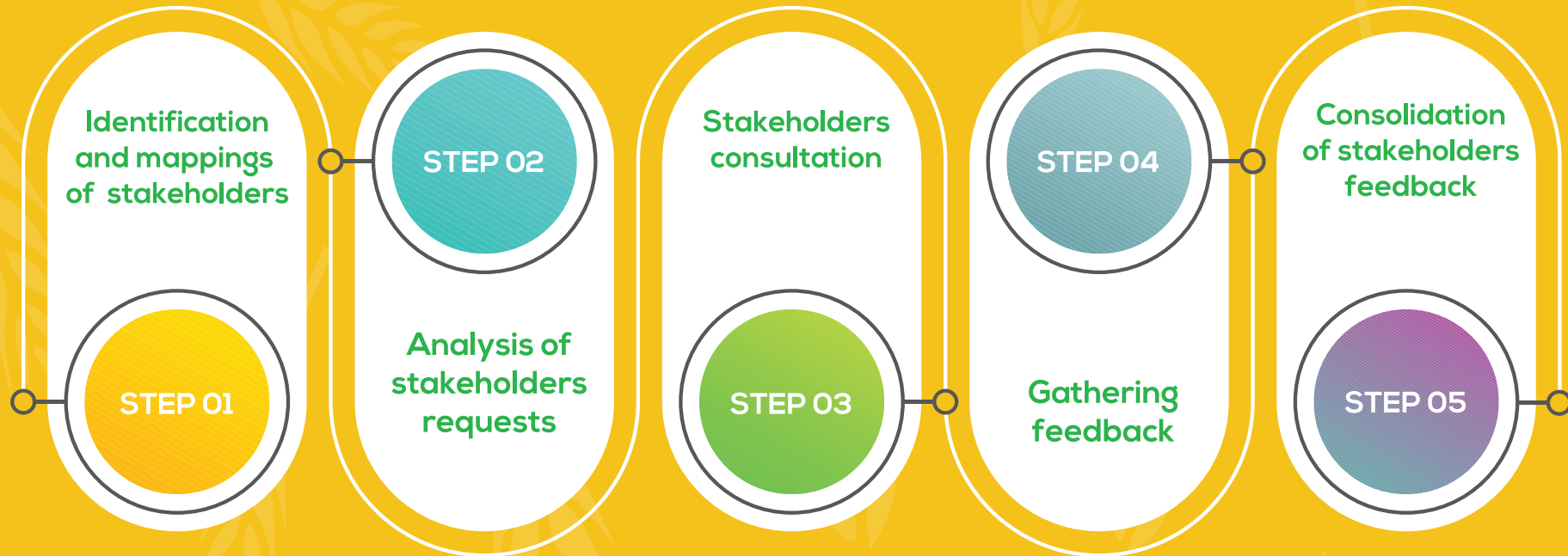


Stakeholder Engagement

We engage our stakeholders in order to achieve outcomes that are acceptable to all parties. Some of the stakeholders that have key roles in our organization are:



The method that we use to engage stakeholders is



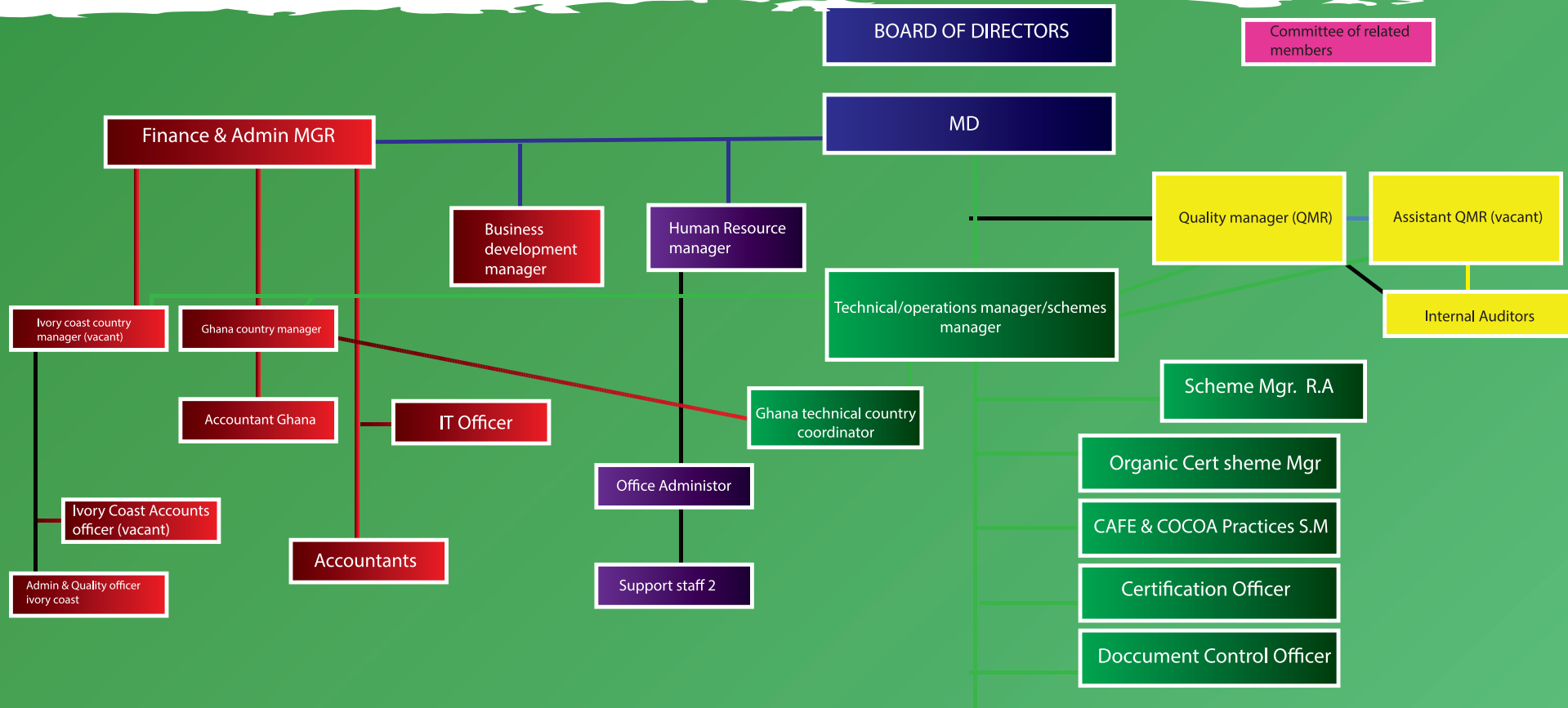
We are a member of industry associates like:

African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA), Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) and KFC. A strategic partnership with Kenya Bureau of Standards now enables us to extend our services to cover ISO22000/FSSC 22000, ISO 14001, ISO 9001 and other trading Standards. In September 2021, we signed an MoU with Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS).The agreement covers testing of organically produced samples for pesticide residues and GMO material. This partnership will give African farmers the opportunity to access niche markets where their produce will fetch better prices.



Governance and Ethics

Organogram



Auditors	Nairobi	West Africa
Freelance	13	15
Permanent	14	
Total N/B Totals dont include verifiers/certifiers & report reviewers as this would be double counting		

	Executive Authority
	Quality Control
	Finance/ Marketing
	Technical staff
	HR/ Admin /Support staff
	Oversight Committee

Risk Management Approach

Risk is synonymous with agriculture. The most common sources of risk are unpredictable weather/climate patterns, diseases, natural disasters, global pandemics and market and environmental shocks. Some risks have become more severe in recent years due to climate change and the most recent global pandemic. Our approach to risk management is anticipation and prevention. The QMR (Quality Management Representative) organizes a thorough risk assessment exercise via a management review meeting conducted every year. The management review minutes are then reviewed by the Committee of Related Members to ensure the proposed preventive/mitigation measures are implemented successfully.

Our management review meeting involves discussion on:

- Review of the previous Management review action plans.
- Annual review of financial operations.
- results of internal and external audits.
- feedback from clients and interested parties related to the implementation of ISO/IEC 17065.
- feedback from the mechanism for safeguarding impartiality.
- the status of preventive and corrective actions.
- follow-up actions from previous management reviews.
- the fulfillment of objectives.
- changes that could affect the management system.
- appeals and complaints.

The review output decisions shall relate to:

- improvement of the effectiveness of the management system and its processes.
- improvement of the certification body related to the fulfillment of this International Standard.
- resource needs.

THE ROLE OF CORM

The certification body has established a committee of related members (CORM) for safeguarding its impartiality. The analysis of risks to impartiality is presented to this committee. The Committee of Related Members operates independent of AfriCert's directors and clients. It meets on need basis to discuss the certification process, policies and procedures related to impartiality, and any tendency on the part of the Certification Body to allow commercial or other considerations to affect impartiality.

COMPLIANCE

We are a legal entity compliant to all requirements laid out by the various statutes and standards that we are either accredited or approved for. In the last year, we have operated sanction free, and have maintained a clean record with all relevant authorities in terms of conformity and compliance. Some standards like Global G.A.P have performance ratings that were developed to promote continuous improvement in the performance of Certification Bodies. This is displayed on the website and helps clients in making the decision of certification body of choice. Our rating currently stands at 4.67 out of the possible 5 stars. With this we rank at position 5 out of the 192 Certification Bodies worldwide.

EMPLOYEES

Our Human Resources strategy is clear: "If the employees come first, then they are happy. A motivated employee treats the customer well. The customer is happy so they keep coming back. It is not one of the enduring green mysteries of all time, it is just the way it works". - Herb Kelleher.



OPEN DOOR POLICY

Our leadership operates with an open-door policy. We endeavor to create a sense of teamwork and shared purpose. Our main aim is to use approaches that are critical to retention. Studies have shown that employee remuneration is not the main motivation for retention, however, in engaging our employees at all levels, boots to boardroom, they get are able to contribute to decision making which fosters honesty, integrity, and respect. Each year, we have team building activities that culminate into parties. We celebrate small wins and big wins. In order to promote the principle of collective responsibility within the company, the management introduced an incentive structure to encourage the staff to go above and beyond their tasks.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT CSR ACTIVITIES

We have been proactive in building our community and ensuring that we support the world around us. Through our school support program, we partner with Embu School for the deaf in sponsoring the education of 10 children. Recently, AfriCert donated furniture to the school and our team allocates time to visit and mentor the beneficiaries.

LOCAL HIRE

We have policies in place that mandates us to recruit and hire local talent in all our satellite offices and all our geographical scopes. This is in line with the aim to give all our clients a relatable experience. The same promotes skill transfer and a better understanding of the local culture and business context.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The CB has made tangible progress towards inclusivity by engaging those who are abled differently. We aim to progressively offer fair treatment as well as provide a comfortable work environment for all.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

We pride ourselves in our internationally experienced personnel. Employee turnover is a major concern in the agribusiness industry; particularly for auditors. The Certification Body endeavors to be a employer of choice by ensuring our employees have competitive remuneration, good work-life balance, paid time-off, professional development and training, and health and wellness benefits. We also have a staff welfare team that mobilizes and channels support to employees during bereavement and emergencies. In the coming year, the company shall roll out an attractive Investment Scheme that staff shall take advantage of to acquire assets.

Covid Response

The Impact of the pandemic was huge. Approximately 4.2 million people have succumbed to the virus worldwide. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating; tens of millions of people run the risk of falling into extreme poverty. The pandemic has caused a disruption to the entire food system and has laid bare its fragility. International trade has suffered under the weight of border shutdowns, slowdowns, and disruptions. Farmers who exported their produce hitherto have been left exposed by diminishing market. When lockdown restrictions necessitated our regional teams to suspend face-to-face audits, our team came up with innovative alternatives—and fast. We switched to remote/off-site audits where possible, despite the challenge posed by the fact that many of our clients live in remote areas with limited internet access. The company encouraged observance the Ministry of Health guidelines by providing sanitizers and masks, and scaling-down on passengers ferried in its vehicles. Despite the fact that business was adversely affected by the closure of borders and inter-county movement restrictions, the company made sure all staff members continued to received their salaries. We also advanced leave days to allow employees to support their families. The CB joined the rest of the world in adopting and implementing telecommuting.

What our employees had to say: What gave you hope during the pandemic?

“During the pandemic a lot of negative publicity was circulating in both the press and social platforms. What gave me hope is that despite the stigma many people recovered and the medical fraternity joined forces to manage the affected & infected. This gave me hope. AfriCert also managed to pay us during those dark months despite not doing any audits. For that, I am really grateful”

“I Just maintained a positive attitude that no situation is permanent and all we need is patience and hope that things will definitely get better with time”

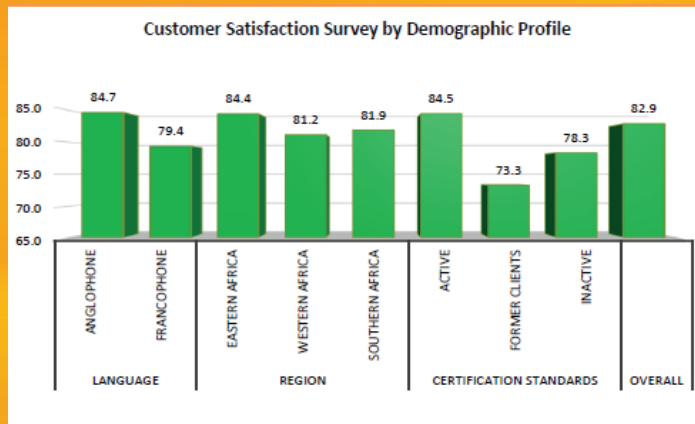
“The only hope I had was God. I had hope that I will survive the pandemic considering millions of people were dying every day.”

“I am eternally grateful to God for keeping our clients, my colleagues and Board members alive and well throughout this pandemic. We have managed to take care of one another and keep the doors open all through. MIRACLES are made of such as this testimony”

“What kept me going is the fact that I was learning something new every day from the challenges to the opportunities and I was enjoying what I was doing. One thing I always believe in is the right attitude makes anything happen”

Customer satisfaction results

Customer satisfaction is a good measure of performance. Through an annual customer survey, we try to gauge our customer's level of satisfaction. We value client feedback and action it accordingly. In 2021, the survey targeted all the AfriCert clients with proportionate sample obtained in Anglophone and Francophone countries and across the African regions where AfriCert operate. Anglophone countries constituted 66.2% while Francophone countries constituted 30.9%. In 2021, the overall customer satisfaction index stood at 82.9%, an indicator that the clients were very satisfied with the services they received from AfriCert. In terms of certification status, Active clients were most satisfied at 84.5% followed by inactive clients at 78.3% while former clients were the least satisfied at 73.3%. Clients in Eastern Africa was most satisfied at 84.4%, as compared to their counterparts in West Africa who registered a 81.2% satisfaction rate.



Customer service week

We took time to honor our customers and staff during the International Customer Service Week. This year, the theme was 'the power of service'. The Certification Body prioritized focus on employees, who continue to give prominence and pride of place to customer satisfaction. Optimization of processes: Our Standard Operating Procedures are designed to incorporate our customer's needs. We measure success through cost efficiency, prompt complain handling, and adhering to quality and temporal objectives. For example, we encourage our customers to do combined audits which result in time and cost savings. In one audit schedule, a client can get multiple certificates.

The future is digital

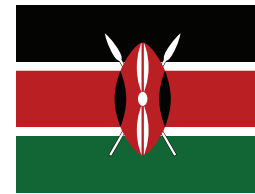
The company aims to ensure that the data collected in the field is accurate and useful. We have therefore introduced tablets as a data collection tool and this will go a long way in enhancing end to end automation of our reporting and archiving systems. The certification process shall be faster as pertinent data will be captured in real time. To centralize data storage and ease decision making, the company is deploying a bespoke CRM tool for resource planning. It shall serve to streamline communication and workflow management.

Environmental Health and safety

AfriCert is committed to protecting human wellbeing as well as the environment. We aim to be a net zero carbon emitting company by 2050. This philosophy will be reflected in all our activities to be sure we remain responsible stewards of the environment and by extension protect the health and well-being of our employees and neighbours. As a first step, we have adopted e-signatures within and without the office, a factor that made ours a paperless office. We also recycle obsolete paper in partnership with Chandaria industries. Conservation: Practice and promote the conservation of nature and the earth's energy resources.



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From Africa to the World