

JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (JICA)

THE SAUDI ARABIAN STANDARDS ORGANIZATION
THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

THE STUDY
ON
THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
OF
THE SAUDI ARABIAN
STANDARDS ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES
FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION

FINAL REPORT
(SUMMARY)

MAY 1998

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JAPAN ELECTRICAL SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT TECHNOLOGY LABORATORIES
FUJI TECHNOSURVEY COMPANY, LIMITED

TOKYO, JAPAN

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Abbreviations

CCI	: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CD	: The Civil Defense
C.P. (c.p.)	: Consumer Protection (consumer protection)
CSO	: The Consumer Support Organization
E/E	: Electrical/Electronic, electrical/electronic
GC	: General Committee
GCC	: Gulf Cooperation Council
GSMO	: Gulf Standardization and Metrology Organization for GCC Countries
GOTEVOT	: The General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training
ICCP	: International Conformity Certification Program
IECEE	: The IEC System for Conformity Testing to Standards for Safety of Electrical Equipment
JET	: Japan Electrical Safety & Environment Technology Laboratories
JICA	: The Japan International Cooperation Agency
FTS	: Fuji Technosurvey Co., Ltd.
MOAW	: The Ministry of Agriculture and Water
MOC	: The Ministry of Commerce
MOE	: The Ministry of Education
MOH	: The Ministry of Health
MOIE	: The Ministry of Industry and Electricity
MOInf.	: The Ministry of Information
MOInt.	: The Ministry of Interior
MOMRA	: The Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs
MOPWH	: The Ministry of Public Works and Housing
Q Mark	: The Quality Mark
SASO	: The Saudi Arabian Standards Organization
SC Mark	: The Standard Conformity Mark
SSA	: Standards of Saudi Arabia
TC	: Technical Committee
The Study	: The Study on the Master Plan for the Development of SASO Activity for Consumer Protection
The Team	: The study team assigned by JICA to conduct the Study
TP	: The Traffic Police



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Chapter 1.

The present situation of consumer protection in Saudi Arabia, its problems and causes



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Chapter 1. The present situation of consumer protection in Saudi Arabia, its problems and causes

The present situation and problems are described from clause 1.1 to 1.11.

The problems in consumer protection and their causes described in Chapter 1 are summarized in Clause 1.12.

1.1. General description of Saudi Arabia from the view point of consumer issues

Geography

Area : Approx. 2,150,000 km² (occupies about 80% of the Arabian peninsula)

Climate : High temperature in the summer time reaches to 50°C sometimes.

Dry especially in the middle part of the country

Small amount of rain falls

The dry weather makes flammable materials to catch fire easily.

Under high temperature and strong sunshine, some materials such as and plastics tend to deteriorate rapidly.

People, Society

Population : Approx. 17 million including about 4 million of expatriate workers

Education/Saudization : The Saudi Arabian government has been putting a special emphasis on education and vocational training in order to replace the expatriates with trained Saudi Arabians

Economy

GDP(1992) : Approx. 445 billion S.A.R.

(Crude oil, natural gas and petroleum refining sector : 37%

Governmental service : 25%, Private sector : 38%)

Governmental expenditure (Estimate in 1995 and 1996) : Approx. 150 billion S.A.R.

(National guard : 33%, Human resources development : 18%)

Export(1994) : Approx. 160 billion S.A.R. (Petroleum and related products : 96.8%)

Import(1994) : Approx. 87 billion S.A.R.

As most of the consumer products are imported from various countries, the Saudi Arabian consumers should have enough knowledge of consumer products to choose the proper products that they want from various kinds of merchandise in the market.

1.2. The legal system relating to consumer protection

Saudi constitution is Islamic law, Shari'a, which is derived from the Holy Qoran. Therefore, the legal system is different from that of other countries.

1.2.1. Current legal system

Comparison of legal system for consumer protection

A suitable legal system is essential for activating the consumer protection system. Especially, it is important to assure product safety, proper indication, and fair trading. Table 1.2.1.-1 shows the comparison of the legal system for consumer protection between Saudi Arabia and other countries.

Table 1.2.1.-1. A comparison of the legal system for C.P. between Saudi Arabia and other countries

Item	U. K.	Germany	U. S. A.	Japan	Saudi Arabia
Assurance of product safety	Consumer Protection Act	Equipment Safety Law	Consumer Product Safety Act	Consumer Product Safety Act Electrical Appliance and Material Control Law	Royal Decree No. M/11 (Law for Combating Commercial Fraud) and SSA
Proper indication	Trade Description Act	Price Tag Law	※ Federal Trade Commission Act	Household Goods Quality Labeling Law	
Assurance of fair competitive market	Fair Trading Act	Dishonest Competition Prohibition Law		Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations	

※: In each state of the U.S., the law to prohibit false and misleading indication is established.

In Saudi Arabia, there do not exist individual laws specified for each purpose such as product safety law. Because, Royal Decree No. M/11 and No. M/10 are prescribed instead and supposed to cover all items regarding consumer protection.

- 1) Royal Decree No.M/11 (dated 22.5. 1404 H) (The Law for Combating Commercial Fraud)

This Royal Decree stipulates, for example, the following items.

- a) Any one who has deceived or commenced to deceive, or had adulterated or commenced to adulterate shall be punished.
- b) A commodity non-conformant to "Prescribed Specifications" issued by SASO shall be deemed to be adulterated or spoilt.

Then all products are required to meet standards determined by SASO or the overseas standards approved by SASO .

2) Royal Decree No.M/10 (dated 3.3.1392 H.) (Constitution of SASO)

Royal Decree No. M/10 is the law to found SASO as the sole organization in Saudi Arabia, authorized to establish the SSA for standardization etc.

1.2.2. Problems in the current legal system

1) Lack of Consumer Protection Fundamental Act

There is no essential law in Saudi Arabia which specifies what role government, enterprises, consumers shall take in achieving consumer protection as in Japan, whose "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act" specifies the roles and duties of the government, manufacturers, and the consumer.

2) Lack of a comprehensive plan for consumer protection

There is no comprehensive plan for consumer protection in Saudi Arabia, and the Royal Decree No. M/10 and 11 do not stipulate that the concerned parties should cooperate. A body like Consumer Protection Council in Japan may be effective in taking nationwide measures. However, such a body is not established yet in Saudi Arabia.

3) Lack of a product safety law

As mentioned above, the legal system to protect consumers is constituted basically with Royal Decree No.M/10 and 11. Therefore, there are no laws for product safety. Royal Decree No. 11 and SSA are not enough to protect the consumer against dangers caused by defective products.

Limitation of mandatory SSA

The standards are only technical specifications and testing methods, and are not suitable to define the obligation to be fulfilled by manufacturers, importers, distributors, consumers and other related parties and to define the contents of controlling. The obligation should be stipulated in laws or regulations.

4) Other legal problems

Besides Consumer Protection Fundamental Act and Product Safety Law, the following laws for specific field are lacking.

- a) Lack of interior wiring law, and weak enforcement of qualification system for interior wiring works

There is no interior wiring law, and fire accidents related to electricity, especially to interior wiring are frequent as described in the Clause 1.10. Though "Qualification Regulation for Electrical and Mechanical Works" was established in 1976, it has not been enforced well.

b) Lack of indication law

In Saudi Arabia, Royal Decree No.M/11 and SSA are considered enough and a separate indication law does not exist. The products without applicable SSA are not controlled.

c) Lack of several laws for each product categories

As for tires, there is not any law or regulation to oblige the consumer to use and maintain tires properly for the sake of traffic safety and to specify the punishment for the offense.

As for textile products, the Civil Defense Law does not specify the inflammability of carpets, curtains nor places where they are used. Besides, in Saudi Arabia, there is no regulation for harmful substances used in textiles, while it is enacted in other countries.

1.3. Function of organizations involved in the consumer protection

The Saudi Arabian organizations involved in the consumer protection administration are assigned with the respective function as described below.

1.3.1. Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Municipality & Rural Affairs

1) Ministry of Commerce (MOC)

MOC plays a central role in the consumer protection administration for almost all the consumer products, and administers the registration system of stores, etc., controls unfair trade and acts as the channel to accept complaints and commercial dispute.

Following are the examples of MOC's activities for consumer protection.

- a) Consumer protection
- b) Foodstuff quality control
- c) Companies and commercial agents' registration
- d) Trademark regulations
- e) Collecting the consumer complaints and commercial dispute, and settle them mostly by arbitration.
- f) Test/inspection regarding food, as their main objective, and on weighing and measuring instrument, jewelry, etc. in its own labs.

2) Ministry of Municipality & Rural Affairs (MOMRA)

MOMRA and the regional municipalities give a food store a license after checking its facilities, carry out monitoring and control of the food processing in cities and villages. They inspect the food shops, restaurants and other premises dealing in food for the check of the hygienic conditions. They also inspect expiry date of food and other key monitoring points periodically. MOMRA has its own laboratory and tests the samples picked up in the market.

1.3.2. Ministry of Interior (Civil Defense, Traffic Police)

1) Civil Defense

The Civil Defense is the organization responsible for fire fighting and takes fire preventive measures, carries out fire extinguishing activities, investigates the causes of fires and takes the countermeasures and perform other related duties.

2) Traffic Police

The Traffic Police are responsible for regulating traffic, taking preventive measures against traffic accident, performing accident investigation and making statistics.

1.3.3. Others

1) Ministry of Industry and Electricity (MOIE)

MOIE executes the system of approval and registration of manufacturing enterprises as one of activities to protect, develop and control the domestic industry.

2) Customs Authority

The Department of Customs belongs to the Ministry of Finance & National Economy, and controls all the materials coming from outside of Saudi Arabia with the help of other ministries and agencies, which pick up samples and check them according to certain procedures and decide to clear or reject them.

3) Ministry of Agriculture and Water (MOAW)

MOAW is responsible for controlling fisheries and animal resources for foodstuff.

4) Ministry of Health (MOH)

MOH is responsible for the health care and hospitals, and controls the medicine coming from outside of Saudi Arabia by checking certification in cooperation with the Customs Authority.

5) Ministry of Education (MOE)

MOE is in charge of elementary, intermediate and secondary schools. It provides fundamental knowledge about consumer life to the pupils of elementary schools and intermediate schools through the curriculum.

On the other hand, university and higher education are under the control of the Ministry of Higher Education, and technical schools such as agricultural, commercial and industrial schools are under the control of the governmental agency, GOTEVOT (the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training).

6) Ministry of Information (MOInf.)

MOInf. controls the television and broadcasting, publication of newspapers and magazines, etc.

7) Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI, non-governmental organization)

CCI is a non-profit organization, which represents the interest of industrial and commercial businesses and aims at protecting and developing them. CCI supports SASO activity with financial aids on the one side, asks SASO to develop new standards on the other.

8) Consumer Support Organization

There is no consumer support organization representing the consumer in Saudi Arabia. It is said that the consumer interests are adequately represented by the related ministries and agencies, but they would not be able to act really for the interests of the consumer.

1.4. Organization, function and facility of SASO

1.4.1. SASO Organization and Its activities

The organization of SASO is shown in *Figure 1.4.1.-1.*

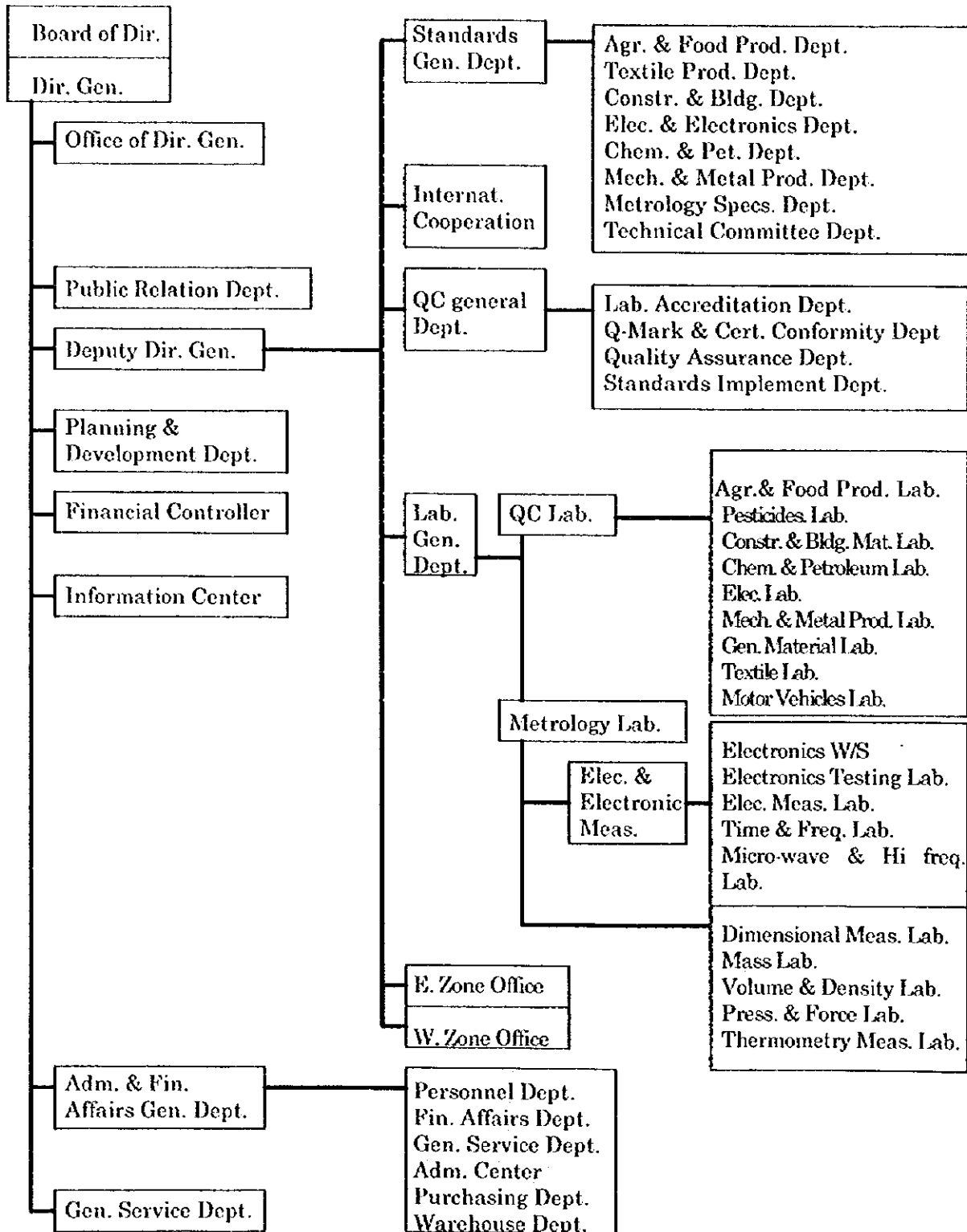


Figure 1.4.1.-1. SASO organization chart

General description of SASO's task

- Standard : Establishing and publishing SSA and tasks related to standards including regional/international standardization
- Certification/Registration/Accreditation : Conformity Certificate System, Quality Mark System, ISO9000 registration & ISO14000 registration(in preparation), Laboratory accreditation, etc.
- Metrology : Tasks as the National Measurement and Calibration Center
- Test/Inspection : Test for drafting standards, Standard conformity test requested by various governmental organizations, manufacturers, etc.

Tasks for each sub-organization/department

1) Board of Directors

The Board of Directors (BOD) is the governing authority of SASO. The BOD consists of the Minister of Commerce as the chairman, the Director General of SASO as the vice chairman and about 10 members from related governmental organizations as well as representatives of the trade & industry sectors.

2) Public Relations Dept.

- a) Releasing and collecting information related to standards, consumer education, etc.
- b) Managing and participating in seminars, training courses and exhibitions
- c) Managing collection of suitable advertisements for "The Consumer".
- d) Serving as secretariat to GSMO

3) Planning & Development Dept.

The department is responsible for preparing five year and annual plan for SASO and training of SASO personnel.

4) Information center

The center collects and keeps information related to SASO activities, and provides them for the concerned parties. The center has a library of standards and related materials and a computerized database as well.

5) Standards General Dept.

The department prepares draft standards according to the annual plans approved by the Board of Directors. It consists of the following sub-departments :

- a) Agricultural & Food Product Dept. : 16 persons
- b) Textile Product Dept. : 5 persons
- c) Construction & Building. Material Dept. : 9 persons
- d) Electrical & Electronic Dept. : 8 persons
- e) Chemical & Petroleum Dept. : 7 persons
- f) Mechanical & Metal Product Dept. : 8 persons
- g) Metrology Specifications. Dept. : 5 persons
- h) Technical Committee Dept. : 15 persons

6) International Cooperation

This organization manages all SASO international technical activities excluding those related to GCC.

Their major activities are technical cooperation with foreign countries, participation in joint commissions with other governmental organizations for international activities, access to WTO and cooperation with international organizations such as ISO, IEC.

7) QC General Dept.

The department is responsible for laying down and application of quality control. It consists of the following four sub-departments.

- a) Laboratory Accreditation Dept. : 1 person
- b) Quality Mark & Certificates of Conformity Dept. : 6 persons
- c) Quality Assurance Dept. : 8 persons (6 for ISO9000, 2 for ISO14000)
- d) Standard Implementation Dept. : 9~10 persons (ICCP implementation)

8) Laboratory General Dept.

The department consists of Quality Control Lab. and Metrology & Calibration Lab. The QC Lab. carries out tests and research to ascertain applicability of draft standards and to check conformity with SSA and tests relating to Q mark systems, etc.

The Metrology and Calibration Lab. keeps the national standards of measurements, verifies the precision of the inspection and measuring instrument.

The QC Laboratory and a portion of E/E Measurement Laboratories are related to the study closely.

- a) Quality Control Laboratory : 92 persons
 - ① Agricul. & Food Prd. Lab. : 19 persons
 - ② Pesticides Lab. : 4persons
 - ③ Constr. & Bldg. Material Lab. : 4persons
 - ④ Chem. & Petroleum Lab. : 17 persons
 - ⑤ Electrical Lab. : 5 persons
 - ⑥ Mechanical & Metal Prod. Lab. : 9 persons
 - ⑦ General Material Lab. : 10 persons
 - ⑧ Textile Lab. : 6 persons
 - ⑨ Motor vehicle Lab. : 6 persons
- b) Metrology & Calibration Lab. : 30 persons
 - ① Electronics Work Shop
 - ② Electronics Testing Lab.
 - ③ Electrical Measurement Lab.
 - ④ Time & Frequency Lab.
 - ⑤ Micro-Wave and Hi Frequency Lab.

} (Electrical & Electronic Measurement Laboratories)

 - ⑥ Dimensional Measurement Lab.
 - ⑦ Mass Lab.
 - ⑧ Volume & Density Lab.

- ⑨ Pressure & Force Lab.
- ⑩ Thermometry Measurement Lab.

9) SASO branches in Jeddah and Damman

They represent SASO and its activity in the Western and the Eastern Region, respectively. They also carry out product inspections of limited product categories.

a) Jeddah Branch : 53 persons

There are a few persons in the electrical and electronic section and carry out mainly frequency checks on the products picked up at the customs.

b) Damman Branch : 40 persons

There is no laboratories in Damman and none of tests are carried out except for the test on used cars.

Problems in overall activities of SASO related to consumer protection

- Closer communication and cooperation among departments in SASO and related external organizations should be intensified for promoting consumer protection activities.
- Certification/Registration/Accreditation and test/inspection activities conducted by SASO will be better to conform with the relevant ISO/IEC guides.
- Systematic career development program for personnel assigned for each task and managers will be better to be enhanced.
- The number of tests carried out regarding the samples from market surveillances is rather small.

1.4.2. Facilities and activities for testing electric/electronic products, tires and textile products

1) Electric/electronic products

Most of the tests are carried out in the Electrical Laboratory and it tested 3,332 samples in 1996. Their rough number of distribution were 40% for customs clearance, 30% for the follow-up test of Q-mark certified factories (follow-up inspection was conducted twice a year), 10% for the governmental organizations and 20% for local industries. The radio frequency check is carried out in the Electronics Testing Laboratory.

The laboratories have testing equipment enough for conducting fundamental tests, but most of them were installed about ten years ago. All tests required by SSA and also some special tests to check safety and durability of products can not be carried out due to the restrictions of test equipment and skills.

2) Tires

The tests of tires are carried in the General Material Laboratory. The number of tests for tires carried out in a year is about 350 and tire samples are mostly sent

Equipment and skills for testing are insufficient. At present, the test items are limited to only tensile strength and elongation on rubber sheet samples taken from the side tread of tires. In addition to test items, the method of making specimens from tires is inadequate.

3) Textile products

The tests are carried out in the textile Laboratory and it tested 824 samples in 1996. Their rough number of distribution was 50% for the follow-up test of Q-mark certified factories, 10% for the customs, 20% for the governmental organizations and 20% for local industries. Most of the samples are tested for their flammability, color fastness, abrasion resistance and fiber composition.

The laboratory has enough equipment and test skills to carry out the above mentioned tests. Tests for harmful substances causing skin trouble such as formaldehyde is not carried out, because relevant SSA has not been established yet.

1.5. Standards

1.5.1. General

SASO establishes and revises Standards of Saudi Arabia as the sole standardization organization in Saudi Arabia based on the Royal Decree No.M/10.

The number of SSA and harmonization

SASO has already published 1323 SSA in 1418H/1997G. 125 SSA are harmonized with ISO standards and 26 SSA with IEC standards. And also 658 SSA are harmonized with Gulf standards. Most of SSA are mandatory unless especially specified in each SSA as voluntary. According to the lists, 176 SSA for electrical/electronic products, eight SSA for tires and 73 SSA for textiles have been already published.

Demand of SSA

SASO has been requested to publish SSA more and more in response to the current technology from the ministries, manufacturers etc. SASO can not catch up with the demand all once because of putting many kinds of products in the market.

1) Procedures of establishing and revising SSA

The Standards General Department of SASO is responsible for establishing and revising SSA.

SASO establishes and implements procedure for drafting SSA. SASO opens an opportunity to people of the national industries, tradesmen, importers, and to governmental authorities, research academic institutions and consumers to serve on committees. However, as no consumer organization is now existing, the government authorities are actually acting as representatives of the consumers. SASO personnel of the Standards Departments present General Committees and Technical Committees, but no testing personnel of the laboratories participate in them. In general, SSA are reviewed every five years.

2) The organization structure for the establishment of SSA

Flowchart for establishing and revising SSA is shown in *Figure 1.5.1.-1*.

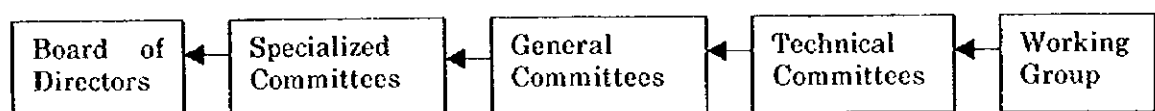


Figure 1.5.1.-1. Organization structure for establishing and revising SSA.

Draft SSA are prepared by the technical committees and authorized by the board of directors after review by the general committees and specialized committees in order.

1.5.2. Electrical and Electronic Products

There are a General Committee and seven Technical Committees for every type of product category. There are 176 SSA for electrical/electronic products. Only 38 SSA among them are related to consumer products and cover 19 kinds of consumer products. 38 SSA is too small in comparison with kinds of consumer products.

Problems

- The small number of SSA related to consumer products, which have been published, compared with the demands of its people
- No SSA for mains configuration adapters and extension cord set (many accidents occurred in the market)
- Not so many SSA harmonized with the IEC standards yet
- Revision of SSA every five years

Cause

- The lack of technical experts

1.5.3. Tires

Tires are dealt with as a part of mechanical and metal products. However, there is no TC for tires. The SASO staff members prepare the draft SSA for tires referring to the relevant international standards (ISO) or other national standards. There are eight SSA for tires for passenger car, trucks and buses.

Problem

- No requirement for methods of tire's storing
- No requirement for prohibition of retread tires for passenger cars and the limitation for trucks and buses (some countries do not allow the use of retread tires for passenger cars and for the front position of trucks and buses for the reliability.)
- No SSA for tire's maintenance by drivers

Cause

- Lack of statistical data on traffic accidents caused by tires and information of market situation
for necessary action for improvements in the standards:

1.5.4. Textile Products

There are a GC and a TC. SSA for textiles are established referring to the international standards (ISO) and some national standards in other countries. There are 73 SSA for textiles.

Problem

- No SSA for safety of harmful substance, toxic gas and static electricity
- No SSA for garments and spring mattresses (durability)
- Insufficient indication methods for Woven silk fabrics (SSA689/1994 "Woven silk fabric")
- Shortage of some items for the color fastness testing

Causes

- Shortage of textile experts
- Shortage of information regarding market needs
- No sewing specifications
- No reference standards in other countries (traditional wear)

1.6. Inspection/testing system

Products intended to be put on the market are controlled by regulatory authorities in cooperation with SASO according to the regulations to ensure their safety and quality for consumer protection. The present "Inspection/testing system" including the market surveillance is shown in *Figure 1.6.-1*.

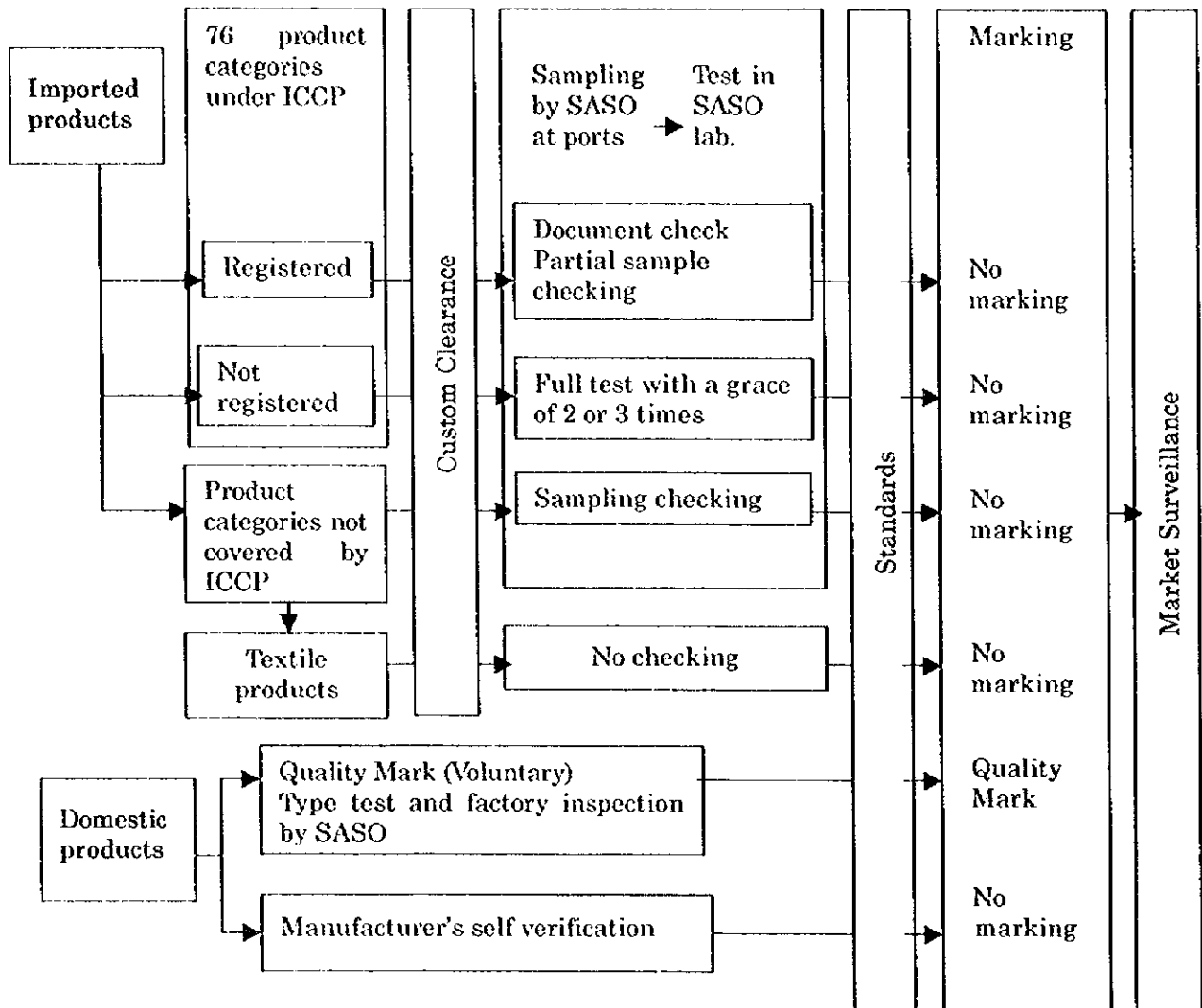


Figure 1.6.-1. Inspection/testing system.

The inspection/testing system includes ICCP, the random inspection at customs clearance for imported products on the regulatory basis, and the Quality Mark system for domestic products and imported products on the voluntary basis. Also the market surveillance to check the conformity of the products is included in the inspection/testing system.

1.6.1. Inspection of imported products

Imported products are picked up and inspected to ascertain safety and quality according to the regulations of MOC, MOAW and MOInf, etc. at ports.

1) Outline of inspection/testing system

a) Products registered under ICCP

The products are picked up from every lot at random to:

- identify the design of the originally registered products
- check frequency ranges of receiving apparatuses by measurement
- check the application documents including for the country of origin, and the certificate of conformity

b) Products not covered under ICCP

The products are also picked up in the same manner for:

- checking the country of origin
- checking the application documents including the certificates of export admission issued by the embassy of Saudi Arabia in the exporting country of the products
- testing in relevant laboratories including SASO, where the products are doubtful to comply with relevant standards

2) Territory of each regulatory authority (Ministry)

Each authority is responsible for controlling products allocated as shown in *Table 1.6.1.-1.*

Table 1.6.1.-1. Regulatory authorities and their controlled products

Ministry	Territory
MOC	All products including cosmetics, jewelry, chemicals for general use except regulated by other authorities as mentioned below in this table
MOAW	Livestock, fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, plants and the like
MOH	Water, fresh food, medicine, radiation materials, nuclear medicine and the like
MOInt.	Prohibitive items such as drugs, guns, radiation material, nuclear medicine
MOInf.	Information material such as magazines, CD cassettes
MOIE	Chemical products for industrial use

Problems

- Many fraudulent imported products
- Only a check of the county of origin and appearance by visual inspection

Causes

- Incomplete inspection/testing system
- Insufficient charge of penalties for improper importers

1.6.2. Inspection of domestic products

There is a licensing system for the registration of domestic manufacturers at the beginning of production, which is controlled by the MOIE. The system includes a check on production ability. SASO contributes to the check on the production ability from the technical aspects that are concerned with applicable standards, manufacturing and testing facilities, etc. There is a committee consisting of representatives of the MOIE, the MOC and SASO for supervision of the factories after granting the license. The committee plans to visit factories of mostly foodstuff, except ones with the Quality Mark Certification, for inspection of the quality system, manufacturing/testing facilities, etc. and takes the samples for testing at SASO.

Problems

- Shortage of SSA to be applied
- A very few follow-up inspection after granting the license except for foodstuffs
- No scheme for regular inspection in the licensing system

Cause

- No mandatory system similar to International Conformity Certification Program

1.6.3. Inspection in the market

There are plenty of fraudulent products in the markets. The MOC is responsible for market surveillance. Local municipalities primarily carry out very often the surveillance for foodstuff. The MOC carries out the market surveillance for products other than foodstuff, but not so often. The MOC had requested SASO to test fire extinguishers, water storage heaters and room heaters selected from the market in response to complaints. However, the SASO has never conducted testing of the tires and textiles during the market surveillance performed by the MOC.

Problem

- A flood of fraudulent products in the market

Cause

- Insufficient market surveillance except for foodstuff

1.7. Certification / Registration/Accreditation system

SASO uses "Quality Mark" system and ICCP for products to be put on the market in Saudi Arabia, "ISO9000 Registration" and "Laboratory Accreditation" in addition to publication of SSA.

1.7.1. Quality Mark system

1) Legal status

The system is voluntary. The manufacturers who obtain the Quality Mark can indicate it on their products.

2) Scope of the system

The Quality Mark is applies to all kinds of products provided that the SSA are applicable.

3) Procedure

The Quality Mark system consists of Pre-License Inspection, Sample Test and Periodic Surprise Inspection. The Periodic Surprise Inspections are conducted three times a year for foodstuff and twice a year for other products.

4) Statistics on the Quality Mark

The Mark has been granted to 110 companies, and 98 companies are still holding the Mark. They include 16 electrical companies and two of textiles, but none of tires.

Problem

- The small number of company who have obtain the Quality Mark.

Causes

- The Quality Mark not so popular with the public.
- Medium- and small size companies not have inspection/testing facilities.
- Shortage of SSA.

1.7.2 . ISO 9000 Registration system

1) Legal Status

SASO established the Quality System Registration System based on ISO 9000 series in 1994.

2) Scope of Registration

SASO can offer registration service to Food products, Textiles and textile products, petroleum products, Chemicals, chemical products, Electrical equipment, Manufacturing not elsewhere classified, Construction and Wholesale and retail trade.

3) Procedure

The procedure is specified in "REGISTRATIONS FOR THE QUALITY SYSTEMS." The Registration is valid for three years from the date of issue. The Surveillance Audit is conducted twice per year at minimum.

4) Statistics of the registration

The registration has been granted 12 companies including those of lubricating oil, scaffolding, chemicals and luminaires.

Problem

- The small number of company registered

Cause

- No Accreditation System established at national or regional level of the Gulf countries

1.7.3. Laboratory Accreditation system

1) Legal status

The laboratory Accreditation System is voluntary. The system would be effective in implementing the law of prohibiting of inferior products issued based on Royal Decree No. M/11 (1404(H)-5-29).

2) Scope of Accreditation

The accreditation scheme applies to both of domestic and foreign laboratories. Any laboratory as a part of factory cannot obtain the accreditation unless it is licensed according to the regulation as an independent organization.

3) Procedure

The procedure for the accreditation is based on ISO/IEC Guide 25 (General requirements for the competence of calibration and testing laboratories).

4) Statistics on accredited laboratories

According to the "List of Accredited National Laboratories," 10 laboratories, one of them being at a university and remaining nine being private companies, are accredited. The list includes four calibrations and six testing laboratories including of telephone sets. However, the list does not include testing laboratories of tires and textiles.

1.7.4. Other activities

SASO contributes to the followings:

- Test for export products according to the standards of exporting countries.
- Test for domestic products to check the conformity with SSA.
- Tests as a part of the market surveillance.
- Other tests on request.

1.8. Domestic manufacturing industries and product import

1.8.1. Industrial development and import policies

1) Industrial development policy

The overall objective of Saudi Arabia is to transform the economy from overwhelming dependence on the export of crude oil into a diversified industrial economy. The governmental policies on the non-oil manufacturing sector development are as follows :

- a) Increasing the manufacturing capacity to produce at a competitive cost a wide range of products for both the domestic and export market.
- b) Widening the country's access to modern technology.
- c) Providing domestic manufacturers and foreign investors with many incentives so as to encourage them to promote domestic production.
- d) Reducing the dependency on expatriate workers by the creation of technical skills of the Saudi Arabian people.

As a result of the above-mentioned governmental policies and its execution, the number of domestic manufacturers has been increasing at a rate of about 10% annually.

Role of MOIE and SASO to promote the governmental policies on the non-oil manufacturing sector

MOIE is the main ministry to promote the above-mentioned governmental policies. SASO supports domestic manufacturers especially regarding product quality by establishing standards, quality assessment using the Q-Mark system, product testing, etc.

2) Import policy

Excluding a few exceptions, Saudi Arabia has adopted a liberal trade policy and various items are imported from various countries.

All goods imported and sold in Saudi Arabia must conform with SSA. Quality control of imported goods are conducted in various ways including ICCP procedures. Their details are described in **Clause 1.6.1.** in this chapter.

Table 1.8.1.1 shows major commodity imports in millions of S.A.R. The total money amount of 105 billion S.A.R. in the table is more than 4 times larger than the Saudi Arabian GDP in the non-oil private manufacturing sector which is about 24 billion S.A.R. in 1994 (Source : ARC Report 1997). These figures show the country's dependence on imports.

Table 1.8.1-1. Major commodity imports in 1995 (Source : Import Statistics 1995)

Commodity	million S.A.R.
Foodstuffs	17,171
Textile & Clothes	7,913
Medicine	2,813
Chemical Products	9,551
Wood & Wood products	1,592
Jewelry	4,237
Base Metals & Metal Articles	10,857
Electrical Machines, equipment & tools	23,020
Cars & Spare parts	6,294
Other transportation means/equipment	8,293
Others	12,861
Total	105,187

1.8.2. Domestic manufacturing industries

Increase in domestic manufacturers

Table 1.8.2-1 shows the increase in the number of productive domestic factories. There were 2,234 productive factories including 338 joint companies with foreign investors in 1993 and, in 1997, the total number of productive factories is said to have reached about 2,500. However, the statistics of the total domestic production amount by manufacturing industry and their market share have not yet clarified..

Table 1.8.2-1. The number of productive domestic manufacturers
(Source : Ind. statistics bulletin 1995 MOIE)

	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993
Domestic manufactures	1,416	1,600	1,818	2,025	2,234

Their distribution regarding each product category is shown in Figure 1.8.2-1.

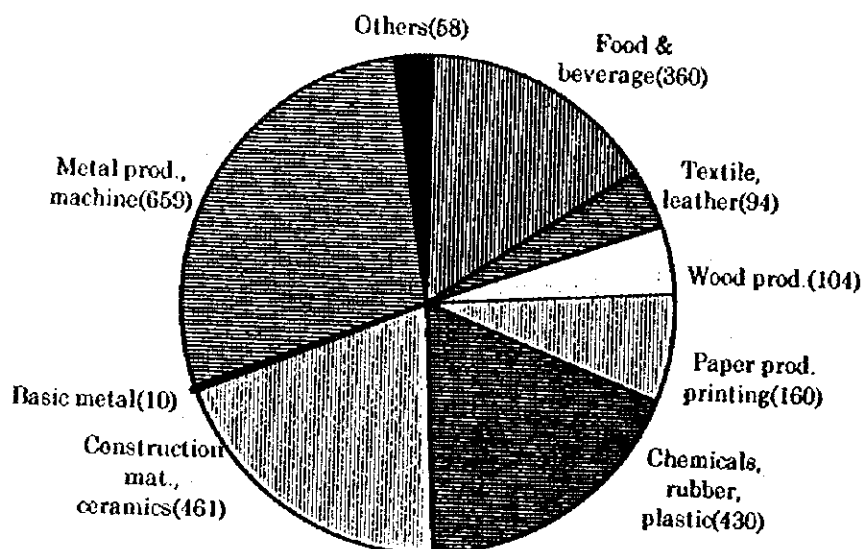


Figure 1.8.2-1. Distribution of productive licensed manufacturers in 1995 (MOIE)

The current situation of domestic production regarding product groups for the in-depth study is as follows :

Electric/Electronic product manufacturers

The electric/electronic product manufacturers are included in the metal product & machine group in this figure. Saudi Arabia concentrates its domestic manufacturing of electric/electronic products on certain product categories. Among approximately 100 manufacturers of electric/electronic products, there are more than ten manufacturers in each product group of water heaters/coolers, air conditioners/desert coolers, refrigerators, electrical switch boards, lighting fixtures (including road illumination) as well as pumps. All these products seem to have a big domestic market demand including governmental purchases. The market share of domestic air-conditioners has reached 70 to 80% of the total.

Tire manufacturers

Tire manufacturers are included in the chemicals, rubber & plastic group in this figure. There are only three retread tire manufacturers for trucks/buses and all the new tires are imported and most of the market demand for tires is supplied by imports.

Textile product manufacturers

The textile products manufacturers are included in the textile & leather group in this figure. There are about 26 manufacturers of apparel, three for tents, one for curtains and four for carpets/rugs.

Findings on domestic manufacturing from factory visits and the relating information

During the Study, the Team visited two air-conditioner manufacturers (joint companies with famous foreign manufacturers), a big uniform manufacturer, large and medium-size two lighting fixtures manufacturers, a retread tire manufacturer and a tent manufacturer.

Findings from the visits and additional information from various sources are summarized as follows :

1) Quality control of products

Quality control of domestic products both in the factories and in the market is important for better consumer protection. The big manufacturer has enough facilities for quality control of their products. On the contrary, the middle and small size manufacturers do not have enough testing facilities.

2) Certification of product quality

The products distributed in the Saudi Arabian market should conform with SSA, but, at the present moment, among the 2,500 productive domestic manufacturers, products of only 98 companies are guaranteed for their standard conformity officially by SASO adopting the Q-mark system.

3) Distribution of inferior materials and parts

The good manufacturers suffer greatly from the unfair competition. The domestic manufacturers use many imported materials and parts. Among those imports, alleged fake and inferior electric/electronic parts are very common. Some electric appliances manufacturers using these materials and parts sell their products at cheaper prices.

1.8.3. Product import

Excluding a few items such as petroleum, petrochemical products, cement, etc., Saudi Arabia depends on imports for necessary productive and consumer goods. Securing the amount and quality of the imports is a major administrative subject for the government.

Due to the Saudi Arabian liberal import policies, many kinds of goods are imported from various countries. Various products, from high grade and famous brands to popular and cheap products come from various countries.

Many products which do not fit Saudi Arabian environment or standards, and some products which are low in quality or are fakes or imitations are found among the various imported products.

1.9. Market, distribution

Findings based on the market survey in the first and second field works are summarized as follows.

1) The distribution routes of goods in the market for non-governmental use are as follows :

- a) Importer → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer
- b) Importer & wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer
- c) Importer, wholesaler & retailer → Consumer
- d) Manufacturer → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer
- e) Manufacturer & wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer

Route b) is likely to be the most common for imported products.

Most of the enterprises engaged in the distribution business are individual or family owned ones. The number of retail shops is increasing and competition among them is becoming very severe.

2) Consumer's behavior regarding the product purchase

When purchasing products, most consumers are likely to be only conscious about the price and the country of origin as an indication of their quality. They seldom ask sales clerks about actual quality, usage/maintenance and guarantee. Usually, names of importers and inspection procedures of products are not clear for consumers because of no such markings. Only some domestic products that have been granted Q mark have the identification marking.

3) Findings regarding electric/electronic products

- a) Many products with inferior quality which do not conform to the relevant standards and with fake or misleading indication are being sold.
- b) There are many cases in which the plug of an appliance does not comply with the configuration requirements of the relevant SSA. As a result, many types of adapters are being circulated in the market. The safety of the adapters is in question because SSA is not published for the configuration adapters.

- c) Some products with supply voltage selection switches and with plugs which do not conform to standards may lead to misuse of supply voltages. And also some appliances are designed for rated voltages of other than 127V or 220V.
- d) Many manuals for imported products are written in English not in Arabic.
- e) Domestic products are increasing especially for products having a big domestic and GCC market such as air-conditioners, refrigerators, etc.
- f) Big importers for famous brands have a well arranged service network. However, the ability of repair technician in small shops is said to be not enough.
- g) Fair importers are suffering losses from fakes and imitations and also from products imported by some small importers who can sell at cheaper prices without any investment regarding after-sale service .

4) Findings on tires

- a) Most of the tires sold in retail shops are new imported tires. Domestic retread tires are sold mostly for truck transportation companies from retread tire manufacturers on a contract basis.
- b) Big importers for famous brands prepare education material for proper use of tires, provide after-sale service and provide training for big users.
- c) At the time of purchase, most consumers are likely to be only interested in the price presumably because of lack of knowledge about importance of tires for traffic safety.
- d) Most of the imported tires have no manuals in Arabic.

5) Findings on textile products

- a) Many garments with wrong indication regarding fiber composition, with improper labeling and no labeling regarding care method are becoming common place even in high-class shopping centers.
- b) Only a few companies have quality control facilities.
- c) At the time of purchase, most consumers do not ask for the care method. The country of origin is the determining factor to evaluate product quality.
- d) For general types of tents, flame retardant fabrics are mostly not much used according to a market survey in a tent souk in Riyadh.
- e) The fiber composition and the country of origin are not indicated on some of the fabric rolls or bolts.
- f) One garments shopping center in Riyadh handles only well quality controlled garments and gives each customer a card stating a guarantee to exchange defective products or any product if within three days of purchase. This tendency seems to be favorable for consumer protection.

1.10. Information about consumer injuries, damage and complaints in Saudi Arabia and the information processing system

As electric/electronic products, tires and textile products are the product groups for the in-depth study, the Team studied the subject in the following four fields.

- 1) Fire accidents especially caused by troubles in electricity and related to flame retardant ability of textile products such as tents, curtains and carpets.
The main source of information : The Civil Defense (CD)
- 2) Traffic accidents especially caused by troubles with tires
The main source of information : The Traffic Police (TP)
- 3) Consumer complaints due to inferior and unsafe products and unfair trade
The main source of information : The Ministry of Commerce (MOC)
- 4) Actual market study (Market visiting survey and tests for samples purchased in the market by the Team members and SASO staff mainly in Riyadh)

1.10.1. Fire accidents

Statistics

Fire accidents in Saudi Arabia has been increasing from 14,063 fires in 1990 (1411H) to 16,675 fires in 1994 (1415H). Among the number of fires in 1994, fires in houses (3,624 fires, 22% of total), fires in tents (648, 4%), fires in electrical cabinets and wires (950, 6%) and fires in vehicles and motorcycles (2,711, 16%) are closely related to consumer injuries and damage. (Source : Statistical Yearbook 1995).

Electrically caused fires

The statistics reveals that fires due to electricity cause occupies a big portion. According to the Safety and Fire Protection Dept. in the Civil Defense, more than half of house fires are caused by electrical problems.

Flammable textiles

For fires in tents, the flame retardant ability of tent fabrics is very important. Taking dry climate in most part of Saudi Arabia into consideration, quality and proper use of fire retardant fabrics are of great importance to this country.

Bad interior wiring

Major cause of fires in electrical cabinets and wires is improper wiring practice such as mismatching between wire size and protection breakers, loose connections etc. As internal wiring in private houses is not controlled in Saudi Arabia, improper wiring is very common through out the country.

Causal analysis and a database

The occurrence and information about each fire is stored in a computer in CD. The general statistics about fire accidents are announced in the Statistical Yearbook. But causes of fires are not investigated closely.

1.10.2. Traffic accidents caused by fires

Statistics

Traffic accidents in Saudi Arabia has been increasing from 122,140 in 1994 to 176,000 in 1995. The statistics for 1993 shows that 70% of traffic accidents occurred due to speeding, non-compliance with traffic rules and bad overtaking. About 3,000 people died and 30,000 injured in the traffic accidents in 1995. About 60% of cars involved in traffic accidents are passenger cars.

Importance of car traffic and tires in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, cars are indispensable for every day life. Every man, sometimes a boy under age of 18, must drive a car daily. So it is a very important issue how to prevent and reduce car accidents.

Traffic accidents caused by tires

At the present moment, the number of traffic accidents caused by tires is not disclosed to the Team, but the burst of tires is related definitely to many traffic accidents in Saudi Arabia. Newspapers in July 1997 reported two traffic accidents caused by tire burst. A causal flow diagram of car accidents caused by tires is shown in *Figure 1.10.2-1*.

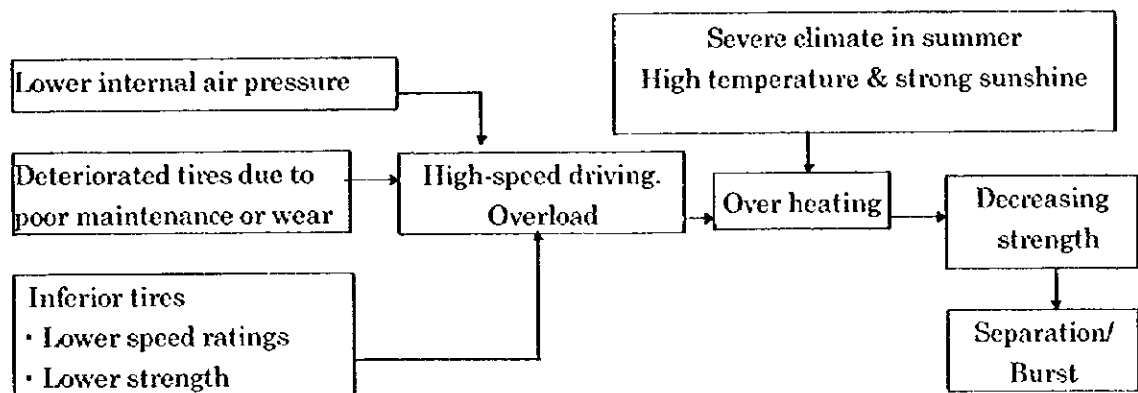


Figure 1.10.2-1. Causal flow diagram of tire burst.

As for tires, the situation in Saudi Arabia is as follows:

- 1) Consumers are apt to buy cheap tires with lower speed ratings.
- 2) Usage and maintenance of tires are improper (High-speed driving with lower internal air pressure, no position change, etc.)
- 3) High temperature and strong direct sunlight deteriorates the rubber of tires.

The Traffic Police and many knowledgeable people suggest that many tire bursts are related to car accidents. By the explanation from engineers in SASO, about 90% of traffic accidents are caused by the bad manners of the drivers, and major troubles are separation/burst of tires used at low air pressure and high-speed driving by the drivers. Among the traffic accidents in a year, about 4,500 cases of cars rolling over were reported. This fact also suggests that many tire troubles are related to traffic accidents because cars rolling over is a typical phenomena caused by tire burst.

From the overall consideration described above, major objective for consumer protection is to prevent separation/burst of tires. A specialist for tires said that the car accidents could be reduced by about half if tire burst could be prevented. In order to prevent the tire troubles, a proper selection and proper use/maintenance of tires are of greater importance than in other countries because Saudi Arabian natural and social environment requires more careful use of tires.

Retread tires

Retread tires may cause more trouble than new tires. Use of retread tires for passenger cars is seldom at the present moment in Saudi Arabia because of the following reasons:

- Import of retread tires is small in number.
- Saudi Arabia has three retread tire manufacturers only for trucks/buses.

However, in 1997, a SSA was established for retread tires in which the specifications of retread tires for passenger cars was included. In the near future, use of retread tires might become more common for passenger cars. This issue should be handled with great care.

Causal analysis and a database

The traffic police are analyzing the causes and other elements for each accident through the use of computers. But causal analysis for car parts, which induces accidents such as bursts of tires is not being carried out.

1.10.3. Consumer complaints filed in the Ministry of Commerce

Activities of MOC

A lot of consumer complaints and commercial disputes have been brought to the Ministry of Commerce under administration of the Deputy Minister of Commerce for Supply. Most of the complaints and disputes are settled by arbitration. Sometimes, illegal enterprises are confiscated with their illegal products, ordered to make compensation, fined, with their names being put in a newspaper and jailed.

A database regarding the complaints and commercial disputes

The record of each complaint and dispute is not stored in computers nor analyzed statistically. Such an information system is still in the planning stage.

Examples of consumer complaints

The ministry provided typical examples of consumer complaints regarding each product field of the in-depth study. They are summarized as follows :

1) Electric/Electronic products

- a) Inferior plugs and receptacles with extension code cause fires.
- b) Wires with a smaller diameter than the specifications are being used for internal wiring.
- c) Product's life is too short for radios of low quality.

2) Tires

- a) Deterioration of tires after a long period of parking due to the hot condition in Saudi Arabia and one point loading on the tires.
- b) Life of tires is shorter than the guaranteed period.
- c) Troubles due to improper storage
- d) Use of tires that should be used for agricultural vehicles to passenger cars because the retailer is cheating

3) Textile products

- a) Color change after washing
- b) A care method for special washing is not indicated.
- c) Fabrics with indication of 100% silk are proved to be not made of silk.
- d) Yarn slippage in garments
- e) Fake indications on the country of origin some of which are labeled in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the above information, the ministry submitted a material which shows typical problems and complaints about electric/electronic appliances and ministry's suggested solutions to the Team. Though the information from MOC is not statistically analyzed, it supports the findings on electric/electronic products by the Team regarding consumer accidents and complaints in Saudi Arabia

1.10.4. Findings on electric and electronic products from market survey and test of samples purchased in the market

1) False and misleading indication

Many products in the market have an improper label leading to misunderstanding of country origin and brand, and some products have their trademarks, color and external view completely or partially similar to original ones. The victims by false labeling and cheap, inferior-quality products are not only consumers but also conscientious local manufacturers.

2) Warranty

Almost all the low-price products in a small shop have no warranty and the shop does not guarantee them. Customers buy those products with their knowledge.

3) Instruction manuals

Many instruction manuals attached to the test samples are not written in Arabic but in English. SSA specifies instruction manuals should be written in Arabic.

4) Wrong use of voltage between 127V and 220V

- The Questionnaire to the SASO staff (Questionnaire) shows that 42% of persons questioned have experienced wrong use of voltage, which is not exceptional trouble but a common practice.
- If the wrong use of voltage were corrected, the number of troubles and complaints related to household appliances would decrease to half.
- Wrong use of voltage has close relationship with the dual voltage system and its connecting apparatus described below, together with consumers' mistake.

5) Dual voltage system and its connecting apparatus

The questionnaire shows that many outlets used in the housing and plugs attached to the products do not comply with SSA. Various kinds of configuration adapters are circulated in the market, which may result in the wrong use of voltage between 127V and 220V. Many products cannot directly be connected to the outlets.

6) Bad interior wiring

According to the article of "The Consumer" and Civil Defense, troubles and fires are often caused by bad interior wiring.

7) Troubles and complaints resulting from wrong use of home appliances

- Wrong application of power supply voltage caused the burn of motors.
- Not changing a dust bag of vacuum cleaner caused the burn of motors.
- Loose connection of plugs caused sparking and high current.

1.10.5. Findings on tires from market survey and test of samples purchased in the market.

According to market survey and test of samples purchased in the market, the major causes of tire troubles are improper usage of tires and insufficient education for consumers about tires.

1) Quality of tires

a) New tires

The new tires are all imported and inspected under ICCP. Most of the new tires sold in the market conform with the relevant SSA. The two tire samples from the market were tested in SASO laboratory and proved to conform basically with SSA.

b) Retread tires

At the moment, the use of retread tires is limited in Saudi Arabia. The amount of import is very small and there are only three productive retread tire manufacturers mainly for trucks and buses.

The retread tires should be used with special care in Saudi Arabia, as the quality assurance of retread tires has many difficulties and many countries set some limitation on their use. In 1997, SSA for retread tires is established. In near future, Retread tires for passenger cars, buses and trucks can be imported and manufactured more freely based on the new SSA.

c) Used tires

Though not many used tires are sold in the market, they are not preferable from the view point of safe drive.

2) Consumer education

a) Labeling and instruction manuals

Tires are sold without any instruction manuals(cards) in Arabic. The record of production and the characteristics are printed on the side wall of the tires. But the numbers and symbols on the side wall are difficult for users to understand.

b) Proper maintenance and use of tires

Most of the owner drivers of passenger cars do not much care about proper use and maintenance of tires in the following points.

- ① Air pressure is lower than the specified value
- ② No mounting position change of tires
- ③ No check of remaining groove depth of tires

c) Education

Retailers do not give necessary information to their customers. Many customers do not have sufficient knowledge of tires.

3) Retail of tires

a) Storage in retail shop

SSA specifies requirements for tire storage, but many retailers do not follow the SSA and the SSA do not prohibit piling up of excess number of tires in storing.

b) Sales of used tires

The import of used tires is not allowed now, but their sales are not prohibited.

4) The problems of tire test in the SASO laboratory

Increase of the test items and strengthening of facilities and skills in SASO laboratory for tire test are necessary.

1.10.6. Findings on textile products from market survey and test of samples in the market

The problems found in the market survey and at the sample test are introduced below.

1) Unfair indication and Improper labeling

Many kinds of textile products are distributed with unfair indication, misleading representations and improper labeling, including imitation and sham. So called 100% silk Ebaya purchased for a sample test turned out 100% polyester, and five kinds of silk fabrics purchased also showed the same composition.

2) Quality control

- Most enterprises do not perform quality control. They receive complaints from consumers about color change and shrinkage after washing.
- The results of shrinkage and color fastness tests of 100% cotton men's under wear failed to meet the SSA.

3) Safety

a) Skin trouble

There are no laws or standard for controlling the use of harmful substances causing skin trouble. There are no standards for baby's suits and under wears against harmful substances.

b) Flame retardant ability

- The Civil Defense Law covers flame retardant ability only for tents, but not for curtains and carpets. SASO only test those products at request. It will be necessary to establish a legal system and perform the control properly.
- The standard (SSA645/1994) is established in Saudi Arabia for the flame retardant ability of tents. The test of tents has been strengthened based on the experience of the tent fire in 1997 in Mecca. However, the quality confirmation of all tents distributed is not implemented completely.

1.11. Consumer education and qualification system

1) School education

a) Consumer education (General)

MOE provides fundamental knowledge about consumer life to the pupils in elementary schools and intermediate schools.

b) Consumer education for electric and electronic products

Electricity-related dangers are well taught in the schools, but additional knowledge such as how to use electric household appliances is necessary. Therefore, more consumer information is needed.

c) Consumer education for tires

Consumer education for tires is not conducted in the schools. However, considering that there are many traffic accidents caused by tires and that all Saudi Arabian males have to drive cars for their daily life, the consumer education for tire usage is necessary in the high schools.

d) Consumer education for textile products

For women, basic education for clothes is taught in the schools.

2) Consumer education by governmental organizations

a) Consumer education in the Traffic Police and the Civil Defense

The Traffic Police and Civil Defense prepare various kinds of materials and conduct education and various safety movements intensively. For more effective consumer education, it is desirable that cooperation among related organizations including SASO, comprehensive usage of media such as TV, newspapers, magazines, etc. and comprehensive measures such as setting or revising related standards, accreditation, surveillance or control on the spot will be necessary.

b) Consumer education in SASO

SASO is very active in their public relations and consumer education through news release to newspapers, exhibitions/seminars and TV programs.

GSMO publishes 12,000 copies of a quarterly magazine "The Consumer" for consumer education and protection. But the number is rather small. SASO intends to make the magazine more popular and useful for the consumer.

c) Consumer education in consumer support organization

There is no consumer support organization representing the consumer and conducting consumer education in Saudi Arabia.

3) Qualification system

Vocational training for auto-mechanics, electricity, construction, etc. is conducted under the control of GOTEVOT. But, the qualification system for electric interior wiring works has not been enforced well in Saudi Arabia.

1.12. Summing-up of the problems and their causes described in Chapter 1 and major issues regarding each product group

The problems and causes in this chapter are summarized in Clause 1.12.1. and major issues regarding each product group for the in-depth study are listed in Clause 1.12.2.

1.12.1. Summing-up of the problems and their causes described in Chapter 1

The problems and their causes are listed in *Table 1.12.1-1* in the following pages.

1.12.2. Major issues in each product group for in-depth study

The problems regarding each product group and causes for them are listed in *Table 1.12.2-1* for electric/electronic products, in *Table 1.12.2-2* for tires and in *Table 1.12.2-3* for textile products in the pages following *Table 1.12.1-1*.

Table 1.12.1.1. Problems and their causes described in Chapter 1

Problems	Causes
<p>1. Total consumer protection scheme and the related legal system</p> <p>1) Lack of fundamental laws which protect the consumer safety</p> <p>2) Lack of country-wide policies for consumer protection and guidance for cooperative implementation among the related governmental organizations.</p> <p>3) Safety of products is not fully guaranteed under the current legal system.</p> <p>4) Standards and regulations for implementing proper interior wiring are on the way of completion as an effective enforcing system.</p>	<p>At the present moment, the concept is thought to be included in M.I.I.</p> <p>Lack of Consumer Protection Fundamental Act makes responsibility of government, companies and consumers unclear and unconscious for them. There is no central body to administrates all related governmental organizations.</p> <p>Only conformity with the relevant SSA is mandatory.</p> <p>Enforcement of the relevant SSA is insufficient and the current regulations are not complete</p>
<p>2. Information system on consumer injuries, damage and complaints</p> <p>1) Data retrieval systems for fire and traffic accidents are not so efficient.</p> <p>2) Data collection and analysis system for consumer complaints and commercial disputes are not constructed.</p>	<p>Closer causal analysis of accidents is insufficient.</p> <p>At the present, settlement by arbitration is MOC's major method and consciousness for better consumer protection based on statistical data is low.</p>
<p>3. Domestic and imported products and their distribution in the market</p> <p>1) The middle- or small-size manufacturers do not have enough test facilities</p> <p>2) Fake or imitated inferior materials and parts are very common</p>	<p>Because of the size of the enterprise</p> <p>Inspection system is incomplete for imported products not covered by ICCP program.</p> <p>Certification system for domestic products is not compulsory.</p> <p>Market surveillance is not enough.</p>
<p>3) Most consumers are only conscious about price and country of origin.</p>	<p>Consciousness and knowledge of consumers to select the right product at reasonable price are low.</p>

Problems	Causes
<p>4) Skills of repair technicians in small repair shops in E/E products is sometimes not enough.</p>	<p>Insufficient vocational training</p>
<p>4. Inspection/Test system</p>	<p>The same causes for problem 3. 2)</p>
<p>1) Many fake or inferior products in the market</p>	
<p>5. Consumer education and public relations</p>	
<p>1) Insufficient consumer's intention of getting necessary products information and using them for better life</p>	<p>Consumer's consciousness is on the way to becoming mature and retailers do not explain to the customers well about merchandises</p>
<p>2) Lack of information for and from the consumers</p>	<p>The school education system is well prepared but insufficient regarding some points. Indications and instruction manuals are insufficient or improper No consumer support bodies to help consumers</p>
<p>6. Qualification system</p>	
<p>1) Unskillful workers do jobs for which technical skills are necessary, such as for electrical wiring installations and repair for electric/electronic commodities.</p>	<p>Qualification system of labors for their technical skills is not yet fully established.</p>
<p>7. SASO activities</p>	
<p>7.1. Standards</p>	
<p>1) Lack of necessary standards for E/E products and components such as for configuration adapters. Many standards lack harmonization with IEC Stds.</p>	<p>Limited capability for a big demand</p>
<p>2) Important items for proper storage, maintenance and use of tires are lacking in the relevant SSA.</p>	<p>Lack of statistical data on traffic accidents and the market situation causes delay for necessary action regarding improvement in the standards.</p>

Problems	Causes
<p>3) Lack of necessary standards for textile products such as for garments, harmful substances, toxic gases and static electricity as well as some textile standards need to be improved such as the standards for silks.</p>	<p>Limited capability for a large demand</p>
<p>7.2. Certification/Registration/Accreditation</p>	<p>Promotion of the system and public awareness to the system are not enough.</p>
<p>1) The number of Q mark granted manufacturers are limited at the moment. (Approx. 100 manufacturers)</p>	<p>A lack of applicable SSA and of quality control facilities among the small manufacturers</p>
<p>2) The number of companies registered by SASO for ISO9000 is rather small (12 companies)</p>	<p>A national level accreditation system regarding ISO9000 registration and certification activity by SASO has just started.</p>
<p>3) The number of accredited laboratories is rather small (10 laboratories)</p>	<p>Efficient use of external laboratories is insufficient</p>
<p>7.3. Laboratories</p>	<p>At the moment, they are not in the scope of SASO laboratories.</p>
<p>1) Facilities and testing skills are not enough for causal analysis of consumer accidents and losses.</p>	<p>Current tendency and market situation are not being properly thought of.</p>
<p>2) Items for test of product conformity with standards are insufficient for electric/electronic products and tires.</p>	<p>Lack of testing equipment and testing personnel</p>
<p>3) Data related to tests is not utilized for laboratory management</p>	<p>Necessary data are not well collected and processed.</p>
<p>7.4. Consumer education and public relations</p>	<p>The publishing interval and semi-governmental character of the magazine limit the circulation.</p>
<p>1) Circulation of "The Consumer" is not enough to have any influence on the public.</p>	<p>Other ministries do not join in the editing work of the magazine</p>
<p>2) Communication between editing staff and other ministries' educational groups is not enough.</p>	<p></p>

Problems	Causes
<p>7.5. Human resources development</p> <p>1) Accumulation of necessary education and experiences among specialists, technicians and managers are insufficient.</p>	<p>Career development system has not yet been established.</p>
<p>7.6. Organization and management</p> <p>1) Information about consumer protection does not reach to SASO, and is not used for SASO activities.</p> <p>2) SASO's technical and scientific expertise are not fully used for c.p. in close cooperation with relevant ministries.</p> <p>3) Certification, registration and accreditation and test/inspection works in SASO do not conform with the relevant international rules or guides.</p>	<p>The information system among the ministries and agencies is not enough.</p> <p>Lack of aggressiveness to get information</p> <p>Lack of coordination, budget, manpower and aggressiveness</p> <p>Lack of international coordination and aggressiveness</p>

Table 1.12.2-1. Problems in electric/electronic products and causes for them

Problems	Causes
1) False and misleading indication of country of origin, trademarks and ratings	Some importers and retailers do not feel much responsibility to the products which they deal in. Consumers rely too much on the labeling of products to choose them and do not confirm if the descriptions of the label are true and the products are of good quality.
2) Many instruction manuals are written in English.	SSA specifies instruction manuals should be written in Arabic but it is not well enforced. Manufacturers, importers, distributors and consumers do not pay much attention to instruction manuals.
3) Wrong use of voltage between 127/220V	There are many types of outlets, plugs and configuration adapters which can be inserted into both 127V and 220V outlets. Also, due to the dual voltage system and wrong connection as a result of consumer carelessness.
4) Electric sparks and sometimes fires caused by loose contact between outlets and plugs	There are various types of inferior-quality outlets and plugs being sold in the market
5) Fires related to electric products	Use of electrical wires having an improper capacity
6) There are many bad interior wiring	Incomplete SSA for and insufficient control of interior wiring.

Table 1.12.2.-2 Problems in tires and causes for them

Problems	Causes
1) Retread tires for passenger cars, buses and trucks can be imported or manufactured. The use of retread tires for passenger cars and buses is not preferable.	The newly established SSA based on British standards specifies the retread tires for passenger cars and buses. Saudi Arabian natural and social environment is not well reflected in standards.
2) Usage and maintenance of tires are not good.	Poor education for drivers.
3) Retailers do not give necessary information to their customers and many customers are not knowledgeable enough to select the proper tires and their proper usage.	Poor education for retailers and no guidance from the authorities to give necessary information to their customers. Instruction manuals (cards) are not being attached to the tires
4) Storage method of tires in retail shops is improper.	The relevant SSA are insufficient and not well enforced.
5) Sales of used tires without any guarantee on quality	Lack of relevant laws or regulations.
6) Testing items and skills for tire analysis in SASO laboratory are insufficient for evaluation of conformity with the standards and causal analysis.	Lack of equipment and skills.

Table 1.12.2.-3. Problems in textile products and causes for them

Problems	Causes
<p>1) Many products with improper indication or no indication are distributed in the market, especially regarding silk fabric rolls, bolts and garments.</p>	<p>When importing textile products, submission of fiber composition is not necessary. No market surveillance. Some of importers are low in moral. Many silk fabric rolls and bolts in the market have no indication of the country of origin and fiber composition.</p>
<p>2) Some consumers complain about color changes and shrinkage.</p>	<p>Many importers and retailers do not request test report from supplier before contract. Many shops do not care about the quality of their products. Many importers and retailers do not conduct quality control.</p>
<p>3) Some domestic manufacturers do not conduct quality control voluntarily.</p>	<p>Conscientious manufacturers have difficulty in price competitiveness of their products against the cheap and inferior ones.</p>
<p>4) No regulations or SSA to control harmful substances.</p>	<p>There is no control system under McH.</p>
<p>5) Flame retardant ability.</p>	<p>Civil Defense is preparing the regulation about flame resistant ability of object items.</p>
<p>a) No description of flame retardant ability of objective buildings and objective items in the Civil Defense Law.</p>	<p>When importing fire retardant tent fabric, a certificate is not necessary.</p>
<p>b) SSA are not enough about flame retardant ability of objective items.</p>	<p>Some of importers do not follow the mandatory SSA specifications.</p>
<p>c) Fraudulent fire retardant tent fabrics are distributed in the market.</p>	

Chapter 2.

Objective of consumer protection strengthening in Saudi Arabia

CHAPTER 2. Objectives of consumer protection strengthening in Saudi Arabia

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Chapter 2. Objective of consumer protection strengthening in Saudi Arabia

2.1. Total consumer protection scheme in Saudi Arabia

Basic activities in consumer protection scheme

Generally the basic activities for consumer protection are classified into following five steps.

- Establishment of the legal system for consumer protection
- Inspection of products in the upstream stage of production or imports
- Market surveillance of products in the downstream stage of distribution
- Consumer education for proper selection, use and maintenance of products
- Causal analysis of accidents and prevention of recurrence

The problems collected at the first and second field works of the Team are described in Clause 1.12., and they are classified into following four groups from the parties concerned.

- 1) Problems in the ministries and governmental organizations
- 2) Problems in the manufacturers and constructors
- 3) Problems in the importers and distributors
- 4) Problems in the consumers

Figure 2.1.-1 shows the “problems,” “measures” to be taken, and “objectives” to be achieved regarding each party concerned.

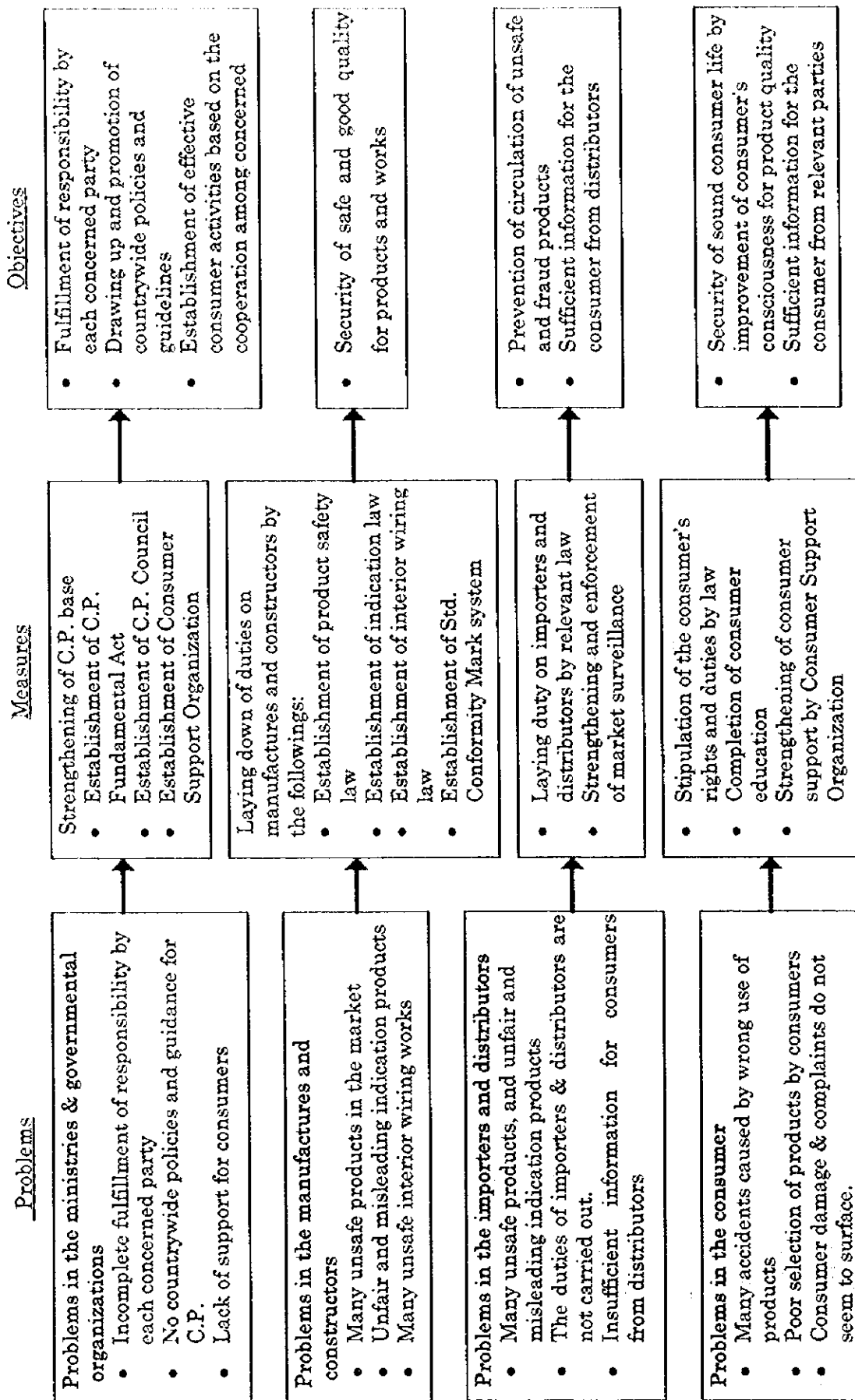


Figure 2.1.1. Total scheme for consumer protection in Saudi Arabia

"Measures" to solve "problems" and "objectives" to be accomplished for each "problem" are described in the following.

1) Measures to solve problems in the ministries and governmental organizations

Measures to solve problems in the ministries and governmental organizations are as follows.

a) Completion of the legal system

The government should establish "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act" to clarify the responsibility of the government, enterprises, and consumers, and to enforce the responsibilities on each concerned party.

b) Formulation of a countrywide policy and guidelines for consumer protection

The government should establish "Consumer Protection Council" to formulate a countrywide policy and guidelines and to review comprehensively what kind of laws/regulations are necessary for implementing standards through the cooperation among concerned ministries for consumer protection.

c) Strengthening of support for the consumer

The government should establish "Consumer Support Organization" (refer to Clause 2.2. 5.) to collect consumer needs and complaints in their consumer life, to satisfy their needs and to solve their complaints.

2) Measures to solve problems in manufacturers and constructors

Measures to solve problems in manufacturers and constructors are as follows.

a) Measures to solve problems in manufacturers are to establish "Product Safety Law" and "Indication Law." These laws should specify the duties of the manufacturers, prohibiting the manufacture of unsafe products and products with false and misleading indication. The existing legal system based on Royal Decree No. M/11 and SSA is not sufficient.

b) Measures to solve problems in the constructors are to establish "Interior Wiring Law." Now SASO is establishing "Saudi Application Guides" on low voltage electrical installations in buildings and residential premises as mentioned in Clause 2.2.4. In addition to the guides, it is necessary to establish "Interior Wiring Law" in order to oblige and to enforce constructors to do wiring work in accordance with the guides.

Moreover, the qualification system for interior wiring workers should be reviewed and strongly enforced to secure good-quality interior wiring work.

3) Measures to solve problems in importers and distributors

Measures to solve problems in importers and distributors are as follows.

a) Measures to solve problems in importers and distributors are to establish "Product Safety Law" and "Indication Law" as described for manufactures in Clause 2) a). These laws should specify the duties of the importers and distributors to prohibit the

import and sale of unsafe products and products with false or misleading indication, and to certify their dealings not to be fraud to surveyors at market surveillance.

b) **Supply of necessary information from importers and distributors to consumers**

Importers should check if descriptions necessary to consumers are in Arabic, and distributors including retailers should be obliged to supply consumers with necessary information from the viewpoint of consumer protection. Especially, information about proper use of tires from retailers to consumers is expected to reduce tire accidents.

4) Measures to solve problems in the consumer

Measures to solve problems in the consumer are as follows.

a) Measures to prevent the wrong use of consumer products are to establish "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act", to give consumers the rights and duties to use and maintain consumer products properly, and to provide consumer necessary information regarding consumer life.

b) Measures to improve consumers' capability to select products are to give consumers necessary information about consumer products on every occasion, so that consumer could have correct knowledge of consumer products and inform retailers of their needs in detail.

c) Measures to collect and properly handle information about troubles and complaints are to establish "Consumer Support Organization", to establish the database of consumer complaints and losses, to make their causal analysis, and to give the results to consumers.

The government including Consumer Support Organization should set up many contact points for consumer complaints, collect the information about accidents, troubles and complaints and take necessary measures regarding them to achieve consumer protection.

2.2. Consolidation of legal system and its enforcement

2.2.1. Consumer Protection Fundamental Act and legal system

Consumer Protection Fundamental Act

In order to assign the government, enterprises and consumers their roles and to encourage them to perform the roles, "Consumer Protection Fundamental Act" should be established, as mentioned in Clause 2.1. The outline of the act is shown in *Figure 2.2.1.-1.*

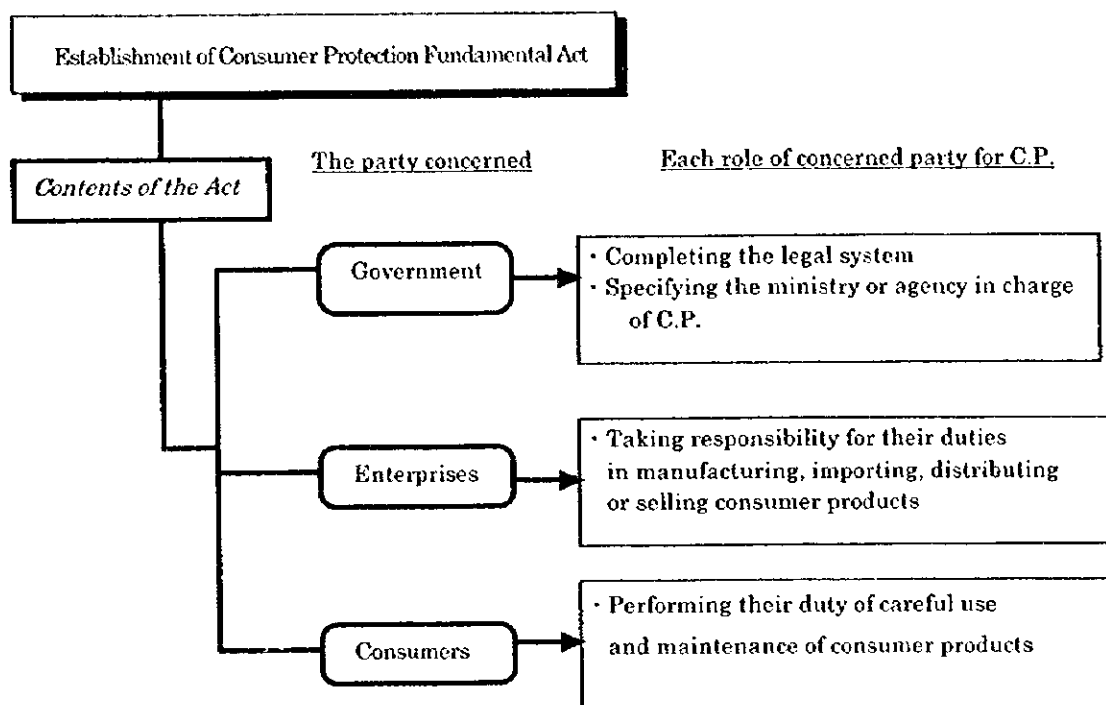


Figure 2.2.1.-1. Outline of Consumer Protection Fundamental Act

The act specifies the roles of government, enterprises and consumers for consumer protection as shown below.

- 1) The government's role is to complete the legal system and specify the ministry or agency in charge of consumer protection.
- 2) Enterprises' role is to take the responsibility for their duties in manufacturing, importing, distributing or selling consumer goods.
- 3) Consumers' role is to perform their duty of careful use and maintenance of consumer goods.

Consumer Protection Council

Based on this Act, "Consumer Protection Council" should be founded to promote unified consumer-oriented administration integrating the ministries and governmental agencies related to consumer protection as shown in *Figure 2.2.1.-2*.

Consumer Protection Council plays following roles.

- Drawing up and promoting of total nationwide planning for consumer protection in the wide ranged administration field
- Adjustment of problems among ministries and governmental agencies concerning about consumer protection

Figure 2.2.1.-2 shows a coordination system of the government for consumer protection.

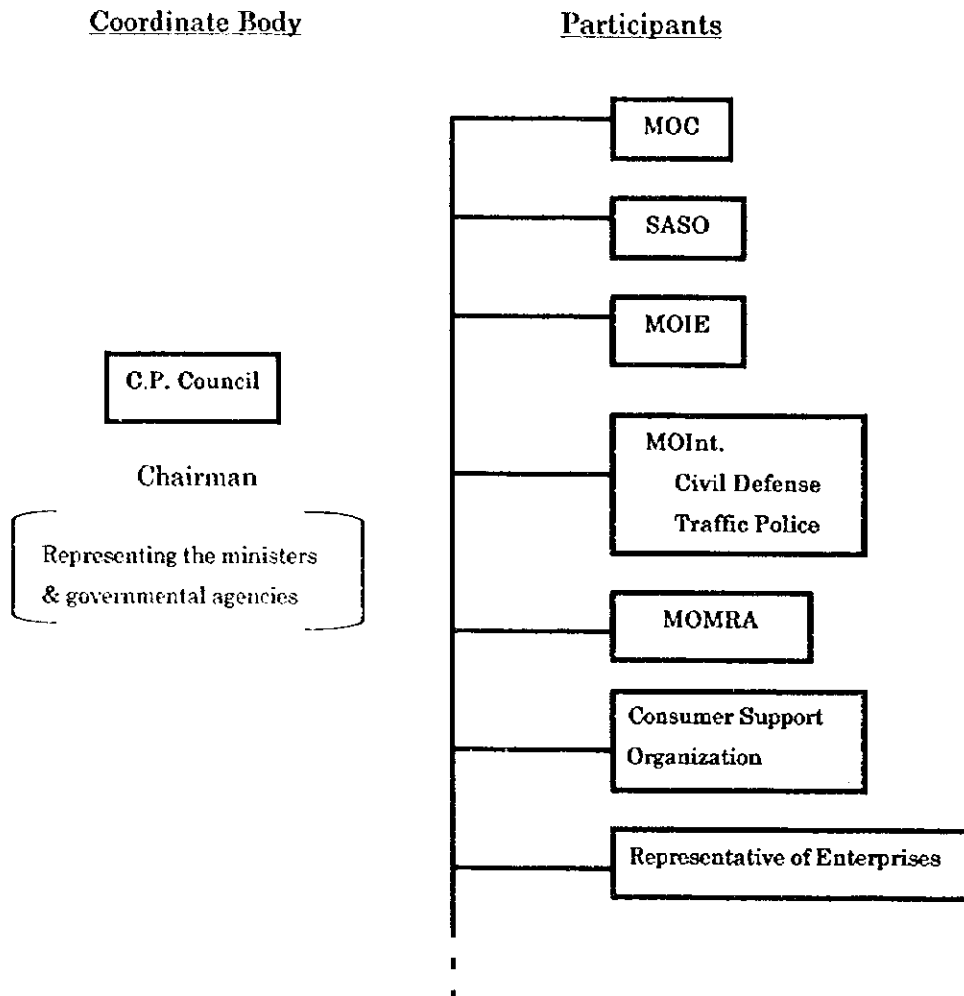


Figure 2.2.1.-2. Coordination system of the government for consumer protection

2.2.2. Product Safety Law

In order to enhance the consumer protection, it is necessary to have "Product Safety Law" enacted, under the Consumer Protection Fundamental Act. And the law should

have the following important contents to solve the problems not protected by Royal Decree No.M/11 as shown in *Figure 2.2.2.-1*.

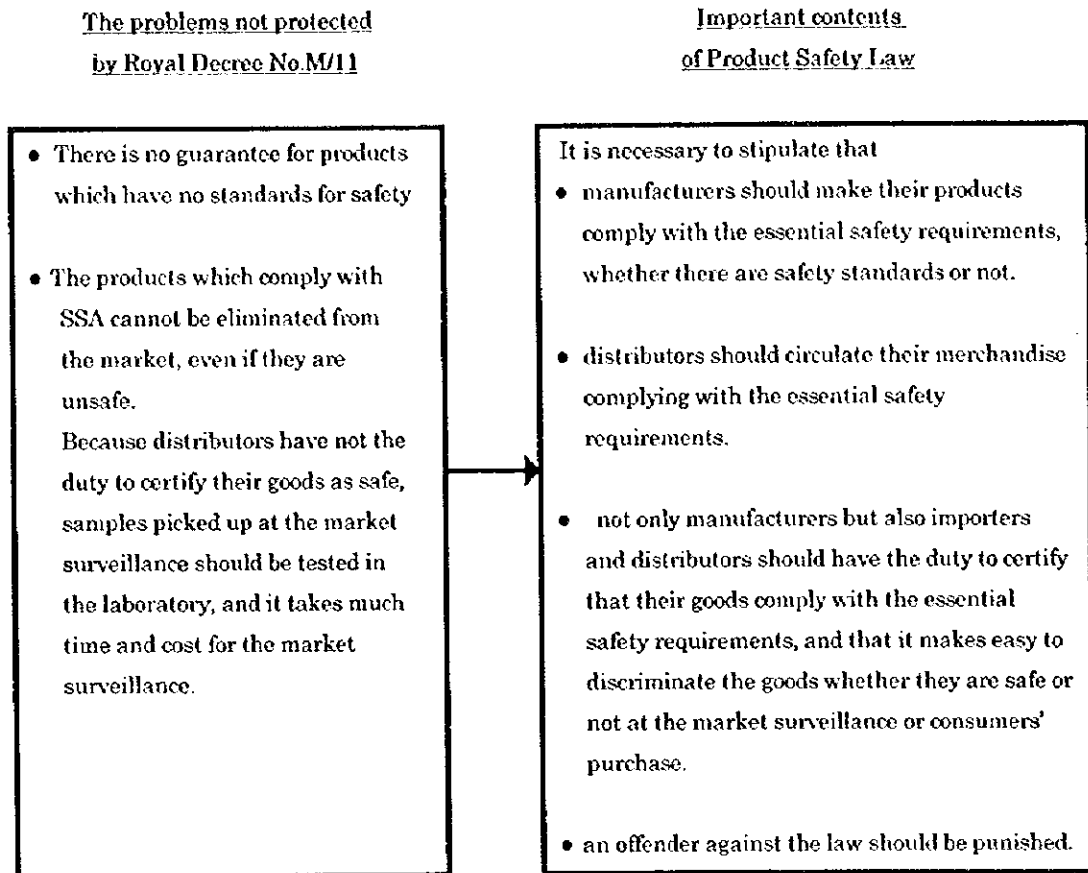


Figure 2.2.2.-1. Important contents of Product Safety Law

Therefore the product safety law should stipulate the following duties for each concerned party.

- 1) The manufacturers are enforced to make their products comply with essential safety requirements, and practically with the relevant standards.
- 2) The importers and distributors are obligated to supply safety products to consumers.
- 3) The manufacturers, importers and retailers are obligated to verify the safety of the products they deal in.
- 4) The consumers are also required to confirm the safety of the products at the time of purchase on its own responsibility and follow the instruction for safe use and keep maintenance procedures.

2.2.3. Indication Law

In order to enhance the consumer protection, it is necessary to have "In indication Law" enacted, and the following items should be specified.

- Basic items necessary for the consumer to purchase products
Example: rated voltage, frequency, size, weight, usage
- Indication of the product quality which is difficult to identify
Example: fiber composition of the textile
- Indication of the name and address of the responsible person or enterprise

2.2.4. Enactment of safety laws for each product category

As mentioned in Clause 2.1., it is necessary to enact the laws/regulations as shown in Table 2.2.4.-1 to supplement and consolidate this legal system.

Table 2.2.4.-1. Enactment of safety laws/regulations for each product category

Product	Law /Regulation	Criteria (Standard)	Ministry/Agency responsible
Electrical Electronic Product	Interior Wiring Law	SSA203 "Safety Measures for Electrical Installation in Residential Premises" in use "Saudi Application Guides on low voltage electrical installations in buildings and residential premises" in future	MOIE
Tire	Traffic safety regulation of vehicles & tires	SSA for tire maintenance, retread tires, etc. to be added or revised	MOInt. (Traffic Police)
Textile Product	Harmful Substance Regulation	Residual Harmful Substance Standard to be added	MOH
	"Fire Retardant Regulation" to be added to the "Civil Defense Law"	SSA645 "Requirements for Fire Retardant Tent Fabrics" in use. SSA Std. of flame retardant ability to be extended for curtains & carpets.	MOInt. (Civil Defense)

1) Interior Wiring Law

The law should be established by MOIE. Under this law, the Saudi Application Guides should be managed. And the law should stipulate the penal regulations against the breach of the above Guides.

2) Traffic safety regulation of vehicles, tires, etc.

It is recommended that traffic safety regulation be legislated to stipulate the requirements for the motor vehicle tires and parts and be enforced by the Traffic Police to constitute the appropriate law system.

The law should stipulate that circulation of all the used tires are forbidden and that tire retailers should explain to the customer the method of tire usage and maintenance.

3) Safety regulations of textile products

It is recommended that "Harmful Substances Regulation" be enacted to control harmful residues regarding textile products and be enforced by the MOH as the responsible ministry, and that the flame resistibility regulation be added to the present "Civil Defense Law" and that SSA be established on more diversified products such as curtains and carpets.

2.2.5. Establishment of Consumer Support Organization

It is necessary in Saudi Arabia to establish the Consumer Support Organization (CSO), which should conduct, for example, the following various activities from the standpoint of the consumer:

- a) Participation in the discussion about consumer protection regulation and standard
- b) Conduct of consumer education
- c) Product tests for consumers to select products properly and publication of its results
- d) Cooperation with governmental organizations concerning consumer protection
- e) Establishment of an information network for consumers, participation in collecting consumer complaints and analysis of them
- f) Release of consumer protection information to mass media
- g) Representation of consumers for the sake of the consumers

CSO should be established under SASO as a semi-governmental organization. SASO is equitable organization to establish and support CSO based on the following reasons:

- ① Administration of consumer protection have a connection with various ministries and agencies, and is necessary close cooperation among them. SASO has already been conducting its jobs with various ministries and agencies.
- ② When publishing reports such as a test result of products for consumers' proper selection, it is easy for CSO to publish it on neutral ground through SASO's technical support.
- ③ When technical test, analysis or investigation is necessary, it is easy for CSO to get SASO's assistance.

CSO should increase contact points for consumers gradually not only in Riyadh, Jeddah, Damman, but also in various municipalities, and publish its own magazine transferring consumer issues from "The Consumer" magazine (refer to Clause 3.5.).

2.2.6. Strengthening of functions of Saudi Arabian ministries and governmental agencies in mutual collaboration

The ministries and governmental agencies in charge should tighten the regulations against such as fires and traffic safety and security of textiles from harmful substances,

etc. and should strengthen enforcement with mutual cooperation. Measures for strengthening of functions of Saudi Arabian ministries and governmental agencies in mutual collaboration are described below.

1) Appointment of representative ministry for conducting the total consumer protection management

It is necessary to appoint a responsible ministry as a representative one, and to give the ministry the rights and duties for conducting the total consumer protection management in cooperation with other ministries concerning consumer protection.

The ministry should play the role as secretary of the Consumer Protection Council.

2) Strengthening measures for electrical and electronic product safety

The officers of MOC in charge or the party assigned the duty shall conduct the market surveillance by the assistance of the municipality and SASO, etc., demand the responsible supplier to prove the conformity to the essential safety requirements, expel the unfit products out of the market and take other necessary measures.

3) Strengthening measures for interior wiring

The cooperation among the related ministries and agencies such as MOIE, SASO, MOMRA, etc. would be required to enforce the compliance with the interior wiring law and standards in the design and construction or renovation of buildings in future.

4) Strengthening measures for tire safety

It is important to call the special attention of the consumer to prevention of tire accidents through cooperation of tire stores, gasoline stations etc. It is useful to inspect tires at the time of roadside inspections with the help of CCI.

5) Strengthening measures for textile product safety

The "Harmful Substances Control Law" shall be established to control harmful substances by MOH.

The regulation of flame resistibility of textile products should be added to the current "Civil Defense Law" and SSA regarding flame resistibility be expanded to curtains and carpets.

6) Strengthening measures for indication problem

To realize the appropriate indication it is necessary to intensify the market surveillance of indication items by delegating the task to the market inspectors assigned by the municipality.

7) Strengthening activities of SASO

SASO is responsible for technically supporting the activities of ministries and governmental agencies for consumer protection. SASO should establish Consumer Support Organization as a semi-governmental organization under SASO. In conjunction with this organization, SASO should establish what is called Consumer Protection Coordination Department in charge of consumer protection.(refer to the Clause 3.8.2.) Other measures for strengthening activities of SASO are described in Chapter 3.

8) Total scheme for strengthening of consumer protection in Saudi Arabia

Figure 2.2.5-1 shows the ministries and governmental agencies responsible for implementing the above-mentioned measures, contents of the measures and their relationship. Items to be strengthened for consumer protection are described in the circular frames, organizations in charge in the thick square frames and concrete measures in the thin frames.

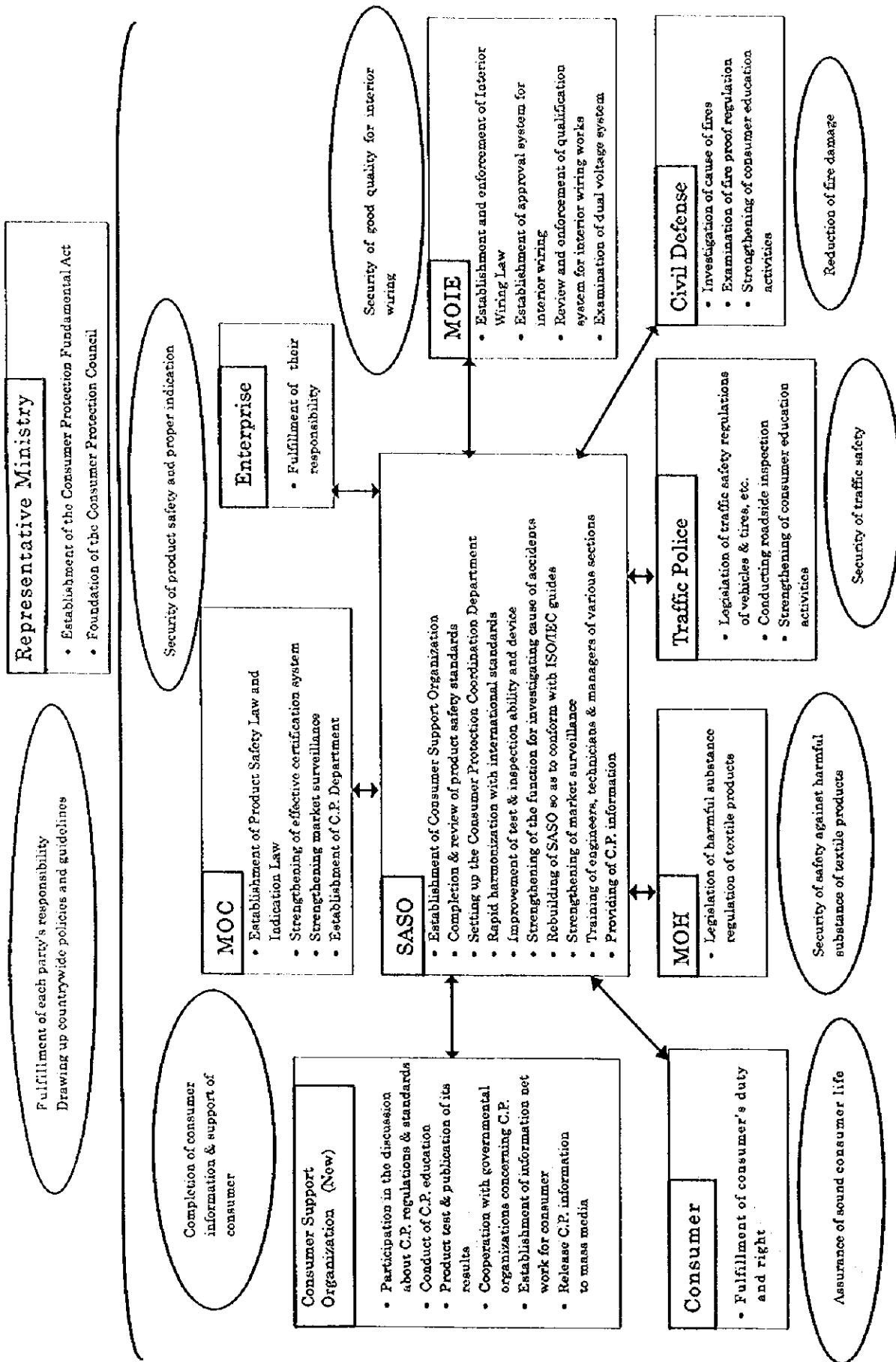


Figure 2.2.6.-1. Scheme for strengthening consumer protection in Saudi Arabia

2.3. Collection, analysis and effective use of information regarding consumer injuries, damage and complaints

In order to solve the problem tabulated in *Table 12.1.1-1* "2. Information system on consumer injuries, damage and complaints", the following measures should be taken.

Features of information system for consumer protection

- 1) Collecting exact information as much as possible and analyzing the cause
- 2) Storing information in a relational computerized database.
- 3) Providing fast and easy data retrieval through a computer network

Consumer information database

Each of the following ministries or organizations should establish its own database and link it up to a communication network.

Civil Defense : Developing a fire accident database

Traffic police : Developing a traffic accident and roadside inspection database

MOC : Developing a consumer complaint and commercial dispute database and a market surveillance data base

A recommended information processing flow is show in *Figure 2.3-1*. Besides arbitration of disputes, MOC should strengthen causal analysis and make manufacturers and importers report to MOC regarding defective products.

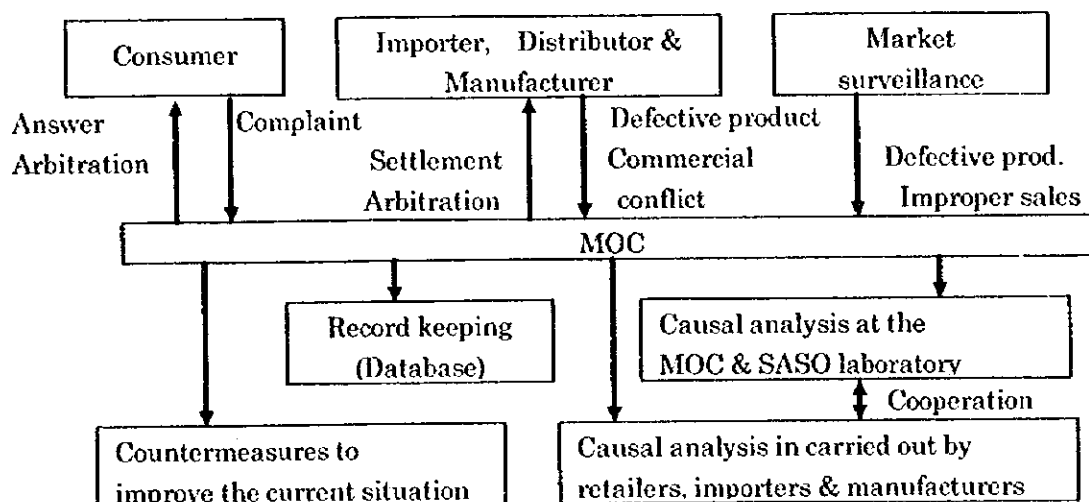


Figure 2.3-1. The recommended information processing in MOC

Consumer support organization : Developing a consumer complaint database with an in-depth survey on each complaint

Other organizations : Establishing consumer complaint and loss database in each specific field in charge

The necessary steps to have a good database are as follows :

1) Collecting exact and actual data with all concerned factors

Data input is the basis of the system. Inspectors who prepare original data should be trained and manuals for the original reports should be carefully prepared.

2) Causal analysis to the point

For a causal analysis of consumer injuries, damage or accidents, a cooperative study is sometimes necessary among the inspection agencies, laboratories with high technical skills and manufacturers or importers of the products in question.

3) Relational database and communication network

Many hardware and software manufacturers will be ready to provide the appropriate solutions. Sources of information, databases and communication network are outlined in *Figure 2.3.-2*. Information can be exchanged manually if the network is not completed.

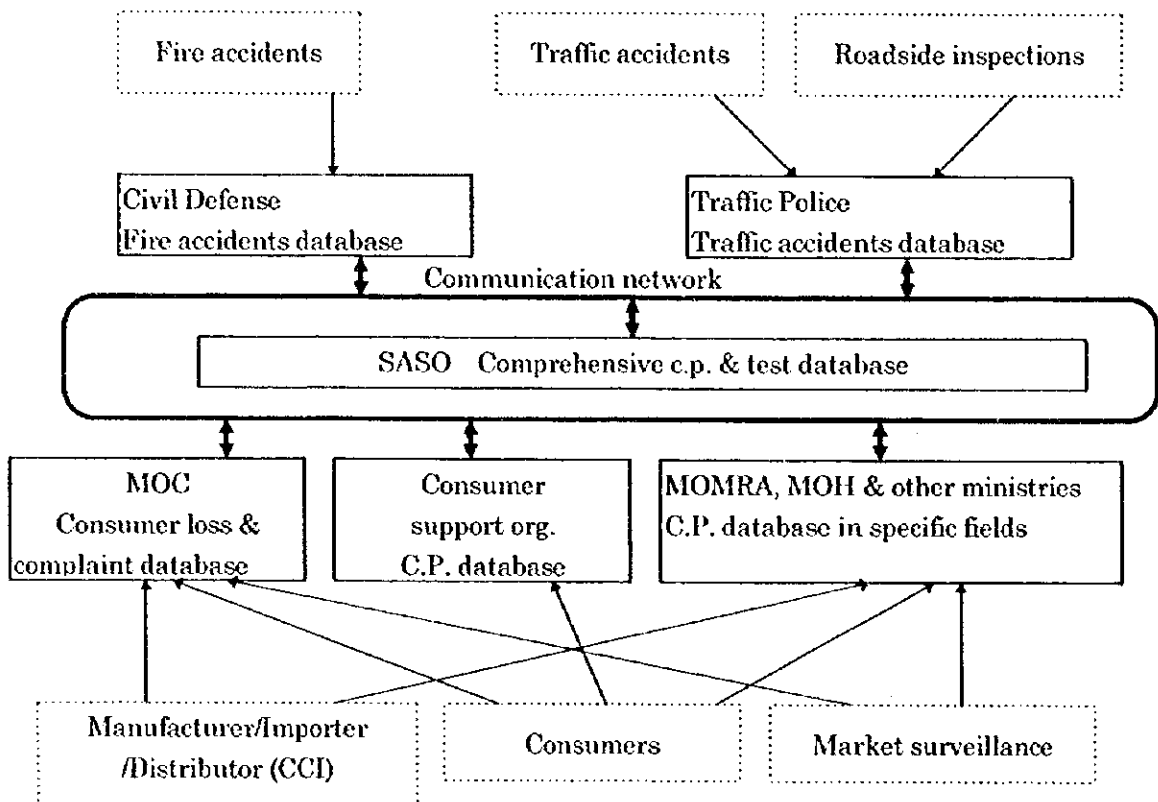


Figure 2.3.-2. C.P. databases and communication network

4) Utilization of data among the related organizations

Data should be fully utilized to prevent the recurrence of accidents, injuries and damage by all related organizations, bodies and manufacturers or importers.

- Notice to the importer that the product handled by him is involved in an investigation of a consumer trouble and request for his cooperation.

- Listing of the doubtful products regarding safety as well as the importers' and manufacturers' names in the authorities in charge for an in-depth inspection.
- Recall of the faulty products, ban on manufacture/import or request for improvements
- Intensifying the market surveillance and test for samples from the market for doubtful products
- Revision of the relevant standards and rules or procedures
- Consumer education

5) System improvement

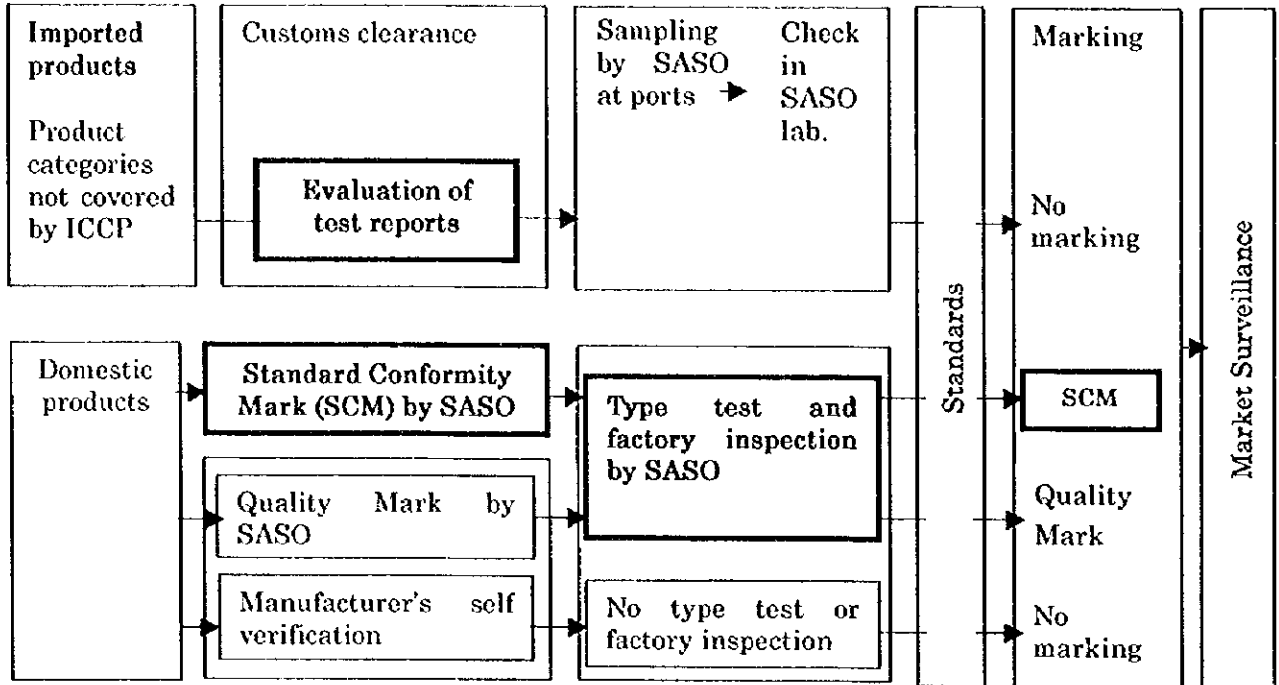
SASO and the other related ministries or organizations should have committees for improving the system and pursue more effective use of information. Causal analysis expertise will grow step by step and necessary skills and facilities should be supplemented. Input items to original data regarding accidents or consumer losses should be revised as actual accidents and losses change in their product categories and causes.

6) Completing total feedback system for consumer protection

The information system should be used effectively to formulate a total feedback system with fast response. Results or effects of measures should be evaluated using actual data or facts. Accumulation of improvements based on exact data and actual facts can make the consumer protection system more effective.

2.4. Inspection/testing system

The inspection/testing system should be improved as shown in *Figure 2.4-1* in response to the problems summed up in Clause 1.12. The system is especially referred to electrical / electronic products, tires and textiles in the scope of the in-depth study.



Notes:

- 1) Items indicated in the bold box are newly introduced to improve the control of products put on the market.
- 2) "Evaluation of test reports" aims at the promotion of the responsibility of importers.
- 3) "Standard Conformity Mark (SCM) by SASO" aims at the promotion of control of domestic products under the mandatory certification system such as for imported products.

Figure 2.4-1. Improvement of the inspection/testing system.

2.4.1. Imported products (not covered by ICCP)

Importers ought to take responsibility for their products regarding safety and quality. Therefore, the importers should submit the following items for inspection at the time of customs clearance:

- declaration of indication methods of the name or abbreviation of the importers in suitable way
- a test report to demonstrate the conformity of the products

- instruction sheets in Arabic to be attached

The MOC should keep the records of the importers including the information of their products, and use them to trace the importers when getting information on accidents, receiving complaints and findings failure in the market surveillance on the products.

The inspection/testing procedures for imported products should be as shown in *Figure 2.4.1.-1*.

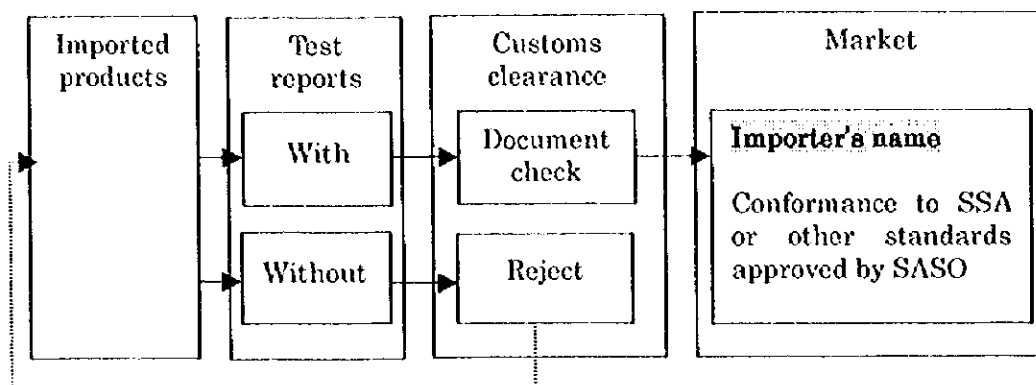


Figure 2.4.1.-1. A diagram of the inspection procedures

A document check should be additionally conducted by visual inspection to eliminate inferior products as shown in *Table 2.4.1.-1*.

Table 2.4.1.-1. Document check

Kinds of products	Check items	Reasons
All	Indication method of importer's name and country of origin	As mentioned above
	Validity of test report	
Electrical/electronic products	Ratings	Many products designed for other than 127V or 220V
	Configuration of plugs attached to electrical/electronic products	Many plugs not complying with SSA
Textile products	Fiber composition	Many false and imitating

Ideally, the document check should be started immediately. However, the following steps may be used in consideration of the degree of the problems in the market.

At the first step (from 1998)

Scope of products	Test item of test report
All electrical / electronic products	All requirements of relevant standards
Textile products of silk	Fiber composition, colorfastness and shrinkage

At the second step (from 2000)

Scope of products	Test item of test report
Baby's clothes, underwear and others directly touching the skin	Fiber composition, colorfastness, Shrinkage and harmful substances such as formaldehyde

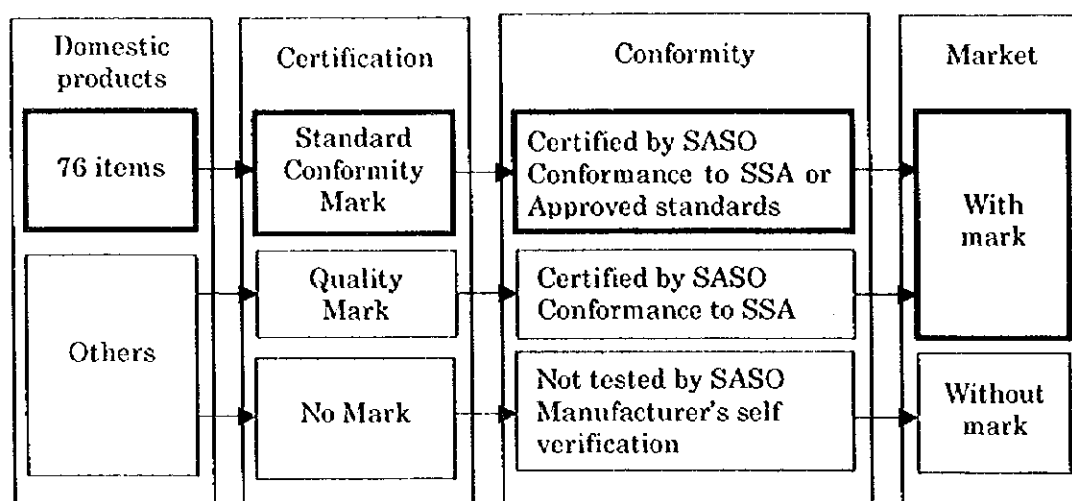
At the final step (from 2002)

Scope of products	Test item of test report
All textile products	Full requirements of relevant standards

The document check should be commissioned to SASO as a sole standardization organization in Saudi Arabia.

2.4.2. Inspection of domestic products

Domestic manufacturers ought to have the responsibility for their products regarding safety and quality. Therefore, a new mandatory certification system called "Standard Conformity Mark" should be introduced to ensure safety and quality of the domestic products as shown in *Figure 2.4.2.-1*.



Notes:

Items indicated in the bold box are concerned with "Standard Conformity Mark (SCM)" to be newly introduced to improve the control of products put on the market.

Figure 2.4.2.-1. Outline of future inspection/testing system.

- The SCM system should be implemented by SASO.
- It consists of the type testing, preliminary and routine factory inspection.
- For the first step only the type testing should be required and the factory inspections should not be required.
- After three years the factory inspections should be conducted at the second step.
- When the SCM is started, the products, which have already obtained the Quality Mark, should be granted the SCM without any additional inspection and testing.

2.4.3. Causal analysis of accidents and consumer complaints

The system of the causal analysis of accidents and consumer complaints is not set up although there are many accidents and complaints as mentioned in Clause 10.3. Therefore, the system of should be set up as shown in *Figure 2.4.3.-1*.

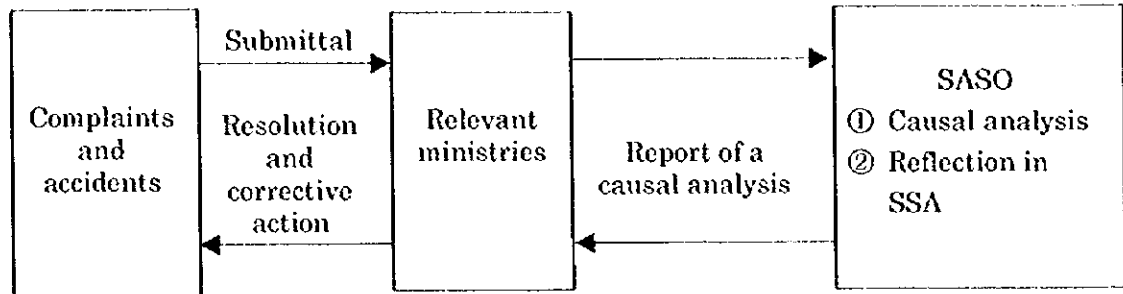


Figure 2.4.3.-1. System of resolution of accidents and complaints.

The ministries should qualify SASO as causal analysis organization because SASO has the technical knowledge with long experience in testing.

2.4.4. Market surveillance

The market surveillance should be strengthened to eliminate inferior products from the market. The market surveillance should be carried out based on the priority of the short-term and middle-term objectives in consideration of the degree of the problems in the market.

1) Electrical/electronic products

a) Visual inspection in the market (Short-term objective)

The inspection should be conducted for at least 1,000 products in a year.

Check items

- For completed products; Marking of rating and Plug configuration.
- For mains configuration adapters; Marking of rating and Plug and receptacle configuration.

b) Sampling test (Full test items) for configuration adapters and extension cord set purchased from the market in SASO lab. (Short-term objective)

c) Sampling test (Full test items) for other popular products in home purchased from in the capability of SASO (Middle-term objective)

2) Tires

a) Market surveillance (middle-term objective)

The inspection should be conducted for at least 90 shops in a year.

Check items

- Storage condition of tires based on Gulf standard
- Supply of information of tires to buyers (consumers) from retailers
- Attachment of instruction manual
- Participation of the retailer in the seminar opened by traffic police or the like
- Sales of used tires

b) Roadside inspection (Short-term objective)

The inspection should be conducted for at least 10,000 cars in a year.

Check items

- Internal air pressure
- Residual groove depth
- Crack and cut

The following questionnaire on tire's maintenance should be provided to drivers.

- Air pressure
- Awareness of standard air tire pressure
- Position change of tires
- Exchange of tires

To accomplish the roadside inspection properly, the inspection should be made in cooperation with MOC and CCI (tire importers, wholesalers and retailers group).

3) Textile products

The fabric roll and bolt and the garment are inspected as described below.

a) Visual inspection in the market

The inspection should be conducted for at least 2,000 products in a year. The market surveillance for "Labeling" is a short-term objective and for "Product quality" is a middle-term objective.

Inspection items

- For labeling; Fiber composition , Country of origin and Care label (not need for fabric roll and bolt)
- For Product quality; Appearance and Sewing (not required for fabric roll and bolt)
- b) Sampling test for fiber composition, especially for silk products, shrinkage and colorfastness in SASO lab. (Middle-term objective)

4) All sectors

- a) Visual inspection for marking of country of origin and name of importer or domestic manufacturer in the market
- b) Collection of complaints and claims received from purchasers by retailers, etc.. and their solution.

To carry out the market surveillance effectively, a committee should be set up with the membership which are representatives of relevant ministries, professors, chamber of commerce (distributors, retailers and manufacturers), consumer support organization and SASO.

2.4.5. Inspection of interior wiring

An interior wiring law and the "Saudi Application Guide" should be established and enforced for buildings, houses and other premises to reduce the number of fire accidents caused by the poor interior wiring.

The inspection should include at least checking items in *Table2.4.5-1* in consideration of the cause of the fire accidents in this country.

Table2.4.5-1. Checking items

Electrical components and personnel	Checking item
Cables for interior wiring	Cross-sectional areas suitable to the ratings of circuit breakers
Socket-outlets	Configurations and marking of the ratings corresponding to the mains supply
Circuit breakers	Marking of ratings with distributing mains supply
Working personnel	Wiring work done "qualified electricians"

The inspection systems should be introduced including checking items for electrical components and the qualification of working personnel. SASO should be appointed as the accreditation body of the inspection organizations, which carry out inspections of the interior wiring.

2.5. Consumer education and qualification system

2.5.1. Consumer education

As pointed out in *Table 12.1.1-1* "5. Consumer education and public relations", consumer education should be conducted by the government and Consumer Support Organization considering following two aspects.

- ① What consumer life should be in the present economical society : Philosophical aspect
- ② Basic knowledge, discernment and rational planning ability necessary for consumer life : Practical aspect

Important viewpoints of the philosophical aspect

- Fundamental duties of the consumers such as careful use and proper maintenance of consumer products: in elementary schools
- Laws/regulations related to consumer protection, consumers' rights, how to plan healthy consumer life using consumers' rights and how to handle consumer injuries, damage, and complaints : in intermediate schools
- Related laws/regulations and standards : in industrial & commercial schools

Important viewpoints of the practical aspect

- Consumer education for the basic and important items for people's safety such as prevention against fires, electric shocks and traffic accidents
- Consumer education for the basic knowledge of consumer life such as how to purchase consumer products with exact understanding of the products through proper indication
- Traffic safety , especially for the male students, proper use of tires because car driving is a indispensable skill for daily life in Saudi Arabia.

General consumer education

The following educational activities should be added using all available media effectively.

- Education through actual examples of consumer injuries and damage including their causal analysis and prevention measures using news papers, TV and magazines against their recurrence.
- Educational articles in magazines on check points for proper selection of the necessary products in the market.
- Cooperative movements or campaign with related organizations (MOC, MOInt., MOIE, MOMRA, MOE,SASO)

consumer education.

- Consumer consultation
- Product testing and making public the results by consumer magazine etc.
- Collection and making public of information about damage, injuries and accidents
- Enlightenment of consumers' rights and duties through mass media

2.5.2. Qualification system

The lack of skills for interior wiring work and for repairing work of electric and electronic commodities, as pointed out in *Table 1.12.1-1* "6. Qualification system", should be solved with the following procedures.

Improvement of interior wiring work qualification system

- a) The qualification system of interior wiring work should be stipulated in the Interior Wiring Law.
- b) The qualified worker should have the duty to conduct his work in accordance with Interior Wiring Law.
- c) Interior wiring may be conducted only by the qualified workers.
- d) The qualification should be given to the workers who passed the examination of qualification.
- e) The subjects for the examination of qualification should be established.
- f) The detailed knowledge can be obtained at the vocational training center.
- g) The examination should be implemented in every rural municipality in cooperation with MOIE, SASO and technical institutions.
- h) The certificate should be given to only the successful applicants by rural municipality.
- i) The qualification should be renewed periodically so as to catch up with the current technology.

Improvement of repairing work for E/E commodities

In order to level up the repairing skill of electric and electronic commodities, the vocational training center should have the special course for them. The lecturers should be invited from big enterprises or repair center of electric and electronic household appliances.

2.6. Solutions to major problems in each product group

2.6.1. Electric and electronic products

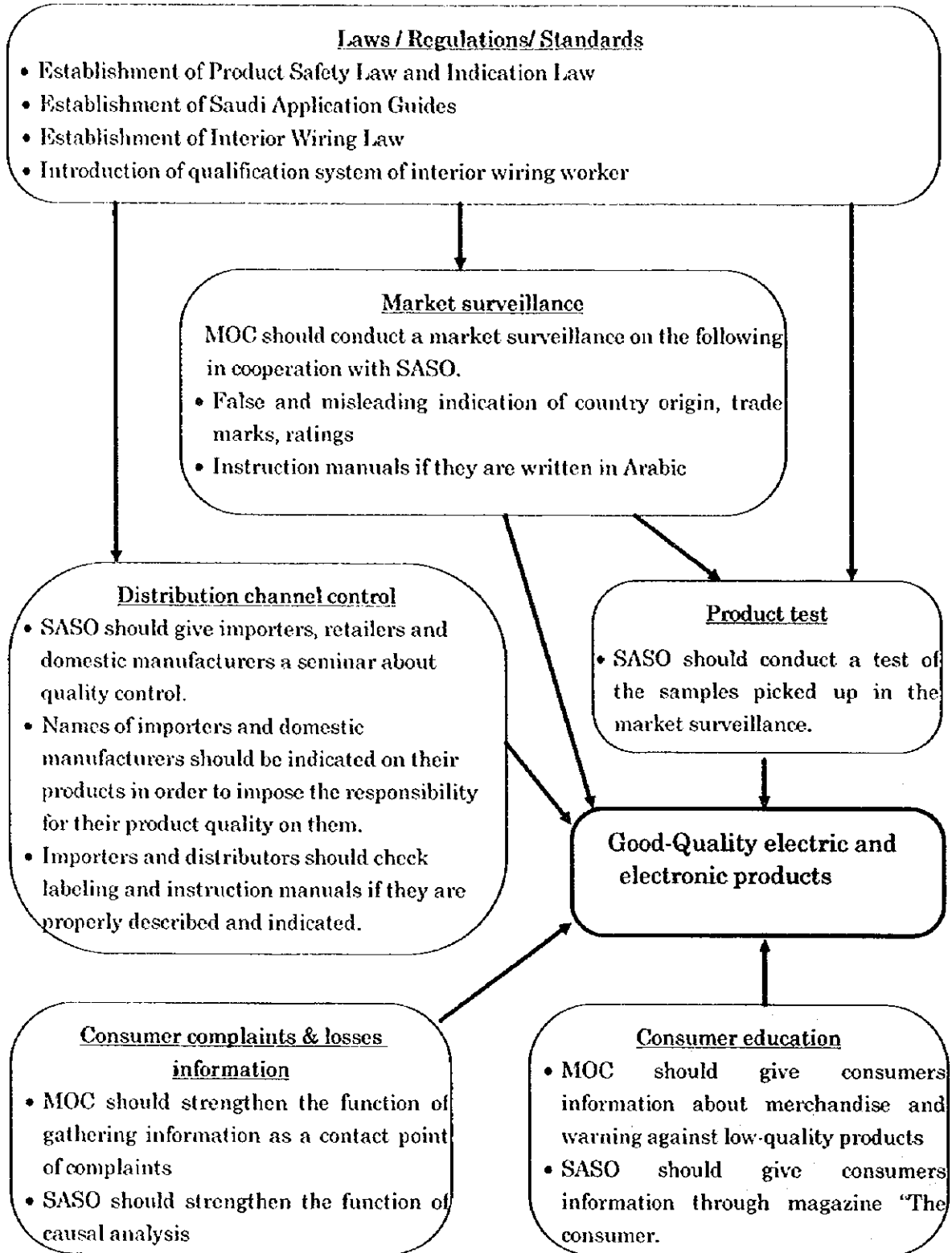


Figure 2.6.1.-1. Overall cooperative activities related to electric and electronic products

Figure 2.6.1-1 shows overall activities based on the cooperation among relevant ministries and organization to solve the problems related to electric and electronic products and ensure their quality.

1) False and misleading indication

Table 2.6.1-1. Problems and solutions (false and misleading indication)

Problems	Solutions
False and misleading indication of country of origin, trademarks and ratings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Taking the sample to SASO Lab. for check and test b) Establishment of Indication Law c) Market surveillance by MOC and SASO d) Importers shall be obliged to attach their names on their products.

Labeling is very important because customers largely rely on descriptions of the label such as country of origin in choosing products. It is necessary that the route of the product can be traced by its labeling.

2) Instruction manual

Table 2.6.1-2. Problems and solutions (instruction manuals)

Problems	Solutions
Many instruction manuals are written in English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Through market surveillance, instruction manuals should be checked if they are written in Arabic. b) Importers or distributors should be obliged to check if instruction manuals written in Arabia are attached to products.

3) Wrong use of voltage, dual voltage system and its connecting apparatus

Table 2.6.1-3. Problems and solutions (wrong use of voltage)

Problems	Solutions
Wrong use of voltage between 127 and 220V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consumer education trough mass media b) Strict use of the outlets and plugs specified in SSA for 127 and 220V use c) Division of products into two voltage groups (127 and 220V) d) Review of the standard for 220V-use outlets and plugs e) Unification of voltage (220V only) f) Standardization of configuration adapters

To prevent wrong use of voltage, not only consumer education but also drastic countermeasures are required. Wrong use of voltage has close relationship with the dual voltage system and its related connecting apparatus. Reportedly, the discussion of unifying voltages to 220V has just begun.

4) Bad interior wiring

Table 2.6.1-4. Problems and solutions (bad interior wiring)

Problems	Solutions
There are many bad interior wiring.	a) Establishment of Saudi Application Guides b) Establishment of Interior Wiring Law c) Introduction of qualification system of interior wiring worker d) Strengthening of inspection of interior wiring

a) Proper wiring can prevent fires, troubles related to household appliances and wrong use of voltage. In spite of its importance, interior wiring have not been and is not sufficiently controlled. Saudi Application Guides under consideration will help in this aspect. Interior Wiring Law should be established and a qualification system of interior wiring worker introduced.

b) The situation, however, cannot be left as it is. If the Saudi Application Guides, standardization of configuration adapters and unification of voltage are enforced, the number of troubles related to electric and electronic products will remarkably decrease. Such projects, in which SASO plays a central role, require an earnest and patient approach but should be expedited from the viewpoint of permanent national policy and consumer protection.

5) Troubles resulting from wrong use of home appliances

As for troubles resulting from consumers' wrong use of voltage or products, consumer education through school education and mass media are decisively important.

2.6.2. Tires

The countermeasures to reduce traffic accidents caused by tires and to improve the problems listed up in *Table 1.12.2.-2*, are patient and continuous consumer education, establishment and revision of necessary SSA as well as their enforcement and reinforcement of capability of SASO laboratory as shown in *Figure 2.6.2.-1* and as described in 1) through 5) below.

1) Laws/regulations/standards

Laws or regulations should stipulate distributors' and consumers' obligation and prohibition of the sale of unsafe tires. SSA for tire maintenance, storage and specifications regarding retread tires should be established or revised.

2) Distribution channel control

- a) Retailers should give necessary information to their customers and ensure that instruction manuals(cards) written in Arabic are attached to tires.
- b) Sales of used tires should be strictly prohibited.
MOC should prepare necessary regulations against sales of used tires.

3) Market surveillance

- a) Market surveillance
The retail market should be periodically checked for tire storage, the illegal sale of used tires, salesclerks' information to customers, attachment of instruction manuals.
- b) Roadside inspection
The Traffic Police should conduct roadside inspections for proper usage of tires.

4) Consumer education

- a) High school boys should be educated on traffic safety and proper tire usage.
- b) Retailers should be educated to give enough information to their customers.
- c) SASO, in cooperation with the Traffic Police, CCI, and big tire importers, should hold a seminar on traffic safety and educate consumers.

5) Strengthening of the SASO laboratory and the information system

- a) Test items for tires in SASO laboratory are insufficient for the evaluation, because of a lack of equipment and skills. They should be reinforced.
- b) The causal analysis of troubled tires from market surveillance and the roadside inspection should be increased in the Traffic Police and SASO laboratory.
- c) The information system regarding tire troubles and traffic accidents should be reinforced and the data from the system should be used effectively to improve all the related activities.

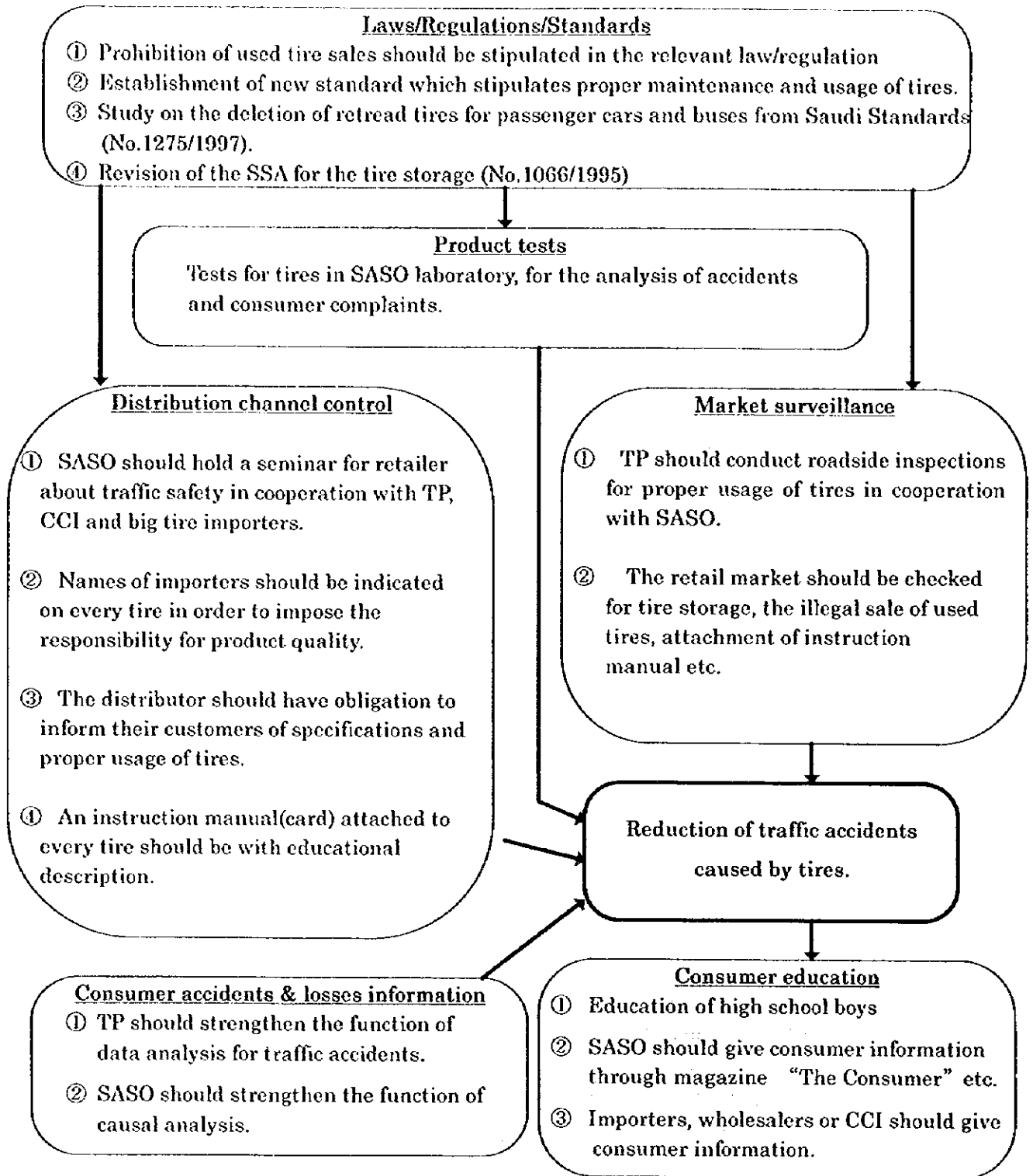


Figure 2.6.2.-1. Overall cooperative activities related to tires

2.6.3. Textile products

Figure 2.6.3.-1 shows activities based on the cooperation among relevant ministries and organizations to solve the problems related to textile products and to ensure their quality.

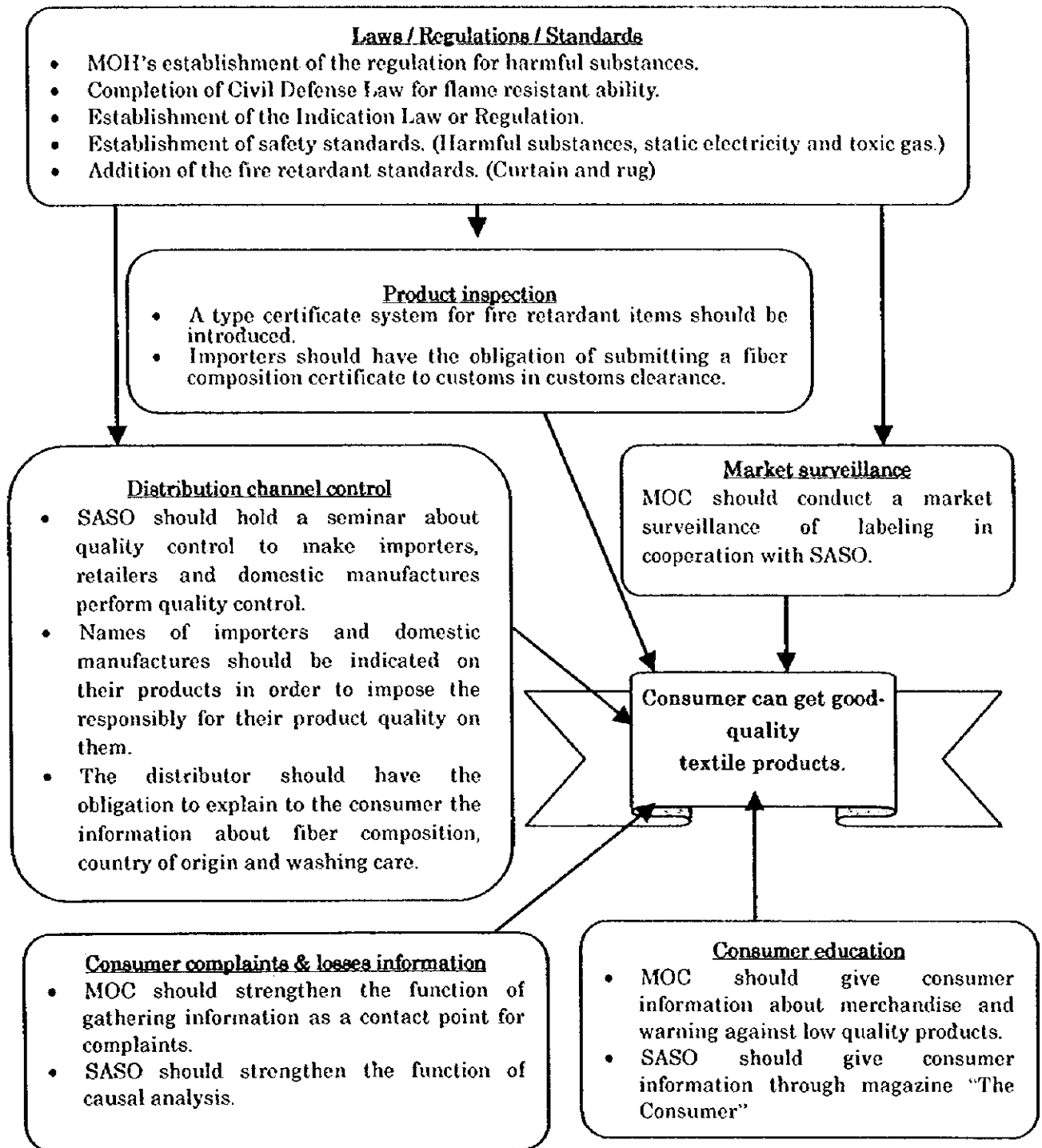


Figure 2.6.3.-1. Overall cooperative activity related to textile products

1) Unfair indication and improper labeling

Table 2.6.3.-1. The problems and solutions.(Indication and inspection)

Problems	Solution
Many products with improper indication and no indication are distributed in the market, especially silk fabric roll, bolt and garment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) SASO conducts a market surveillance of labeling in cooperation with MOC. b) Country of origin and fiber composition shall be indicated on silk fabric's roll and bolt. (SSA 784/1994 should be improved) c) SASO holds a seminar about quality control to make importers, retailers and domestic manufactures perform quality control. d) Importers shall have the obligation of submitting a fiber composition certificate to Customs in, Customs clearance. e) Names of importers and domestic manufactures shall be indicated on their products in order to impose the responsibly for their products quality on them.

The labeling is very important for the interests of consumers and it is required to establish the necessary standards to define the requirements related to the fiber composition, care method, country of origin, and eliminate the unfair indication and improper labeling.

2) Quality control

Table 2.6.3.-2. The problems and solutions.(Quality control)

Problem	Solution
1) Some consumers complain about color change and shrinkage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) SASO conducts market surveillance and test by SASO lab in cooperation with MOC. b) SASO holds a seminar about quality control to make importers, retailers and domestic manufactures perform quality control. c) Names of importers and domestic manufactures shall be indicated on their products in order to impose the responsibly for their product quality on them. d) MOC should strengthen the function of gathering information as a contact point for complaints. SASO should strengthen the function of causal analysis. If necessary, MOC gives the results of causal analysis to importers, retailers and domestic manufactures.
2) Domestic manufactures who perform quality control are not price competitive.	MOC gives consumer information about merchandise and warning that cheap products are often inferior in quality, through holding a seminar, and SASO gives consumer information through holding a seminar and magazine "The Consumer."

If the companies performing the voluntary quality control increase, the awareness including morality and the technology of the textile industry in Saudi Arabia will be improved and defective products or the goods distributed in the market with unfair indication and improper labeling will be decreased. Thus, the consumer protection will be realized.

3) Safety

In the sense of consumer protection, it is more important to keep the safety of as well as the interests of consumers. Regarding the textile products, there are two issues.

Table 2.6.3.-3. The problems and solutions.(Safety)

Problems	Solution
1) No regulation and SSA to control harmful substances.	MOH should establish the regulation for harmful substances. SASO should establish the standard for harmful substances for babies' items and underwear.
2) Flame retardant ability.	
a) No description of flame retardant ability of objective buildings and objective items in Civil Defense Law.	a) Completion of Civil Defense Law for flame retardant ability.
b) SSA are not enough about flame retardant ability of objective items.	b) SASO should establish the standards for fire retardant of objective items such as curtains, carpets and rugs other than tents.
c) Fraud fire retardant tent fabric is distributed in the market.	c) A type certificate system should be introduced to drive out products which may be dangerous.

a) Skin trouble

It is recommended to establish the law to control the use of harmful substances to cause skin trouble and maintain the safety of consumers. At first, the MOH should establish regulations and penalties by law, and SASO should prepare the SSA and perform an inspection to protect the safety of the consumer thoroughly.

b) Flame resistant ability

At first, the objective buildings for the fire prevention and the objective items for the flame retardant ability should be defined in the Civil Defense Law, and then, SASO should prepare the standards.