

2019

SADCA MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MRA)

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COOPERATION IN ACCREDITATION

The document establishes and states the general policies governing SADCA's Mutual Recognition Arrangement.

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Further information

For further information about this publication, contact the SADCA Secretariat on:

SADCA Secretariat
Libertas Office Park
Cnr Libertas and Highway Streets
Equestria, Pretoria
0184
South Africa
Tel: +27 12 740 8537
Email: fikiles@sanas.co.za

1. PREAMBLE

The Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA) is a regional accreditation cooperation.

This document describes the elements of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (hereinafter referred to as the MRA) for testing, medical and calibration laboratories, certification and inspection body accreditation. The Arrangement is a means by which the Signatories to the SADCA MRA for testing, medical, calibration, certification and inspection can recognise one another's technical competence and confidence in the results of the accredited organisations.

The SADCA Signature Sheet, signed by each signatory to the SADCA MRA, is shown in **Annexure A**.

This MRA is an effort to enhance the objective of free trade within Africa and building up confidence among accreditation bodies in the region.

The criteria for the operation of conformity assessment bodies are specified in **Appendix B**:

The criteria for the operation of accreditation bodies are specified in ISO/IEC 17011 and supplemented by SADCA, IAF and ILAC mandatory and A-series documents.

The principal elements for establishing confidence among the participating accreditation bodies within SADCA are listed below. These elements are designed to ensure conformity with the requirements of the standards, verified by peer evaluation, in order to establish and maintain mutual confidence in the technical competence of SADCA MRA Members and their accredited organisations. The elements are:

- 1.1 Exchange of information on the development and operation of accreditation programs of SADCA Members;
- 1.2 Participation in the work and decision making of the SADCA General Assembly and SADCA Committees where applicable;
- 1.3 Participation of accredited laboratories and, where applicable, inspection bodies in domestic and international interlaboratory comparisons and proficiency testing programs;
Note: Proficiency testing may be used in some types of inspection where available and justified by the inclusion of testing activities that directly affect and determine the inspection result or when required by law or by regulators. It is, however, recognised that Proficiency Testing is not a usual and expected element in the accreditation of most types of inspections
- 1.4 Evaluations of applicants and re-evaluations of signatories to this Arrangement conducted in accordance with the relevant SADCA and IAF/ILAC documents;
- 1.5 Participation in the work of SADCA with other scientific and technical organisations to address issues related to testing, medical testing, calibration, certification and inspection in various technical fields;
- 1.6 Observations of assessments undertaken by applicant accreditation bodies and MRA signatories, where it will be determined whether their conformity assessment bodies meet the requirements of the relevant accreditation standards; and
- 1.7 Confidence in the metrology institutes which underpin the traceability claims of the laboratories and inspection bodies (where applicable) accredited by the Arrangement



signatories and support for the measurement comparison activities of CIPM (Comité International des Poids et Mesures, i.e. International Committee of weights and measures) and/or regional metrology organisations.

This MRA does not affect other recognition required by laws and regulations in the economies of the signatories.

1. 2. MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MRA): Scope and Obligations

2.1 This MRA is based on the results of the evaluations carried out in accordance with the relevant standards, rules, policies and procedures contained in the SADCA **M001: Policies and Procedures for an MRA amongst Accreditation Bodies**, the mandatory ILAC and IAF documents, and the IAF/ILAC A series documents.

2.2 Each accreditation body signatory to this MRA:

- Agrees to abide by its terms and conditions;
- Maintains conformance with ISO/IEC 17011, the supplementary requirements defined in SADCA M001 “Policies and procedures for an MRA amongst Accreditation Bodies, and relevant SADCA, ILAC and/or IAF mandatory documents;
- Ensures that accredited conformity assessment bodies comply with the relevant accreditation standards, and any related SADCA, ILAC/IAF requirements/mandatory documents;
- Upon changes to requirements of this MRA, ensure conformity with the new requirements with the period specified by the SADCA General Assembly.

2.3 Each Signatory shall:

- 2.3.1 Recognise within its scope of recognition of this MRA the accreditation of an organization by other signatories as being equivalent to an accreditation by its own organisation;
- 2.3.2 Accept, for its own purposes, endorsed certificates or reports issued by organisations accredited by other signatories on the same basis it accepts endorsed certificates or reports issued by its own accredited organisations;
- 2.3.3 Recommend and promote the acceptance by users in its economy of endorsed certificates and reports;
- 2.3.4 Investigate all complaints initiated by other signatories to the MRA resulting from certificates or reports issued by its accredited conformity assessment bodies;
- 2.3.5 Notify the SADCA Secretariat as soon as possible of any significant changes that have occurred or will occur in its status, signatory status of other accreditation cooperations (e.g. SADCA, ILAC, IAF, etc.), operational practices or accreditation schemes.
- 2.3.6 Contribute to the work of the MRA Committee/Council as appropriate.
- 2.3.7 Participate in the meetings of the Committees, sub-Committees and/or working groups of SADCA as appropriate.



- 2.3.8 Participate in the work of SADCA including return of ballots,
- 2.3.9 Provide evaluators for the evaluation and re-evaluation of accreditation bodies as appropriate to its size and to the needs of the MRA Committee;
- 2.3.10 Cooperate with other accreditation bodies so that the MRA may be extended to include other accreditation bodies in the African region.
- 2.3.11 Use all information obtained from the peer evaluation process in a confidential and professional manner; and
- 2.3.12 Abide by the rules for the use of the SADCA MRA Mark.
- 2.4 To participate in the SADCA MRA, an accreditation body shall be evaluated in accordance with the rules and procedures defined in *M001: Policies and Procedures for an MRA amongst Accreditation Bodies*, and the mandatory SADCA and ILAC/IAF documents as relevant and shall complete the Signature Sheet (refer to Annexure A). The same procedures shall be followed if a decision is taken to extend its recognition.
- 2.5 Upon admission as a signatory to the SADCA MRA, the signatory will be issued with a Certificate of Recognition (as per **Appendix C**). The Certificate will be re-issued following any extension or reduction of its scope of recognition. The certificate being replaced will become obsolete and must be returned to the SADCA Secretariat
- 2.6 The scope of recognition of a Signatory may be extended or reduced following re-evaluation in accordance with the relevant rules, policies and procedures.
- 2.7 If a Signatory wishes to withdraw from this MRA or withdraw parts of its scope of recognition for any reason whatsoever, that body shall notify the SADCA Secretariat in writing, no later than three months in advance of withdrawal. The Secretariat shall notify other Signatories, as well as another accreditation cooperations to which the accreditation body is a signatory. Upon withdrawal of a body, that body's Signature Sheet shall be deleted, and the list of signatories amended accordingly.
- 2.8 In the event of the SADCA MRA Committee making an adverse decision or finding against a Signatory, the procedures for appeal are defined in **SADCA P002**.
- 2.9 Any amendment of the text of this MRA shall be approved by the SADCA General Assembly.
- 2.10 It is recognised and accepted by each of the Signatories that this MRA does not create any rights, liabilities or obligations that would have a binding effect in domestic or international law. This MRA by itself does not provide any recognition or accreditation under any law or regulation in the economy of any signatory.
- 2.11 This MRA takes effect upon signing by both the signatory accreditation body and the SADCA Chair.



Annexure A: Signature Sheet



SADCA MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT

SIGNATORY

I, the undersigned, endorse the terms of the SADCA Arrangement and agree to abide by them, to the best of my ability.

Accreditation Body:

Economy:

Scope and date:

Authorised Representative:

.....
Signature:

.....
Date:

SADCA Chair:

.....
Signature:

.....
Date:

Annexure B: Standards covered by the SADCA MRA

MRA signatories operate in accordance with the criteria specified in the current version of ISO/IEC 17011, supplemented by SADCA, ILAC and IAF mandatory and IAF/ILAC A series documents where necessary.

MRA signatories accredit laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies and other conformity assessment bodies for compliance with the current versions of the Standards detailed in the table below.

Policy for Transition Periods for Implementation of Revised Standards

When revised standards are published, ILAC/IAF decides on the transition period for the implementation of the revised standard. After the close of the transition period, the information provided by the accreditation body to the accredited conformity assessment body (e.g. the accreditation certificates) shall appropriately reference the revised standard. Compliance is determined during normal assessment activities or as a separate activity.

After the close of the transition period, conformity assessment bodies accredited to older versions of the revised standard will not be recognised under the SADCA MRA.

The ILAC or IAF decisions for the transition period for each revised standard, in the form of a General Assembly resolution are published on the ILAC website and will be further communicated by SADCA.

The Standards for conformity assessment bodies currently recognised as meeting the accreditation requirements of SADCA, ILAC and IAF and covered by the SADCA MRA are:

ISO/IEC 17025	General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories	Calibration laboratories
ISO/IEC 17025	General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories	Testing laboratories
ISO 15189	Medical laboratories – requirements for quality and competence	Medical testing laboratories
ISO/IEC 17020	Conformity assessment - Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection	Inspection bodies
ISO/IEC 17021-1	Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements	Management System Certification
	Normative documents to be used in combination with ISO/IEC 17021-1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For Certification of Environmental Management System (EMS) – ISO/IEC TS 17021-2 - For Certification of Quality Management System (QMS) – ISO/IEC TS 17021-3 	



Annexure C: SADCA MRA Recognition Certificate



Be it known that

Accreditation Body Name (ACRONYM)

Has been accepted as a member of the

**Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation
Mutual Recognition Arrangement**

for the following scopes:

Calibration: ISO/IEC 17025	<i>Day-Month-Year</i>
Testing: ISO/IEC 17025	<i>Day-Month-Year</i>
Medical testing: ISO 15189	<i>Day-Month-Year</i>
Inspection: ISO/IEC 17020	<i>Day-Month-Year</i>
Management Systems Certification: ISO/IEC 17021-1	<i>Day-Month-Year</i>

- Quality Management Systems Certification: ISO 9001 *Day-Month-Year*
- Environmental Management System (EMS) – ISO/IEC TS 17021-2 *Day-Month-Year*

AB Representative

SADCA Chair

SADCA MRA Committee Chair

**Approved by the SADCA MRA Committee in (Place) and (Date)
Signed in (Place) and (Date)**



APPENDIX A: AMENDMENT RECORD

Proposed by	Section	Change
Secretariat	Pg 2	Details of SADCA secretariat changed
Secretariat	All	Revision of entire document