



# SADCA

## Accreditation Mirror

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### SHARING ACCREDITATION GOALS: THE SADCAS EXPERIENCE

#### Why SADCAS?

The Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS) is a multi-economy accreditation body established in terms of Article 15 B of the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Annex to the South Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Trade with the primary purpose of ensuring that conformity assessment service providers operating in those SADC Member States which do not have national accreditation bodies are subject to an oversight by an authoritative body. Typically, in the developed world, each country has its own accreditation body but within the SADC region considering the cost of establishing and sustaining such a body and further taking into account the limited financial and human resources, the region decided to establish one accreditation body which services the accreditation needs of a number of countries. Over the years, SADCAS the first multi economy accreditation body in the world has proved to be a viable, cost effective and sustainable model which optimizes limited financial and human resources. A number of other regions in the world such as the Gulf region, Economic Community of West African States (UEMOA), Caribbean Islands etc. have benchmarked on the “home grown” SADCAS model, a concept developed by a group of experts from the SADC region.

#### Achievements So Far

SADCAS is now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year of operation and accreditations continue to grow in terms of field and scope of accreditation, sectorial coverage and also in terms of geographical diversity having accredited facilities in Lesotho and Cote d'Ivoire and having accredited the first water meter verification laboratory during the past 12 months. By 30 April 2020, SADCAS had issued 168 accreditation certificates to 136 accredited facilities in 13 SADC Member States namely: Tanzania (30); Zimbabwe (29); Botswana (21); Namibia (15); Zambia (10); Eswatini (9); DRC (5); Mozambique (5); Malawi (3); Angola (3); Seychelles (2); Madagascar (1) and Lesotho (1); and two non SADC countries Ghana (1) and Cote d'Ivoire (1). This represents a remarkable 35% growth in new accreditations during the year and 39% growth in all accreditations including scope extensions. At the same time, SADCAS had cumulatively conducted 189 training courses in 13 SADC Member States as part of its efforts to develop capacity of conformity assessment bodies for accreditation. A total of 41 accreditation applications from 10 SADC Member States namely: Tanzania (11); Malawi (8); Zimbabwe (5); Botswana (5); Namibia (4); Zambia (3); Madagascar (2) Mozambique (1); Eswatini (1); and DRC (1); and were at various stages of processing. Over the years, operational income has been increasing. The 2018/19 financial year saw a 41% increase in income from operations whilst generally dependency on government funding has been reducing from 100% as at 2009 to 26% as at 31 March 2019. SADCAS services are focused on the priority sectors for development in selected value chains as identified in the SADC Industrial Policy.

Seven (7) out of the eight (8) accreditation schemes offered by SADCAS are internationally recognized with SADCAS having extended its international recognition to the Management Systems certification bodies accreditation scheme in November 2019. This means that the certificates issued by SADCAS accredited calibration/testing/veterinary/verification/medical laboratories, and certification and inspection bodies are recognized in 103 countries worldwide thus removing the need for repetitive conformity assessment checks. Effectively this means that through internationally recognized accreditation SADC Member States serviced by SADCAS have better access to 103 foreign markets – A truly global reach.

#### Benefits of Internationally Recognized Accreditation

In addition to increasing business efficiencies, competitiveness of products and enhancing market access, at a macro level accreditation helps by reducing the regulatory burden upon commercial organizations. Making regulation more effective and less onerous is a common goal for governments across the world.



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With confidence in the conformity assessment process underpinned by internationally recognized accreditation, standards can be used to support a lighter touch approach to regulation, which in turn means business owners spend less time tied up in red-tape. By assuring technical competence, SADCAS plays an important role in facilitating regional integration and in the protection of health, safety and the environment thus contribute towards the achievement of the SADC ultimate goal of achieving economic growth, alleviating poverty and enhancing the standard and quality of the life of its people

**By Maureen Mutasa - SADCAS**

### Ensuring Transition to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 following COVID-19 pandemic: the case for MAURITAS

As the year 2020 ushered in one of the worst pandemics in decades, the island of Mauritius too was not spared from confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19. The immediate response of the Government of Mauritius was the imposition of a strict curfew as from 20 March 2020, lasting till the 30 May 2020, when no new cases of local transmission were detected.

Under these circumstances, MAURITAS had to postpone its planned assessment activities whereby impacting the transition of some its accredited testing and calibration laboratories to ISO/IEC 17025:2017. MAURITAS acted in full transparency and informed all its accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies on its revised transition plan for ISO/IEC 17025:2017 following ILAC communique.

With travel restrictions and quarantine measures in place, one of the major challenge faced by an accredited body in a small economy as is the case for MAURITAS, was the sourcing of the services of foreign assessors. Fortunately for MAURITAS, transition assessments started as early as from September 2019 and nearly 65 % of the assessments were already completed. In order to ensure a robust assessment exercise whereby foreign assessors are involved, MAURITAS devised a plan whereby on-site assessments will be performed by team leaders and a document review exercise done remotely by the foreign assessor. As at date, it is worthy to note that MAURITAS has already conducted assessments in 91% of its accredited laboratories, out of which 70% have already successfully transitioned to ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

As the global disruption continues to evolve, MAURITAS will have to adapt to alternative methods of conducting assessments for the year ahead while keeping the balance between health and safety and not jeopardizing the technical validity of conformity assessment exercises as one of its priority.

**By Cheshta Matadeen – MAURITAS**

### INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF MAURITAS ACCREDITATION SCHEMES

Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) has maintained its signatory status under the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for implementing the following accreditation schemes:

- Calibration Laboratories to ISO/IEC 17025:2017;
- Testing Laboratories to ISO/IEC 17025:2017;
- Management Systems Certification (ISO/IEC 17021-1,)
  - o Sub-scope Quality Management Systems (ISO/IEC 17021-3),



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- QMS (ISO 9001:2015).

AFRAC has achieved signatory status of the International Laboratories Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) and the International Accreditation Forum Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (IAF MLA) in May 2018. Under this signatory status, MAURITAS has maintained its international recognition with ILAC and IAF.

MAURITAS became signatory to the SADCA MRA in March 2019. This decision was ratified during the 23<sup>rd</sup> SADCA General Assembly held on 14 March 2019 in Namibia.

MAURITAS underwent a transition evaluation by the AFRAC/SADCA evaluation team from 01 – 03 July 2019. MAURITAS submitted the implemented corrective actions to the evaluation team. Therefore, the AFRAC MRA Council approved in November 2019 that MAURITAS had successfully transitioned to ISO/IEC 17011:2017. In this context, the next re-evaluation of MAURITAS will be a full evaluation by 25 May 2022.

## SADCAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR CERTIFICATION HOLDS ITS FIRST MEETING

The Advisory Committee for the SADCAS Certification Bodies Accreditation Scheme (CBAS) (AC.05) held its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting on 28 November 2019, at The Aviator OR Tambo Hotel in Kempton Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. The newly established Advisory Committee comprises of 15 experts from 14 SADC Member States. All the registered members of the Advisory Committee except one member each from Democratic Republic of Congo and Lesotho attended the meeting with the latter having failed to come due to a clash in meetings. The role of the regional Advisory Committee is to provide appropriate technical guidance within the field of certification. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee set up by SADCAS.



**CBAS AC in Session**

Up to date SADCAS has accredited 3 certification bodies in the Main scope Management Systems ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 and ISO/IEC 17021-2 (Environmental Management Systems to ISO 14001), ISO/IEC 17021-3 (Quality Management Systems to ISO 9001) and ISO/IEC 17021-10 (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems). A number of other certification bodies operating in the SADCAS Member States serviced by SADCAS are working towards accreditation. Although SADCAS has so far processed 2 applications under the Product Certification Bodies Accreditation Scheme, none have been accredited. Noting



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the growing interest in accreditation of certification bodies, SADCAS set up the Advisory Committee for certification.

The main purpose of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting was to provide an overview of SADCAS, update on developments in SADCAS and at the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), overview of the certification bodies accreditation scheme and to discuss the role of Advisory Committees. The meeting started off with introductions during which members were updated on developments in certification activities in the various countries with a number indicating that they were working towards accreditation and sharing the scopes of their certification activities and intended scope extensions. On developments at IAF the Committee was informed about the IAF Global database which houses and provides an authoritative source for validating accredited certifications issued all over the world. The Committee was also informed about the IAF Multi lateral Arrangement and the efforts underway to extend the scope of the IAF Multi Lateral Arrangement IAF MLA to cover Business Continuity Management Systems etc. The Advisory Committee members were also informed about the SADCAS accreditation process, reviewed the accreditation criteria and IAF Mandatory Documents and SADCAS requirements for accreditation under the Management Systems Certification Bodies and Product Certification Bodies Accreditation Schemes. In order to identify the areas requiring technical supporting documents, the Committee established a Working Group led by Mr Ranganai Mutonono to map out all the requirements documents and IAF documents to use as a basis for identifying those areas requiring supporting documents. This measure was taken so as to ensure that the Committee does not reinvent the wheel and also to avoid duplication of efforts in developing such documents.



***Regional CBAS AC Pose for a Photo***

Mrs Lorna Shikongo - Kuvare was elected Chair of the Advisory Committee. A Documents Working Group of the Advisory Committee was also established.

The meeting which was chaired by Mrs Mutasa, SADCAS CEO was very interactive and members appreciated the presentations made during the meeting including the presentation on the SADCAS accreditation fee structure and strategies in place to maintain the competitiveness of SADCAS fees. All the presentations and discussions held during the meeting provided the Advisory Committee members with a good understanding of



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their roles and responsibilities and developments at SADCAS and IAF following which they were all committed to undertake specific agreed tasks through meeting and electronic means.

**By Maureen Mutasa – SADCAS**

## **MALAWI BUREAU OF STANDARDS HAS DONE IT AGAIN!!!**

The Malawi Bureau of Standards Quality Assurance Services Department (MBS QA Services) has been accredited by SADCAS under the Main Scope: Management Systems (ISO/IEC 17021-1), Sub-scope: Quality Management Systems (ISO/IEC 17021-3) ISO 9001 in the sectors food products and beverages, tobacco, rubber and plastics. The MBS QA Services Department is in fact the 3<sup>rd</sup> certification body in the 14 SADC Member States serviced by SADCAS to be accredited by SADCAS. The certificate which was issued on 12 August 2019 is valid for 5 years until 11 August 2024.

The certificate was handed over during a ceremony held on 7 February 2019 at the Sunbird Mount Soche Hotel in Blantyre, Malawi. The ceremony started off with a prayer by Mr Masautso Ngamwane, the National Accreditation Focal Point (NAFP) – Malawi which is housed within the MBS with the other NAFP- Malawi being housed at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism. The Director General of Malawi Bureau of Standards, Mr Mr Symon Mandala delivered the welcome remarks during which he articulated the importance of accreditation in national development plans and further shared the plans to extend the scopes of accreditation to other areas of operation all in an effort to provide internationally recognized competitive conformity assessment services in Malawi.



**From Left to right: Dr Kufambata, Chairman MBS Board of Directors; Mr Mandala, MBS Director General ; Mrs Mutasa, SADCAS CEO; Honourable Salim Bagus, Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism; and Dr Ndala, Principle Secretary Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism**

In her speech Mrs Maureen P Mutasa, informed the guests about the process that MBS QA Service went through from submission of application on 28 February 2018 to completeness check, document review and



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initial assessment culminating in accreditation on 12 August 2019. It took Malawi Bureau of Standards a good 18 months from application to accreditation. Given the complexity of today's supply chains, reassurance in the conformity assessments that are performed in another jurisdiction or market sector is essential. "Without a level of confidence, the free exchange of goods and services risks being hampered by technical barriers or varying levels of quality, thereby increasing costs for importers, exporters with the end user, the consumers whom we all are suffering the most from the blow" she said. She noted that in many economies now accreditation is being embraced by governments as a mandatory activity in many regulated areas because of the benefits accreditation brings to help governments meet their responsibilities and safeguard the public and protect the environment as well as in promoting trade. "Accreditation of MBS QA services could not have come at a more opportune time following the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by 52 countries and ratification by 24 countries. "Technically the AfCFTA is now in force unlocking a market of 1.3 billion people across African Borders" she remarked. Accreditation is poised to play an even greater role as a transparent and nondiscriminatory means of assuring technical competence of conformity assessment service providers.

The SADCAS CEO then informed of the world's exclusive global database for accredited management system certifications officially launched recently by International Accreditation Forum (IAF) of which SADCAS is now signatory to its Multi-Lateral Arrangement (IAF MLA). The database provides businesses and governments the ability to digitally validate an organization's certification(s) to determine if a certificate is valid and if the certification body issuing the certificate is accredited to issue certifications to that standard. IAF CertSearch <https://www.iafcertsearch.org>, the largest global database for accredited certifications, currently includes around 400,000 valid certifications across more than 150 economies covering a range of sectors. With over 4000 certification bodies and 68 IAF MLA signatory accreditation bodies globally, validation of certifications across supply chains can be difficult. The aggregation of certification data in one global database – IAF CertSearch - makes the validation process simple and efficient. IAF CertSearch, a tool that supports procurement has now been dubbed the game changer for accredited certification, improving the awareness, integrity and value of accredited certification. Organizations will no longer be able to claim to have an accredited certification when they do not. By virtue of being accredited by SADCAS which is signatory to the IAF MLA, MBS QA Services QMS certifications will be showcased worldwide. She urged MBS QA Services to maintain their hard earned accreditation and then ended her speech by congratulating MBS on this noble achievement and welcomed MBS QA Services to the exclusive club of internationally recognized certification bodies.

In his remarks and before inviting the guest of honour to the podium, Dr Dalisto Kafumbata, the Chairman of the MBS Board of Directors outlined the journey towards accreditation, the reasons why MBS embarked on the journey and highlighted the challenges faced along the way. He then thanked all the cooperating partners EU, UNIDO, NORAD and UNDP for the funding provided to upgrade the quality infrastructure of Malawi. He also thanked the Government of Malawi who are funding the new MBS buildings and then concluded his remarks with a commitment to maintain the hard-earned accreditation which he referred to as the Springboard for more successes".

In his speech the guest of honour Honourable Salim Ibrahim Bagus, Member of Parliament and Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, congratulated the MBS for this achievement another cap for MBS which was recently crowned the best performing parastatal in Malawi. "With MBS QA Services now internationally recognized there is no reason why local Companies should use external certification services saving the country much needed foreign currency," he said. The Honourable Minister prided in having MBS QA Services being accredited by our own multi economy accreditation body SADCAS. He shared the President's vision as articulated under Development Strategy #3 of transforming Malawi's economy from a net importer to an exporter of value - added goods and the measures put in place to achieve this vision such as developing Malawi's conformity assessment infrastructure. The Guest of Honour also informed of Government efforts to implement ISO 9001 in all Government departments a project which is already underway. He then shared with



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guests the ambitious project which is now at 92% completion of the new building for the MBS. In his closing remarks, the guest of honour thanked all the cooperating partners EU, UNIDO, UNDP, NORAD for their financial and technical assistance in upgrading the quality infrastructure of Malawi assistance and reiterated the Government commitment to quality as documented in the Malawi Quality policy.

After the guest of honour key note address, Mrs Mutasa then handed over the accreditation certificate to Mr Mandala who handed over the certificate through Dr D Kafumbata the MBS Board Chairman to the Honourable Minister who was accompanied to the ceremony by Dr Ken Ndala, the Principle Secretary in the Ministry of Industry Trade and Tourism.



***Guests at the MBS QA Services certificate handover ceremony pose for a group photo after the ceremony at Mount Soche Sunbird Hotel in Blantyre***

A vote of thanks was given by Mrs Stipheria Kanyenda the Director of Ceremonies following which a closing prayer was given by Mr Steven Kuyeri MBS Director of Testing Services. Guests were then invited to a cocktail party. The handover ceremony was attended by about over 55 MBS management and staff, Government officials, captains of industry, invited guests and the media. Media interviews were held with the guest of honour, the Principle Secretary and the SADCAS CEO.

Maureen Mutasa – SADCAS

***By Maureen Mutasa -SADCAS***

## **ACCREDITATION OF PROFICIENCY TESTING PROVIDERS & REFERENCE MATERIAL PRODUCERS**

SANAS received international recognition for the accreditation of proficiency testing providers & reference material producers. SANAS went through a joint evaluation from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2019, conducted by the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC), International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). The purpose of the joint evaluation was to obtain evidence to determine whether:



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- ❖ SANAS has completed the transition to the requirements of the standard ISO/IEC 17011:2017 and has implemented its revised management system in compliance with new version of the standard.
- ❖ SANAS is still fully complying with International Accreditation Forum Multilateral Recognition Agreement (IAF MLA) signatory status for accreditation of product certification bodies.
- ❖ SANAS should be recommended as a full signatory to International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) for the accreditation of Reference Material Producers (RMP) and Proficiency Testing Providers (PTP).

## The Evaluation team confirmed that:

- ❖ SANAS has successfully and sustainably updated and implemented their management System in accordance with the new edition of ISO/IEC 17011: 2017.
- ❖ SANAS operates its RMP, PTP, and Product Certification Body accreditation programmes substantially in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011:2017.
- ❖ RMP's accredited by SANAS were assessed against and found to comply with the requirements of ISO 17034.
- ❖ PTP's accredited by SANAS were also assessed against and found to comply with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17043.
- ❖ Product Certification Bodies accredited by SANAS were assessed against and found to comply with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065.

On 11 December 2019 the ILAC MRA declared that SANAS' signatory status was extended to include the accreditation of PTP to ISO/IEC 17043. This means that SANAS accredited PTP can apply to SANAS to use the Accredited CAB combined ILAC MRA mark on their reports, in accordance with SANAS R03 document "Conditions for use of accreditation symbols, reference to accreditation and combined marks". This clearly means that PTP and RMP that are SANAS accredited can now enjoy international recognition benefits.

Although the ILAC MRA Council declared last year in December that SANAS signatory status was extended for both PT and RMP, SANAS could not implement the RMP decision, until ILAC had a region recognised for RMP. On 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 ILAC confirmed that the scope of recognition for SANAS to include the accreditation of RMP to ISO/IEC 17034, can now be implemented.

This is a big deal to SANAS as an Accreditation Body (AB) and to our Country that we are now International recognised on accreditation of PTP and RMP, as these are the cornerstones of traceability for testing laboratories. PT also provides assurance to the providers of testing and calibration services that they can trust results produced.

All the contact details of accredited facilities can be obtained from SANAS website, [www.sanas.co.za](http://www.sanas.co.za)