



Southern African Development Community Accreditation Newsletter

June 2006

**The Regional Accreditation Structure of SQAM
(Standardisation, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and
Metrology)**

SADCAS holds inaugural AGM

SADCAS has held its inaugural Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Namibia, Windhoek during April 2006. Attended by 28 members representing SADC member states, the chairman, Mr Othy Kaakunga of Namibia, opened the proceeding by sketching the background of SADCAS and how SADCAS was established.

He noted that as the European Accreditation [EA] represents a number of accreditation bodies in Europe, SADC represents a number of accreditation bodies such as SANAS, MAURITAS and SADCAS in the SADC region. He added that for a period of time the region has been labouring on the establishment of SADCAS, a regional accreditation body. This regional accreditation body that would be servicing the accreditation needs of the SADC region and beyond must be acceptable to the governments in the region, even to those governments who have their own national accreditation bodies. SADCAS would be serving the needs of those Member States who, at present do not operate their own accreditation bodies, but were working towards the establishment of their own accreditation body.

In addition, he added that SADCAS has fulfilled the guidelines of both ISO 17011 and SADC subsidiarity status and was legally incorporated during December 2005 under Botswana law. However, it still required further competencies and the establishment of various structures. An interim Board was elected in 2005 but now required a Board who would be legally responsible for the operational matter of SADCAS. This Board would be responsible for the implementation of an action plan and the motivations for subsidiarity status.

The following members were elected to the SADCAS Board by the 14 Member States:

- Mr R A Kaakunga - Namibia
- Mr A H M Tukai - Tanzania
- Mr M Mukelabai - Zambia
- Mr C T Mokhorro - Lesotho
- Mr S H Carstens - South Africa
- Mr M A Peet - South Africa
- Dr O Chinyamakobvu - Zimbabwe
- Mrs B M Mutabazi - Tanzania

It was proposed that Mr Kaakunga of Namibia remain as Chairman of SADCAS Board of

Directors. This was seconded by all the other Board members. In his acceptance, Mr Kaakunga thanked the Board members for the confidence expressed in him and committed himself to continue working for the removal of technical barriers to trade in the SADC region.

It was agreed by the Board that the next meeting, scheduled for 25 May 2006 be held in Pretoria, South Africa. Items that would be addressed would be the procedures, consultants, finances, auditors, the business plan, etc. Mrs Mutabazi would not be available for the meeting but urged the Board to go ahead with the meeting. Board members would be travelling to South Africa on 24 May 2006. While SADCAS has yet to become operational, there were no financial reports or budgets presented. However, the SADCAS project plan would be used as guidance. Comprehensive reporting would be given to the SADCAS members at the next annual general meeting.

SADCA forges accreditation into Southern Africa

The 10th meeting of SADCA, was held during the gathering of 21st SADC SQAM technical experts in Windhoek, Namibia. Chairperson, Ms Beatrice Mutabazi of Tanzania, extended a special welcome to colleagues from other regional Accreditation Bodies and Mr. Graham Talbot of UKAS representing the European Accreditation.

She also extended special appreciation to the donor representatives, Mr. Martin Kaiser and Stefan Wallerath of PTB Germany and colleagues of the South African **dti**. Also welcomed were International organizations' representatives Dr Otto Loesener of UNIDO, Mr Magana from the BIML, France, Mr Sam Mwambazi of COMESA, Dr Seton Bennett from NPL of England, Mr Torleif Hauge of NA Norway and the East Africa Community, Mr Dominic Ondoro KEBS, Kenya.

She added that while 2005-06 was a busy year for the SADCA PMC members, especially with regard to the implementation of actions raised during the 9th SADCA meeting. The first role was to ensure that NAFPs were launched, and secondly to ensure that SADCAS was incorporated as a legal entity.

The Chair commented that this was indeed a challenging project as the entire world was waiting to observe how SADC Member States in Africa could succeed in sharing their meagre resources with one regional accreditation body.

In addition, the SADCAS Board of Directors (BoD) participated in a seminar on corporate governance followed by an intensive meeting on the memorandum and articles of association. The challenge ahead of SADCAS is indeed to make it work and all the donors are eager to ensure its success. There are various schemes for assisting emerging Accreditation Bodies offered by ILAC and IAF and other international organisations that should be utilised.

"While accreditation is a big challenge; demonstration of technical competence has no compromise. For those that have been subjected to assessment, you know what it is and for those that initiated their NABs, you know how difficult it is to be technically operational. The job for all of us SADCA members is to assist the SADCAS BoD and the appointed Chief Executive to demonstrate the capability to offer accreditation in our SADC Member States," the chair stressed.

Each Member State briefly reported on the accreditation activities in their respective countries. From the reports it was evident that accreditation awareness was increasing in the region and that Namibia was busy with an Accreditation Bill. On the aspect of training, Mrs Mutasa stated that it was essential that the correct delegates were chosen to attend technical assessor courses and as such it was vital for the NAFPs to liaise with their SADCA members due to the substantial amount of donor funding invested in these experts.

The Chair noted that at international level a number of initiatives were aimed at supporting developing countries to participate in proficiency testing schemes. It was important for the region to respond to these international questionnaires to make the international community aware of the needs of SADC Member States in proficiency testing schemes.

On the aspect of SADCA, the focus shifted during 2005 to that of focusing on SADCAS subsequent to the registration thereof. The SADC Secretariat thanked the South African government and **the dti** for their continued support. Namibia thanked SANAS for the excellent technical support on accreditation in the region and also thanked the South African **dti** for their support. It was noted that this enabled accreditation to develop at the pace it has.

The Regional Coordinator reported on the AFRIMETS meeting he attended which was hosted under the auspices of SADC MET and NEPAD. Representatives of SADC MET, NEPAD, ARSO, AU, BIPM, APMP, Euromet, SADC and EAC were also present at this meeting. This was for the establishment of AFRIMETS which comprises both SADC MET and SADC MEL. AFRIMETS would be the African metrology body and consists of a number of regional bodies dealing with metrology and legal metrology. This effectively meant that there was an African body for standards, ARSO, and an African body for metrology / legal metrology but no African body for accreditation.

Focusing on SADCAS, it was reported that a critical component of the funding was for the drafting and completion of the SADCAS Strategic and Business Plan. Furthermore, SADCAS has been registered as a non-profit company under Botswana laws on 06 December 2005. The SADCA legal coordinator, Mr Kaakunga has already identified the additional steps necessary for the establishment and operation of SADCAS and will be attending to these activities.

Four NAFPs, namely Angola and Mozambique have received attachment training at INMETRO, Brazil, and the DRC and Madagascar at COFRAC, France. Sincere appreciation was expressed to the PTB of Germany who funded the training.

Commenting on the way forward for the NAFPs the Chair noted the following:

- the importance of the continuation of accreditation awareness in the Member States;
- assistance by NAFPs in the preparation of their national conformity assessment bodies for SADCAS accreditation;
- submitting of quarterly reports;
- appointment of a second NAFP in each of the Member States;
- completion of the outstanding NAFP launches.

The NAFP-subgroup for Marketing and Publicity comprising of the NAFPs from Tanzania, Lesotho, Zambia and Mauritius were updating the SADCAS brochure. Angola, Mozambique and DRC were thanked for the translation of the brochure. The Chair requested further assistance with the translation of the updated brochure. With the inclusion of Madagascar, assistance could be given to the DRC with the French translations.

Additionally, SADCA have published articles in a number of regional and international newsletters. Whenever SADCA members were making presentations at any forum, they were encouraged to mention SADCAS and its activities.

The SADCA Vice Chair, Mrs Marobela, was appointed the SADCA representative on the IAF Marketing and Communications group. She will be assisted by Mr Dominic Mwakangale of Tanzania. SADCA members were encouraged to submit articles to the SADCA secretariat for publication on an ongoing basis. Mr Graham Talbot of UKAS, England and who is also the Chair of the ILAC Marketing and Communications group stated that they would welcome articles from the region. In addition he would like 'Good News stories' or examples where accreditation was useful which he would publish on the ILAC website.

Mrs Beatrice Mutabazi was re-elected as Chair of SADCA and Mrs Masego Marobela was re-elected as Vice Chair.

SADCA thanked the Namibian hosts for all the arrangements for the meeting and their hospitality and also appreciated the high profile delegation at the opening of the SQAM meeting.

SADC NAFP update

Subsequent to the appointment of the National Accreditation Focal Point (NAFP) representative in each member state of the SADC region, emphasis has been placed on establishing a sound understanding of the importance accreditation plays in demonstrating conformity to international best practices.

Dedicated theoretic and practical implementation of ISO 17025 training courses and detached training at various accreditation bodies has empowered numerous NAFP technical specialists with the responsibilities of the day-to-day activity associated with accreditation.

During a two day workshop held at the Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) the writer was able to interact with the responsible NAFP representatives and update readers on the latest developments in member states.

Angola

Mr Carmo dos Santos, NAFP representative for Angola was enthusiastic about the creation, by his government, of the National Department responsible for accreditation, which is directly linked to the Ministry of Industry and IANORQ (Angolan Institute of Standards and Quality). Launched on 02 February 2006, national government has recognised the need and importance of accreditation to eliminate technical barriers to trade.

He added that whilst he has attended training in Brazil during August 2006, additional training courses are planned in Sweden. Complimented by an assistant, Carmo indicated that during their inauguration, 36 laboratories and 4 certified organisations were present and were exposed to the latest developments of accreditation in Angola and the region.

"Very positive response was received from the delegates regarding localised accreditation and a number of enquiries have already been received," Carmo added.

However, he said that a number of export orientated organisations, especially in the oil, gas and diamond industries, still needed to be sensitised about accreditation and the benefits of international recognition.

Contact: xinasantos12@yahoo.com.br

Botswana

Not launched as yet, Mr Dennis Juta was very upbeat about the planned launch of the NAFP during March 2006. Nonetheless, a national steering committee has already been formed, comprising of four members from BOBS, the Department of Water Affairs, Material Testing Services and the NAFP.

Whilst three technical assessors have already been identified, two have already received training and will disseminate the lessons learnt and share experiences at local meetings.

Of priority, he stated, was the promotion of information across industry to potential clients in the calibration, testing and certification arenas. The NAFP has been successful in attending and delivering presentations at local workshops, including the 14th Medical Laboratory Science Workshop during late 2005 and at the ISO 17025 Forum. In addition, the SADCA brochure has been very well received at these meetings and has stimulated a number of informal discussions and enquiries.

"The universal acceptance of test results has been very well received by delegates at the workshops already attended, but progress is very slow and we are determined to ensure that the NAFP is a success in Botswana," Dennis said.

Contact: djuta@gov.bw

Swaziland

The NAFP of Swaziland has not yet been launched. According to Mr Henson Dlamini, the Council of the Swaziland Standards Authority is the National Standards Body responsible for standardisation, quality assurance and accreditation in the country and was officially launched by the Minister of Enterprise and Employment on 7th December 2005. Operating within this structure, the NAFP has embarked on a process of recruiting officers to officially launch the NAFP in Swaziland. One person has already received training and additional training will be needed for the new appointees.

To date, the SADCA newsletter and the SADCA brochure has been used extensively to disseminate information through the FSE/SCCI, Swaziland Association of Quality and Standards and the local chambers of commerce.

Issues presently facing local exporters include mounting international pressure to demonstrate conformity assessment for meat processing organisations, medical laboratories, sugar refineries, engineering works, environmental health and occupational safety.

Mr Henson Dlamini, also responsible for coordination all SQAM issues, further added that confusion still exists between accreditation and certification. "A number of organisations still believe that an ISO 9000 certification system, buffeted by intercomparisons, will suffice to demonstrate competence. Whilst no accredited laboratories exist nationally, traceability is imported via SANAS accredited laboratories."

He concluded by saying that a number of enquiries for accreditation have been received to date.

Contact: swazisqam@swazi.net

Lesotho

Operating under the guidance of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Lesotho NAFP is expected to be launched by June 2006.

Represented by Mr Motjoka Makara, presentations supplemented with the SADCA brochure have been made to various industries during SQAM awareness campaigns. He added that whilst most of the industries targeted include the textile sector, little response has been received from delegates.

According to Motjoka, a concerted effort is needed to disseminate information on the importance and benefits of accreditation. He believes this should be done in conjunction with national SQAM initiatives. In conclusion, a national publicity campaign will be launched prior to the launch of the NAFP.

Contact: lessqa@leo.co.ls

Tanzania

Technical barriers to trade have severely affected the Tanzanian fish industry in recent years. International inspectors refused to accept non accredited test results as proof of competence subsequent to 1999. The national government has initiated a proactive plan to rectify the non conformances to ensure the continuation of international trade. The approach was launched with proficiency testing schemes in the food related industries.

“Proactively promoting accreditation in Tanzania is the responsibility of the NAFP sub-committee comprising of TBS TIRDO, GCLA and the National Fish Quality Control Laboratory,” commented Mr Dominic H Mwakangale during our interview.

Launched during February 2005 and funded by the USDA during an awareness campaign aimed at industry, private organisations, non governmental organisations, government and the media; a very positive response has been received toward accreditation.

“Fundamental to our success, the importance of proficiency testing schemes, internal audits and assessment to ISO 17025 has been implemented in laboratories prior to submitting applications for accreditation to SANAS.”

To date, a number of seminars aimed at testing laboratories and industry specific have been completed, including a PTB sponsored medical laboratory workshop, attended by over 100 delegates.

“Our approach has been to firstly train management and thereafter the technicians / chemists. Of notable importance is the translation of training material into Swahili, the local language.”

Donor support from Denmark and UNIDO had afforded the NAFP an opportunity to present additional training to a number of organisations including regulators, food and drug companies, Tanzanian Bureau of Standards and the Government Chemist.

In total, eight applications for accreditation have been submitted to SANAS. Furthermore, five national proficiency schemes have been initiated including a national scheme for

water.

According to Dominic, a centralised system utilised to co-ordinate all accreditation activities has improved the service offered to laboratories. In conclusion, he commented that the NAFP is fully supported by the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Contact: dhmwakangale@yahoo.com

Mauritius

Comprising of four staff members, the Mauritas Act of 1998 makes provision for the accreditation of Test, Calibration, Certification and Inspection bodies. This has resulted in a number of successes for the NAFP with over 100 laboratories in the biological, medical, chemical, environmental and other industries.

Focussing on awareness, seminars and workshops, Mr Chankar Bheekhun commented that over 200 delegates have been trained. In addition, brochures, SANAS guidance and regulatory documents, a telephone service to industry and ad hoc specialist meetings have played an essential role in the four applications for accreditation submitted to date. A further four applications are expected to be submitted by June 2006 and an application for a certification body by August 2006.

"Following international developments, the Mauritian government has amended regulations to include accreditation as a prerequisite for all biomedical laboratories in the next year," Chankar said.

Following this, a seminar attended by 20 delegates, focussed on ISO 15189 with specialised training on the technical and management requirements in preparation for accreditation.

A three year government approved action plan to build local capacity in training and consultancy services has resulted in twinning between Mauritas and SANAS. To date, 22 potential technical assessors have already been identified.

Contact: cbheekhun@mail.gov.mu

Zambia

Mr Nteema Muzandu of the Zambian Bureau of Standards (ZABS) in his dual role as NAFP coordinator and responsible for the National Product Certification Scheme in Zambia discussed various projects initiated across industry to promote the use of a harmonised Afrocentric approach to accreditation on the African continent.

Three awareness campaigns have been successfully concluded and were attended by some 100 delegates across various industry sectors. He added that the Q&A sessions stimulated vigorous debate and has led to the establishment of a needs analysis for industry.

Presently, information is being disseminated to industry using the SADCA brochure via email and the recently launched newsletter will also be used as a vehicle to update industry role players.

A number of enquiries have already been processed from the ZABS laboratories and

private testing and calibration laboratories.

As yet, no enquiries have been received for any certification bodies for accreditation.

Commenting of the stringent requirements for safety and accident prevention in the mining industry, Nteema elaborated extensively on the testing of mine hoists. This interaction with the mining industry has culminated in a Non Destructive Testing / Chemical testing laboratory receiving accreditation.

Of fundamental importance, the support received by the Minister of Trade and Industry has been pivotal in sensitising industry about accreditation.

Accredited Laboratory:

Alfred H Knight Zambia Limited - Chemical, Mechanical, Metallurgical Testing

Contact: nteema@yahoo.com

Zimbabwe

The NAFP was officially launched during September 2005 by the Minister of Trade and Industry to a delegation of Zimbabwean SQAM institutes, industry, SANAS, international government representatives and media.

Said Mr Karani of the Ministry of Industry and International Trade, to date two delegates have received training from SANAS and numerous SADCA brochures have been mailed to government departments and industry role players.

A number of enquiries have been received to date, with a few accredited laboratories.

Accredited Laboratories:

Tobacco Research Board - Chemical and Microbiological Analyses

African Associated Mines (Private) Limited - Physical, Environmental, Asbestos Testing

Zimplats Chemical Analyses

Zimbabwe (SAZ) - QMS Certification, ISO 9001:2000 and EMS Certification, ISO 14001

Zimbabwe National Quality Assurance Programme (ZINQAP) - Proficiency Testing by Interlaboratory Comparisons

Contact: miit@indandcom.co.zw

Malawi

The non acceptance of test results from laboratories in Malawi has been highlighted by the Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology as a serious impediment to stimulate growth, especially in the agricultural and fish (HACCP) industries. Positive commitment from government in addressing the crisis has culminated in a national budget allocation to the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) for the initial costs of accreditation.

Mr Davlin Chokazinga said that while the current situation remains positive the cost implications of accreditation remain prohibitive in terms of the local economy. Opportunities to use donor funding have been investigated.

Nonetheless, he remained positive and elaborated on the workshop attended by 30 delegates on accreditation and some 100 delegates that attended a SANAS ISO 17025 system course.

Furthermore, the SADCA brochure has been adapted to the local environment and further workshops are currently being planned for the agri-based industries.

Whilst no laboratories have been accredited as yet, he believes that the second half of 2006 may produce more fruitful results.

Contact: davlin@mbs.malawi.net

Namibia

Having received financial support from Sweden, Mr Kaakunga said the NAFP has not yet been launched. However, he added that the sponsored laboratory training attracted some 100 delegates.

While SQAM issues are now only being addressed on a national level, the SADCA brochure is used extensively in promoting accreditation.

On the issue of traceability, numerous SANAS accredited laboratories are presently actively offering on-site calibrations to local industries, and one laboratory has already received accreditation by SANAS.

Accredited Laboratory:

Zenner Meters (Pty) Ltd - VOLUME: mechanical water meters for cold potable water

Contact: kaakunga@mti.gov.na

Democratic Republic of Congo

Experienced veteran Mr Kanama with 28 years expertise in calibrations, testing, inspection, verification and quality is responsible for the DRC NAFP which was launched in July 2005. Operating under the Ministry of External Trade, 75 delegates have received training on ISO 17025 and accreditation in various regions. Plans are already at an advanced stage for 40 delegates to attend an ISO 17025 workshop during 2006.

According to Mr Kanama, industry is regularly informed of local and African developments in accreditation using the SADCA brochure and seminars organised by the NAFP and the EU. He added that numerous requests have been received regarding accreditation, the most prominent thereof is the National Cement Works – requiring accreditation to bolster their exports.

As yet, no laboratories have been accredited; however, industry is slowly recognising the need to develop quality management systems that meet international norms, to enhance the national capabilities.

Contact: kamama_viki@yahoo.fr

Conclusions

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is designed to address the current challenges facing the African continent. Issues including underdevelopment and the continued marginalisation of Africa need radical intervention, to develop a new Vision that will guarantee Africa's Renewal.

The market access initiative of NEPAD aims to increase the production and improve the competitiveness and diversification of the domestic private sector, especially in the agro-industrial, mining and manufacturing sub-sectors, with potential for exports and employment creation.

Actions at the African level include establishing national measurement institutions to ensure harmonisation with the international metrology system, to ensure that testing laboratories and certification organisations are set up to support the relevant national technical regulations and pursue mutual recognition of test and certification results with Africa's major trading partners.

While not all member states have launched the NAFP's in their respective states, the majority of states have not only successfully established entrenched NAFP's but have also been responsible for coordinating the process of establishing accredited organisations across SADC. In the case of non established NAFP's, significant groundwork has already been established, however, these require prioritisation to expedite the processes. Furthermore, awareness has been established in using an internationally recognised accreditation body to reduce technical barriers to trade. The writer believes that a common thread exists between Member States is indicative of the Afrocentric approach used to take cognisance of local conditions – that will demonstrate our competence!

Ed



Last updated: 05 June 2006

© 2006 All rights reserved. Southern African Development Community Accreditation
