



**REPORT ON THE SADC STANDARDIZATION, QUALITY ASSURANCE,
ACCREDITATION AND METROLOGY (SQAM) PROGRAMME**

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Elimination of TBTs in the SADC region is addressed under the framework known as the TBT Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade. The Trade and Industry, Finance and Investment Directorate is a custodian of this framework and it supports the SADC Free Trade Area. There are four International Cooperating Partners/International Development Partners (ICP/IDPs) supporting the developmental aspects of the SQAM programme on TBT components at a regional level. These are the European Union, GIZ, PTB, SATH/USAID. Support for national quality infrastructure projects is obtained from UNIDO and is Member State driven.

1.2. For SADC Member States, the SQAM Programme has been actively engaged on assisting Member States to have available at least a basic technical infrastructure and in further building capacity as required by the TBT Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade. The SADC SQAM Programme follows a strategic proactive and developmental approach to continually strengthen the quality infrastructure available in the region in the quest to reduce and eliminate TBTs. Main activities include:

- a. Raising awareness for relevant stakeholders in SADC Member States on the importance and benefits of SQAM;
- b. Organizing and convening SADC Annual Quality Awards at regional level;
- c. Facilitating accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs);
- d. Facilitating training for Lead and Technical Assessors for SADC Accreditation Services (SADCAS);
- e. Operationalizing the SADC Technical Barriers to Trade Stakeholder's Committee;
- f. Facilitating the identification of Technical Regulations hindering trade; and
- g. Coordinating the harmonization of standards, measurement systems and conformity assessment procedures, for harmonization of technical regulations

1.3. Progress on the implementation of the activities is summarized below.

2 PROMOTION CAMPAIGN OF THE SADC ANNUAL QUALITY AWARDS

2.1. SADC Annual Quality Awards serve as a platform for private sector engagement on quality of goods and services. The objective of the awards is to recognise enterprises that are implementing

quality management principles for competitiveness and market access. In the last year, four Member States organized their national quality competitions with a total of fourteen entries received from three Member States, covering categories on Organisation of the year, Product of the year, Service of the year, Exporter of the year, for both large and small and medium enterprises and Individual Award. Out of the fourteen entries that were considered, four received awards, representing Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Etosha Fishing Corporation, a large enterprise from Namibia was awarded as SADC Organisation of the year and Exporter of the year, Nutriconsult LDA a small and medium enterprise from Mozambique was awarded for SADC Service of the year, and Schweppes Zimbabwe, a large enterprise was awarded for SADC Product of the year.

2.2. SADC Annual Quality Awards contribute to increased awareness of the importance on a quality culture and use of international standards for product competitiveness and in trade. SADC Member States continue to give support and engage departments and institutions to continue to organize the National competitions and encourage private and public sector institutions to participate.

3 PREPARATION OF CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODIES (CABS) FOR ACCREDITATION

3.1. The strategic long term plan for SADC SQAM Programme on CABs is to encourage CABs to pursue accreditation in order for their test certificates to be recognized the world over by their trading partners. The strategy is to assist CABs prepare for accreditation in way that will address seeming delays due to fundamental systems and processes not being in order for accreditation. While accreditation bodies can point out non-conformances they are not able to assist such bodies to carry out corrective actions before assessments. The idea is to assist these bodies to prepare well in order to avoid delays before accreditation.

3.2. The development of the strategy to assist CABs prepare for accreditation commenced in the 4th quarter of 2014/2015 financial year, and was expected to be finalised in the 2nd quarter of 2015/2016. So far a data collection exercise on challenges being faced by laboratories and certification bodies in their attempts to become accredited is underway. Inspection bodies will also be engaged following which the draft strategy will be developed. The strategy document was expected to be finalized by the end of March 2016. While we await the completion of the strategy, in March 2014, 23 representatives from CABs were trained on conducting vertical assessments of their own facilities.

3.3. During the 2015/16 financial year the same group will be trained on method validation in preparation for accreditation. Method validation was identified as a constraint during the vertical assessment training. Whilst a start has only just been made in training laboratory representatives in preparation for accreditation, during awareness workshops, enterprises are being encouraged to use existing accredited CABs for their conformity assessment needs which should encourage existing non-accredited CABs to seek accreditation. The conclusion of the CAB Strategy is expected to assist in getting non-accredited CABs ready to apply for accreditation.

4 TRAINING FOR LEAD AND TECHNICAL ASSESSORS

4.1. In the quest to qualify and register lead and technical assessors for the SADC Accreditation Service (SADCAS), 22 candidate Assessors who were trained on ISO/IEC 17025:2005 (ISO standard for testing and calibration bodies) earlier in 2014, received additional training in March 2015, on Technical Assessing Techniques based on ISO/IEC ISO 17025:2005 to determine their competency levels for accreditation assessments, a prerequisite for registration with SADCAS. Thirteen (13) of these trainee assessors have been recommended for mentoring. As part of mentoring, the trainees will be expected to conduct assessments in various Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) in the region under supervision by SADCAS Qualified Assessors.

4.2. Further training of Lead and Technical Assessors on ISO/IEC 17020 (Inspection Bodies), ISO 15189 (Medical Testing Laboratories), and the mentoring of Lead and Technical Assessors on ISO/IEC 17020 (Inspection bodies), ISO 15189 (Medical Testing Laboratories), ISO/IEC 17025 (Testing Laboratories) will be carried out in January 2016. The overall output of the training programme over the next two years is not only to have assessors trained but also to qualify and register them in the accordance with the ILAC/IAF requirements for international recognition.

5 SADCAS PEER EVALUATION FOR INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

5.1. In May-June 2015, SADCAS underwent a peer evaluation on the Testing Laboratory Accreditation Programme (TLAP) and Calibration Laboratory Accreditation Programme (CLAP). The evaluation team confirmed that the overall system of SADCAS meets African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) requirements. In particular the team highlighted that SADCAS operates its TLAP and CLAP substantially in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011:2004 and IAF/ILAC-A5:11/2013. Laboratories accredited by SADCAS have been assessed against and found to comply with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025: 2005. SADCAS adopts and substantially implements the applicable AFRAC and ILAC policies and guidelines. The team further noted that the full time SADCAS staff is skilled and technically qualified for the functions they perform, and that the organization has a satisfactory foundation of accreditation experience. SADCAS has access to a sufficient number of well qualified, experienced and competent assessors and experts and that SADCAS has a well-established accreditation process which is applied consistently to the accreditation of its testing and calibration laboratories.

5.2. The team submitted a recommendation to the AFRAC MRA Committee and the ILAC AMC in October 2015. SADCAS achieved signatory status of its Testing and Calibration Laboratories Accreditation Programs in the AFRAC MRA as decided by the AFRAC MRA Council on 8 October 2015. The ILAC decision will be made on 4 November 2015.

6 TRAINING OF CONFORMITY ASSESSMENTS BODIES IN THE MINING SECTOR

6.1. The effort to train testing laboratories management and staff on ISO/IEC 17025, the appropriate standard for testing laboratories, from both the private and public sector covering exploration, research and quality control in the mining and mineral processing sector in order to prepare them for accreditation is ongoing. This programme is expected to contribute to the strengthening of industrial capacities in the mining and minerals processing sector and enhance the competitiveness and integration into the world markets. The training is being conducted by SADCAS with funding via the SADC PTB Implementation Agreement.

7 OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE SADC TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE STAKEHOLDER'S COMMITTEE (SADCTBTSC)

7.1. The SADC Technical Barriers to Trade Stakeholders Committee (SADCTBTSC), an arm of the SADC SQAM Programme on private sector engagement, held a workshop in 26 – 27 August 2015. A work plan for the next year was developed. The work plan among others includes; continued awareness raising efforts for stakeholders, technical assistance for SMEs to obtain product and system certification, technical assistance with training on labelling and packaging and Good Manufacturing Practice. Stakeholders also requested for further roll out of the conformity assessment toolkit which had been developed by the SADC Cooperation on Accreditation (SADCA) and released in Kinshasa, DRC, in March 2015. The toolkit was developed to assist new conformity assessment bodies (CAB's) to understand what is required to prepare for accreditation from an accreditation body. The toolkit explains the terminology that is used and describes the whole accreditation process. It also gives tips on how to prepare a management system.

8 IDENTIFICATION AND HARMONIZATION OF TECHNICAL REGULATIONS HINDERING TRADE

8.1. On harmonization of technical regulations hindering trade, data gathering to identify technical regulations (TR) that are hindering trade and require harmonization. The questionnaire was administered at national level by national experts. A consolidated report from four Member States was considered on the 3 – 4 August 2015 during the meeting of the SADCTRLC workshop. The report identifies a total of fifteen (15) technical regulations that require harmonisation. This includes among others, biosafety regulations, second hand car regulations, importation of medicine, Standard Import Inspection Regulation, pre-packaged labelling regulations and Kimberly Process Regulations. While this list is not conclusive, texts of this regulations will be analysed further to determine their level of hindrance.

8.2. In order to guide Member States in the development of technical regulations by observing Good Regulatory Practice, Risk and Impact assessment Guidelines have been developed. The guidelines will assist regulators and legislators in taking practical evidence based decisions regarding the need for introducing, amending or withdrawing technical regulations governing the import, manufacture and sale of products. Member States representatives will be trained on these guidelines in November 2015.

9 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN E-MARKING SCHEME FOR REGULATED PRE-PACKED PRODUCTS IN THE SADC REGION

9.1. SADC Cooperation in Legal Metrology will be developing and implementing a legal metrology e-marking scheme for pre-packed products originating from any country in the SADC region, mutually recognized in all Member States, for ease of regulation, consumer protection and reduction of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs). The initial beneficiary of the project will be the Namibia Standards Institute (NSI). Key problems to be addressed include; capacity building of the LMA, Awareness and capacity building of industry role players, Gazetting of SADCMEEL documents as legal metrology technical regulations for Namibia, Development/ adoption and implementation of Namibian Standard on e-marking, Inspections and auditing of packers and Accreditation by SADCAS of the NSI's inspection services. The pilot phase of this effort covers only Namibia and the roll out to other Member States will follow once the pilot phase is completed.

9.2. The SADC region has a fairly developed legal metrology infrastructure, supported by Legal Metrology Authorities (LMAs), significantly supported by Governments. The responsibilities of the LMAs, among others, are to regulate pre-packed goods offered for sale. The SADC Cooperation in Legal Metrology (SADCMEEL) has developed harmonised documents (SADCMEEL documents 1 and SADCMEEL Document 4) for the regulation of the labelling and permissible tolerances of pre-packed goods. The level of implementation of these harmonised documents has been varied across the region.

9.3. In spite of existing legal metrology harmonised documents whose implementation is meant to eliminate Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs), prepacked products are still found to be non-compliant as they are being traded across the borders, prompting the responsible LMAs to 'lock out' such products. Those products that may comply to the harmonised SADCMEEL documents, that are not easily identifiable as such, are subjected to unnecessary inspections by the recipient LMA, thereby posing as a technical barrier to trade, and hindrance to trade facilitation.

9.4. The majority of SADC Member States do not have the capacity to develop and implement a credible scheme that will ensure that, if implemented properly, products that comply with legal metrology legislation are easily identified and allowed entry easy into the marketplace of another economy. The National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) of South Africa is the only legal metrology authority in SADC that is implementing a successful e-marking scheme based on compliance with a South African Standard (SANS 1841). Products originating from South Africa easily find their way into the SADC regional marketplace.

10 COORDINATING THE HARMONIZATION OF STANDARDS, MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES, FOR HARMONIZATION OF TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

10.1. Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Zambia and Zimbabwe have their facilities accredited under the scopes of Temperature and Mass. These facilities are being assisted in profiling their Calibration and Measurement Capabilities (CMCs) to the ultimate submission to the Key Comparison database (KCDB). A training workshop was held to train staff from these National Metrology Institutes (NMIs) in the preparation of Calibration and Measurement Capability (CMC) submissions, in the fields of Mass and Temperature, for publication in the BIPM Key Comparison Database (KCDB).

10.2. The International Committee for Weights and Measures Mutual Recognition Arrangement (CIPM MRA) is the framework through which National Metrology Institutes (NMIs) demonstrate the international equivalence of their measurement standards and the calibration and measurement certificates they issue. The outcomes of the Arrangement are the internationally recognized (peer-

reviewed and approved) Calibration and Measurement Capabilities (CMCs) of the participating institutes. Approved CMCs and supporting technical data are publicly available from the CIPM MRA database (the KCDB).

11 JOINT UNIDO-SADC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON "QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES IN SADC: AN OUTLOOK FOR COOPERATION"

11.1. In order to identify areas of cooperation and coordination and to learn from best practices, a joint UNIDO-SADC facilitated workshop on Quality Infrastructure projects and initiatives in the SADC region was organised in Gaborone, Botswana on 28 to 29 April 2015, Gaborone, Botswana. The workshop was attended by project beneficiary representatives from SADC Member States, representatives of International Development Partners and project executing agencies. Twenty two (22) (Annex 1) delegates attended the meeting representing the SADC Member States, the SADC Secretariat, SADCAS, PTB, SATH and UNIDO. Representatives from the EU-funded ACP-TBT project were unable to attend due to prior engagements. However, information pertaining to current projects in this latter project was made available. Following a series of presentations made on the objectives and progress of each of the projects/programmes pertaining to quality infrastructure in SADC, gaps were identified and possible solutions suggested for the current projects on the development of Quality Infrastructure. This is summarized in the table below and These possible solutions will be used to feed in to upcoming programmes

TABLE 1: GAPS IDENTIFIED AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Identified Gaps	Possible Solutions
Accreditation	
The importance of SADCAS and its services needs to be emphasized in Member States	Optimization of accreditation services available
	Promote SADCAS as a cost effective, viable multi-economy solution to the region's accreditation needs
	There is need for SADC Member States to support SADCAS
Awareness Raising	
Consumer and policy makers education is still lacking	Consumer education should be included in awareness creation activities
	Support projects must emphasize on consumer awareness
	Targeted awareness for policy makers also required
Capacity building	
Lack of national Quality Infrastructure Experts at national level	Organise exchange programmes or working visits to other National Standards and QI institutions to share experience and assist in building each other's capacity in the region
	Leverage partnerships for training
	Make better use of regional and local expertise and experiences in the region for project implementation

Identified Gaps	Possible Solutions
Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs)	
CABs still need to be assisted with readiness for accreditation	Support the operationalization of the Regional and National Laboratory Associations
Accreditation of CABs is a priority and needs to be advanced	Coaching of CABs in the key development sectors as identified in the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap There is need for capacity building of Inspection Services
Coordination and Governance	
No project design without participation of beneficiaries	Projects must be better coordinated for optimal utilization of limited resources
	Technical Assistance projects must be designed to meet beneficiary needs and not technical partner dictates
	There should be consultation with regional level project implementers prior to finalization of national level project plans
	Align national projects to regional agenda
Duplication of efforts exists in some areas	SADC Secretariat should take the lead in coordination efforts. An activity matrix should be developed and managed by SADC Secretariat, e.g. put on the SADC Website
	Develop mechanisms to ensure avoidance of duplication
	Cooperation in Monitoring and evaluation using common set of indicators
	Projects must take into account existing structures and promote and strengthen them, e.g. SADCAS
	Align current and future projects to the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap
	Difference in development of Quality Infrastructure in Member states should indicate to development partners where to focus their support
Weak continuity of national projects	UNIDO to consider how Member States without QI projects/programmes can be assisted
	QI is a very big area, focus interventions on limited aspects so as to achieve better results
	Mechanisms to ensure continuity and sustainability of projects and programmes

Identified Gaps	Possible Solutions
Information Sharing Platform	
No formal mechanism in place for information sharing about project activities taking place in the region	Continue to organize information sharing platforms such as this one in a more sustainable manner: e.g. reports can be presented at SADC SQAM structures annual meetings
Common challenges in the implementation of Quality Infrastructure instruments	UNIDO should give direct feedback to National Standards Bodies on key challenges faced during project implementation
Resolutions made during annual SQAM meetings not made available to current project coordinators	The national TBTEG representative to be encouraged to share this information with executing agencies
Private Sector Engagement	
Stakeholder engagement and consultation needs to be emphasized	Project design stage must take on board all stakeholders including the private sector
	More direct assistance to the private sector
	Develop a harmonized approach to private sector engagement
	Harmonization of curriculum development on QI and QA
	Direct assistance towards private sector institutions for quicker results
QI development currently does not speak to value chains in priority sectors	Link projects to private sector needs and value chains
	More structured assistance to SME needs
	SME must be assisted with product development in order to produce high quality
	Support of development of QI must go in parallel with support to enterprises and consumers to utilize the QI Services
Standardization	
Private standards continue to create challenges for producers	Deal with the issue of private standards
There is a disconnect between QI institutions and Regulatory Agencies which needs to be bridged	Solicit support for harmonization of Technical regulations
	Develop mechanisms to bridge the gap between QI and regulatory agencies
	Guidelines for Quality Policy development in the region

Identified Gaps	Possible Solutions
SADC Annual Quality Awards	
Limited of participation in SADC Annual Quality Awards	Support for national and regional quality award competitions
	Member States to consider including National Quality Awards competitions as part of their project outputs
	Involve the Private sector in running National Quality Awards competitions
	Include a category specifically supportive of women in business in the national and regional quality awards
Technical Regulations	
Lack of support for quality infrastructure related to the development	In addition to the current scope of projects, propose new scope to include administration and enforcement of technical regulations