SADCAS

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ACCREDITATION SERVICE



Accreditation of Food Safety Management Systems Certification Bodies

Background

The SADCAS Certification Bodies Accreditation Scheme for Management Systems (CBAS-MS) was established in June 2010. The CBAS-MS is a multi-disciplinary accreditation scheme operated in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011: Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies. Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) is a sub-scope under the SADCAS CBAS-MS.

The Need for Accreditation

The production and distribution of food and water involves complex supply chains and processes. In simple terms, there is the production of crops and the rearing of animals, followed by the practices involved with sourcing, harvest and slaughter. Then there is the storage, treatment and processing, and in turn packaging and distribution. The food and water industry operates in a highly competitive, dynamic and regulated environment. There are a series of complex issues and a range of areas where there has to be tight control to ensure that the food and water supply is safe when dealing with the mass production of food and water in urban and rural areas. Consideration also needs to be given to the retail environment in terms of storage and display. Increasingly, there is an international aspect to food and water production, as ingredients, products or parts of products, may come from several countries around the world.

Certification bodies provide conformity certificates to organizations for their management systems, products as well as personnel. Third party product and processes certification is a frequently specified requirement to operate in the global market place. The overall aim of certifying products, processes or services is to give confidence to all interested parties that a product, process or service fulfils specified requirements. The value of certification is the degree of confidence and trust that is established by an impartial and competent demonstration of fulfilment of specified requirements by a third party.

Organisations in food chain are certified to ISO 22000. This international standard specifies requirements for a Food Safety Management System (FSMS) that combines interactive communication, system management, prerequisite program, and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Systems (HACCP) principles to ensure food safety along the food chain. Accreditation which is an independent evaluation of food safety management systems certification bodies against ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO TS 22003 by an authoritative body, in this case SADCAS, confirms the competence, consistency and impartiality of the Certification Body. Accredited conformity assessment activities contribute to the prevention and treatment of the adverse effects of unsafe and adulterated food.

Why Use an Accredited Food Safety Management System Certification Body?

For national authorities and regulators

- Contributes to the prevention and treatment of the adverse effects of unsafe and adulterated food.
- Moderates the need for additional legislation as well as reduce the risk of unintended consequences.
- Internationally recognized FSMS certification provides regulators with a robust and credible framework to accept accredited certifications from overseas with an equivalent level of confidence as if carried out in the local economy.
- Provides a reliable monitoring tool to support the work of food safety and drinking water agencies.

For Businesses

- Internationally recognized certifications allow certificates to be recognized around the world thus reduces the risk of products being rejected by international trading partners, and the need to have products re-evaluated on entry into each country.
- Supermarkets chains and food retailers are increasingly demanding that their suppliers demonstrate that their food and water meet safety standards by requiring accredited certifications.
- Support business in the supply chain against potential liability claims.
- A credible and effective marketing tool that enhances market access by providing confidence through competence and impartiality confirmed by authoritative body;

For Consumers

- Consumer confidence can be gained from products that are accompanied by an accredited certificate of conformity.
- Provides assurance that products placed on the market from whichever country of origin meet quality and safety standards.

Accreditation Criteria

Food Safety Management System Certification Bodies seeking to be accredited by SADCAS need to comply with:

- ISO/IEC 17021-1: Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirements;
- ISO/TS 22003: Food safety management systems — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems;
- Applicable IAF MD Series; and







- SADCAS accreditation requirements.

The Accreditation Process

A Certification Body seeking to be accredited in the sub-scope FSMS:

- Submits directly to SADCAS:
  - Duly completed SADCAS F 43 (d): Application for accreditation of Certification Bodies for Management systems;
  - Duly completed SADCAS F 43 (f): Application for approval of personnel i.e. Nominated Representative and Management Signatory;
  - SADCAS F 44: SADCAS accreditation agreement;
  - SADCAS F 40 (a) - Checklist ISO IEC 17021-2015 Conformity Assessment - Requirements for Bodies Providing Audit and Certification of Management Systems together with the Certification Body quality manual or documented information.
- Upon receipt, SADCAS undertakes a **completeness check** of the application documents.
- SADCAS provides the applicant with a detailed quotation based on the scope of application. If acceptable, the applicant signs and returns duly signed quotation to SADCAS.
- SADCAS undertakes a documentation review of the applicant's quality manual and provides feedback to the applicant who, if there are nonconformities, institutes corrective action. If the quality manual addresses all the requirements of the standard then the application proceeds to the assessment stage.
- **Pre- assessments** are optional but may be compulsory depending on the regulator's condition for acceptance where required. Pre-assessment is a visit to check the readiness of the applicant for accreditation.
- An **initial assessment** is undertaken by SADCAS to confirm competence of the Certification Body in carrying out certification activities. The initial assessment involves an opening meeting, an assessment which involves witnessing of certification audits, an office assessment of the Certification Body and a closing meeting. Findings from the assessment are recorded as nonconformities where the Certification Body needs to institute corrective action.

Assessors

Assessors are experts from the public and private sectors as well as from Certification Bodies/ Technical Institutions/Associations in the SADC region who have been trained, qualified and registered as assessors by SADCAS. Assessors trained and qualified by other accreditation bodies and evaluated for competence can also undertake assessments on behalf of SADCAS. SADCAS engages Technical Experts where specialized expertise is required. An assessment is undertaken by an assessment team consisting of a Team Leader and at least one Technical Assessor/Technical Experts with expertise in the scope of assessment. The assessment team makes recommendations for accreditation.

Accreditation Certificate

Accreditation decision is made by the Accreditation Approvals Committee based mainly on the information gathered during an assessment. The accreditation certificate is valid for 5 years and renewed subject to terms and conditions of the CBAS-MS.

Periodic assessments and Re-assessments

In order to maintain accreditation **periodic assessments** are conducted. The first periodic assessment is undertaken not more than 12 months after accreditation, thereafter annually throughout the accreditation cycle of 5 years in accordance with an established assessment programme. The frequency of the periodic on-site assessments may be reduced subject to the outcome of a favorable risk assessment of the accredited Certification Body, but shall not exceed two years.

Re-assessments are conducted at least six months prior to the end of the 5 year assessment cycle.

Complaints

Complaints concerning SADCAS services, personnel and assessors/experts can be received by any member of staff who shall complete SADCAS F 85 and direct the complaint to the SADCAS Quality Manager.

Appeals

Appeals from certification bodies on an accreditation decision shall be in writing and shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer within 3 months of the cause of appeal. Appeals are handled in accordance with SADCAS AP 08: Customer feedback handling procedure which maintains independence and impartiality.

Accreditation Fees

SADCAS accreditation fees are contained in SADCAS AP 02: SADCAS service fees. The fees contained therein are estimates. Individual quotations are provided based on the fee estimates contained therein. SADCAS accreditation fees are reviewed annually.

Accreditation Documents

SADCAS accreditation documents are available from the SADCAS website **www.sadcas.org**



For further information, please contact:

Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service

Plot 50369 Unit 3A, Second Floor, Tholo Office Park, Fairgrounds
Private Bag 00320, Gaborone, Botswana
Tel: +267 3132909/3132910/31388644/3188646
Fax: +267 3132922
Email: info@sadcas.org
Website: www.sadcas.org

Delivering confidence, Assuring competency

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