

BOTSWANA BUREAU OF STANDARDS COMPULSORY STANDARDS UNIT GRANTED SADCAS ACCREDITATION

The Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) Compulsory Standards Unit (CSU) located at Plot No. 55745, Block 8, Main Airport Road, Gaborone, Botswana Bureau of Standards Headquarters in Gaborone has been accredited by SADCAS as an Inspection Body in accordance with ISO/IEC 17020:2012 - Conformity Assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspections. The BOBS CSU is accredited as a Type A Inspection Body and has been issued with the following seven (7) unique accreditation numbers for inspection of the following:

- Food Products (**INSP-1 002**)
- Electrical Products (**INSP-7 001**)
- Building Products (**INSP-11 001**)
- Mechanical Products (**INSP-10 001**)
- Automotive Products (**INSP-13 001**)
- Chemical Products (**INS-12 001**)
- Agricultural Products (**INSP-15 001**)

The certificates, all of which were issued on 3 September 2021 are valid for 5 years and will expire on 2 September 2026. The accreditation certificate handover ceremony was held on 09 December 2021 at the BOBS Headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana. The ceremony was attended by BOBS Management, Members of the Standards Council, BOBS Staff, representatives from the Ministry of Investment Trade and Industry, the press and other stakeholders.

In his opening remarks, Mr Kebapetse the BOBS Managing Director expressed his pleasure in receiving the most important certificate of competence that they have worked so very hard for; accreditation of the BOBS Compulsory Standards Unit to the international standard ISO/IEC 17020:2012. He informed the gathering of the Government of Botswana's plans to move Botswana from a middle to high income economy in line with the Botswana Government's recovery and transformation plan in pursuit of prosperity for all. The aim of the plan is to encourage restoration of economic activities that are meant to support economic growth. He further stated that pursuant to the transformation plan, the resultant success factors include SMME development, private sectors development and export development. Part of the solutions to achieve these include the development of the Botswana National Quality Policy followed by the National Quality Infrastructure to create the much-needed international consumer confidence and assuring that services are offered by conformity assessment bodies that have been accredited.



Mr Kebapetse giving welcome remarks



Mrs Mutasa giving her remarks

Mr Kebapetse stated that they all appreciate that accreditation cuts across all the national quality infrastructure hence affirms competence in all the structures as well as serving as a pillar for international recognition of competence which will in turn facilitate international trade. He ended by thanking and congratulating the BOBS

CSU team for a job well done, the SADC Secretariat through SADC TrF for the financial support and the support from MITI Project Management Unit.

In his remarks, Mr Fudzai Pamacheche from the SADC Secretariat expressed his delight in witnessing this critical achievement by Botswana supported by the SADC Trade related Facility (TrF). He then informed the gathering about the TrF which he said is funded under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF 10) to the tune of €81.6 million in support of SADC Member States. Botswana seized the funding opportunity to improve on its current exporting initiatives, to building capacity with respect to the TBT and to align with the EU standards and quality requirements in order to access the EU market with respect to exports, trade penetration and diversity. Mr Pamacheche stated that Botswana was granted a total of € 2.6 million to implement trade related interventions of its choice which included among others; development of competition policy, Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, promotion of trade and development and enhancing Customs cooperation. Though the start of the BOBS CSU project was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr Pamacheche reported that BOBS was the only beneficiary that demonstrated commitment as shown by the achievement of set objectives. He stated that accreditation was one of the many areas that BOBS undertook as a project, stating that some activities included; updating the regulatory framework for TBT to align the Botswana regulatory framework to that of SADC as well as the WTO; establishing the Standards Inspectorate; Training of Inspectors; developing a management system and seeking accreditation with SADCAS. He noted that for the Botswana funding, BOBS is the only recipient that has implemented and achieved the outputs and it is gratifying that the BOBS achievement is aligned with the SADC TBT protocols that subsequently contribute positively to the RISPD. He further congratulated BOBS Management, CSU staff for the great achievement, under the watchful eye of SADCAS.

In her certificate handover speech, the SADCAS CEO, Mrs Maureen Mutasa who was accompanied by Mrs Pinkie Malebe, the SADCAS Technical Manager, started by congratulating Mr Kebapetse on his appointment as the new BOBS Managing Director. Mrs Mutasa informed the gathering that the BOBS CSU is the first Inspection Body in the 14 SADC Member States serviced by SADCAS to be accredited for Import Inspection. She proceeded to list the scopes for which the BOBS CSU has been accredited indicating that it is the biggest scope to have been accredited by SADCAS in the field of Inspection. This not being the first accreditation for BOBS as an organization, she stated that other strategic units within BOBS have been accredited, such as Trade Metrology (for Mass Metrology), Industrial Metrology (for Dimension and Temperature Metrology) and Testing Unit for Microbiology, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Textile testing. She stated that the road to accreditation for BOBS CSU started on 01 March 2021 when the accreditation application was submitted, followed by an initial assessment which was conducted remotely using an assessment team consisting of nine (9) experts in the areas for which accreditation was sought, making it the largest assessment team that SADCAS has set up for any assessment. The decision on accreditation was made on 3 September 2021 indicating that the accreditation process took six (6) months to complete, the fastest by far in view of the number of scopes accredited. Mrs Mutasa then explained the importance and benefits of accreditation particularly in ensuring a level playing field for exports as well as ensuring that imports meet internationally recognized levels of performance and safety thus protecting our markets from being dumping grounds for counterfeit products. "You would also note that accreditation is specific to the field, scope and in the case of inspection, specific to the product inspected, the inspection method as well as a range of inspections, It is not a blanket accreditation" she remarked. Mrs Mutasa further stated that SADCAS offers accreditation of inspection bodies for various fields and products and that the SADCAS accreditation scheme is internationally recognized as SADCAS has achieved signatory status to the the International Laboratory Accreditation Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) in 2017. She stated that to-date SADCAS has accredited 8 Inspection Bodies which one is from Botswana, with 14 accreditation certificates, 7 of which are for BOBS. In closing, the SADCAS CEO Mrs Mutasa congratulated BOBS CSU for the noble achievement and welcomed them to the club of internationally recognized inspection authorities. She reminded the BOBS CSU that SADCAS will undertake periodic surveillance assessments to ensure BOBS CSU's continued compliance with the requirements during the validity of the certificate, she further indicated that SADCAS would not hesitate to suspend or withdraw the accreditation should BOBS CSU fail to maintain it accreditation including failure to pay accreditation fees. She encouraged BOBS to extend scope of accreditation to other inspection areas like inspection of chemical gloves and hand sanitizers.

Mrs Mutasa proceeded to hand over the 7 accreditation certificates and the accompanying Schedules of Accreditation.



BOBS Managing Director and BOBS Compulsory Standards Unit Staff posing with their certificate of accreditation

The session was closed off with ululations, photo shoots and packed snack!

The Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) is a Botswana National Standards Body enacted by the Standards Act of 1995. BOBS was established with primary objectives of formulating Botswana standards and co-ordinating quality assurance activities in Botswana with mission to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Botswana. Standards provide a veritable backbone for daily life and encourage an improved quality of life by contributing to safety, human health and protection of the environment. The Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) Compulsory Standards Unit (CSU) is responsible for the enforcement of implementation of compulsory standards and the implementation of Standards Import Inspection Regulations (Botswana Product Conformity Programme).