National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFP)

SADCAS

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ACCREDITATION SERVICE

Handbook

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Acronyms

AA	Accreditation Administrator
AAC	Accreditation Approvals Committee
AC	Advisory Committee
AP	Accreditation Procedure
APP	Administration and Human Resources Policies and Procedures
CABs	Conformity Assessment Bodies
CBAS	Certification Bodies Accreditation Scheme
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLAS	Calibration Laboratories Accreditation Scheme
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EMS	Environmental Management Systems
EXCO	Executive Committee
F	Form
FSMS	Food Safety Management Systems
HR	Human Resources
IA	Internal Audit
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IBAS	Inspection Bodies Accreditation Scheme
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
ILC	Inter - laboratory Comparison
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MAURITAS	Mauritius Accreditation Service
MLAS	Medical Laboratories Accreditation Scheme
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFP	National Accreditation Focal Point
OHSMS	Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems
PM	Policy Manual
PT	Proficiency Testing
QMS	Quality Management Systems
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCA	Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation
SADCAS	Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service
SANAS	Southern African National Accreditation System
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TG	Technical Guidance
TLAS	Testing Laboratories Accreditation Scheme
TM	Technical Manager
TPA	Twinning Partnership Arrangement
TR	Technical Requirements Documents
WAD	World Accreditation Day

Preamble

This document is a consolidation of information for reference by National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs). It is intended to answer frequently asked questions about accreditation thus serve as a useful resource for NAFPs to consult in their usual duties. This issue 4 of the NAFP Handbook has been revised in order to update it in line with developments in SADCAS.

National Accreditation Focal Points should realize that there are other sources of information and should therefore not restrict themselves to what is contained herein.

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1. SADCAS PROFILE

The Southern African Development Community Accreditation Services (SADCAS) is a multi-economy accreditation body established in terms of Article 15 B of the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade with the primary purpose of ensuring that conformity assessment service providers (calibration/testing/medical laboratories, certification and inspection bodies) operating in those SADC Member States which do not have national accreditation bodies are subject to an oversight by an authoritative body. 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.

SADCAS is incorporated in Botswana under the Botswana Companies Act Ch. 42:01 as a non-profit limited company. SADCAS is recognized by the SADC Council of Ministers as a subsidiarity organization of SADC hence an agency of SADC. SADCAS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SADC. This MoU serves as the basis for recognition of SADCAS by SADC Member States as a multi-economy accreditation body. The MOU is reviewed from time to time to take into account any changes that may develop. SADCAS Headquarters are situated in Gaborone, Botswana.

The objects, powers and rules for the operation of SADCAS are set out in Constitution lodged with The Registrar of Companies (Botswana). These documents also include the terms of appointment and terms of reference of the members and Board of Directors. The Company Secretary retains the current version of the Constitution of the SADCAS Ltd.

SADCAS' mission is to provide credible, cost effective, accreditation services for SADC Member States aimed at supporting trade, enhance the protection of consumers and the environment, and improve the competitiveness of SADC products and services in both the voluntary and regulatory areas.

The objects for which the Company is established are to:

a) Provide accreditation services to testing, medical and calibration laboratories, certification bodies for management systems, including but without limitation, quality, environmental, personnel certification and product certification, inspection bodies and in such other areas as identified from time to time;
b) Accredit conformity assessment bodies in Member States without national accreditation bodies or whose accreditation bodies cover limited scopes or schedules;
c) Promote and facilitate the use of accreditation services within Member States compliant with relevant international standards and best practices prevailing from time to time;
d) Provide affordable and accessible accreditation services to Member States necessary to meet the requirements and objectives of the Protocol, including, but without limitation, the attainment of the removal of technical impediments or barriers to intra-SADC trade;
e) Provide an authentication service with regional and international status and/or recognition to validate reports and certificates issued by Member States accredited organizations;
f) Establish and maintain a register of all organizations accredited by the Company in the region;
g) Promote the Company as a multi economy accreditation body:
h) Arrange and participate in meetings, conferences and exhibitions that are related to and support accreditation;
i) Establish, nurture and maintain appropriate relationships and cooperation with regional and international organizations, associations and persons that may assist the Company in obtaining and maintaining any or all of its objectives;
j) Pursue each and every one of the objectives in a manner that promotes the Company as an internationally recognized accreditation body;

k) Provide the necessary training in accreditation matters;
l) Establish a pool of expertise in accreditation to serve Member State's needs;
m) Establish and acquire subsidiaries and other entities appropriate for the purpose of attaining the above objects.

SADCAS vision is to be a sustainable accreditation body at the cutting edge of credible accreditation service delivery.

Core values and Value Proposition

SADCAS in its service provision upholds seven core values as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 – SADCAS Core Values

Excellence	We strive for excellence in service delivery.
Impartiality	We are organized and operate so as to safeguard objectivity and impartiality of our services.
Transparency	We are dedicated to provide complete transparency in our work by communicating effectively with our clients.
Non-discrimination	We treat our clients fairly and in an equitable manner.
Integrity	We act with honesty and integrity.
Innovation	We generate new ideas and utilize creative approaches to problems for continuous improvement.
Diversity	We respect the diversity of our clients and ensure balance of interest in representation.

SADCAS value proposition is:

- Delivering confidence
- Assuring competence

SADCAS is governed by a General Assembly which comprises of:

- Subscribers to the Memorandum and clauses of association;
- Members of the Board;

  Appointed representatives of National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs) in each SADC Member State using the service of SADCAS; and
- Individuals or organizations who apply for admission as members of SADCAS.

Drawn out of the General Assembly is the Board of Directors which oversees the running of SADCAS and fulfills any function that the SADCAS General Assembly may delegate to it. The SADCAS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who reports to the Board of Directors leads the company and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of SADCAS.

SADCAS is composed of three functional units. The Technical Unit is responsible for the overall

management of the accreditation process. The Corporate Services Unit provides support services to internal and external business interests and is responsible for Information Communication Technology (ICT), marketing and public relations, business development and administration of training services. The Finance and Administration Unit is responsible for financial management, human resources management and general administration of the company. National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs) established in SADC Member States using the services of SADCAS serve as the administrative link between SADCAS and clients/potential clients in Member States.

Accreditation assessments are undertaken, on behalf of SADCAS, by a pool of SADCAS registered assessors who make recommendations for accreditation by the SADCAS Accreditation Approvals Committee (AAC). Advisory Committees (AC) advise SADCAS on technical matters.

SADCAS is a lean organization staffed by a small group of highly qualified and experienced people. In order to achieve its mandate and in line with international best practice, accreditation assessments are undertaken, on behalf of SADCAS, by a pool of SADCAS registered assessors who make recommendations for accreditation decision by the SADCAS Accreditation Approvals Committee (AAC). Advisory Committees (AC) advise SADCAS on technical matters.

SADCAS provides accreditation services and training in accreditation associated activities.

SADCAS offers accreditation schemes for:

- Calibration laboratories in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025 (CLAS);
- Legal Metrology in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025 (LMAS);
- Testing laboratories in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025 (TLAS);
- Veterinary laboratories in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025 (VLAS);
- Medical laboratories in accordance with ISO 15189 (MLAS);
- Management systems certification bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021 (CBAS-MS);
- Inspection bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17020 (IBAS);
- Product certification bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 (CBAS-Prod); and
- Personnel certification bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17024 (CBAS-Pers).

SADCAS will broaden its scope of accreditation as needs arise. All SADCAS accreditation schemes are operated in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011 and the applicable ILAC and IAF Mandatory Documents.

SADCAS is signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the African Accreditation Cooperation's (AFRAC) Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) for Testing (ISO/IEC 17025) and Calibration (ISO/IEC 17025), Inspection (ISO/IEC 17020 and Medical (ISO 15189). SADCAS is also signatory to the AFRAC MRA and IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement under the Main Scope Management Systems (ISO/IEC 17021-1) Sub-scopes

- Quality Management Systems ISO/IEC 17021-3 (ISO 9001).
- Environmental Management Systems ISO/IEC 17021-2 (ISO 14001).

- Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems ISO/IEC TS 17021-10 (ISO 45001).
- Food Safety Management Systems ISO/TS 22003 (ISO 22000)

SADCAS offers training on accreditation related courses. SADCAS training courses are registered by the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA). Training courses can be conducted in-house or as open courses and online and face to face. The training courses are conducted on behalf of SADCAS by a pool of qualified and registered trainers. The courses are designed to create awareness on the benefits and importance of accreditation and to promote an understanding of the requirements of the key accreditation standards. SADCAS training activities shall not conflict with SADCAS role as an accreditation body.

2. NATIONAL ACCREDITATION FOCAL POINTS

2.1 Background

National Accreditation Focal Points established in SADC Member States using SADCAS services serve as the administrative links between SADCAS and clients/ potential clients in the respective countries. The NAFPs which were established between 2003 and 2009 are housed either in the national standards bodies or the ministries responsible for trade and industry. The NAFP offices are manned by one or two officers. The NAFP list including their contact details is available on the SADCAS website:https://www.sadcas.org/focal-points.

2.2 Job Specification

For an individual to be appointed as an NAFP officer they shall have a minimum Diploma or degree in any field, and training in quality or management systems. Skills required for the job include analytical thinking ability, planning and organizational ability, time management, computer literacy, presentation and communication skills etc.

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of NAFPs as outlined in the NAFP job description are to:

- Provide the national link between current and potential clients in a Member State and SADCAS;
- Be a channel of information e.g. newsletters;
- Undertake domestic marketing and promotion of both accreditation and of accredited services to regulators, other users and other stakeholders;
- Develop and maintain database of conformity assessment bodies and regulatory bodies operating in respective countries for use in outreach programmes;
- Sensitize and follow up on Government contribution towards SADCAS sustainability;
- Receive and process feedback on accreditation services;
- Identify and utilize appropriate national expertise and compile a database of national experts;
- Assist SADCAS in the administration of training courses;
- Provide, in collaboration with SADCAS, appropriate counseling services to customers;
- Ensure protection of SADCAS/SADCA logos;
- Register and serve as authorized national contact point for SADCAS;
- Administer the NAFP office;
- Represent Governments in the governance of SADCAS;

- Provide support for the implementation of the SADCAS Quality System based on ISO/IEC 17011; and

- Perform any other duties as assigned by SADCAS.

National Accreditation Focal Points may have other responsibilities as determined by the appointing authority, the respective national government.

2.4 Role of NAFPs in the SADCAS Strategic Planning Process

In executing their duties, NAFPs are required to prepare national action plans that are necessary to achieve the SADCAS annual objectives. The NAFP annual national action plans shall be submitted to SADCAS by 30 April for review in order to ensure that they indeed support the SADCAS Annual Implementation plan. Progress on the implementation of the NAFP annual action plans is monitored through quarterly reports submitted by NAFPs to SADCAS who in turn gives them feedback including action plan implementation estimates realization. NAFP quarterly reports shall be in the prescribed format and shall be submitted timeously as per the deadlines set. Refer to Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 – NAFP Quarterly Report Template

1. General Information	
Country	
Name of Organization	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
Email	
Period Covered	
Date of Submission	

2. INTRODUCTION

3. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD

Activities as per agreed national action plan	Actions undertaken during period under review	Explanation

4. Enquiries	
• Nature of Enquiries	
◈ Accreditation	
◈ Training	

◈ Other	
• Number of enquiries handled in the quarter	
• Number of enquiries closed out	
• Number of enquiries in progress	

5. Other Related Activities

6. Lessons Learnt

Table 3 – NAFP Quarterly Reports – Reporting Periods and Deadlines

Period	Deadline
1 April to 30 June	31 July
1 July to 30 September	31 October
1 October to 31 December	31 January
1 January to 31 March	30 April

2.5 Role of NAFPs in identifying Experts for Training as SADCAS Assessors/Trainers

In order to effectively deliver accreditation services, SADCAS has to ensure availability of competent assessors and experts for confidence in accreditation services. In line with its mandate, training of assessors/ trainers is coordinated by the SADC Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA). Identification of experts for training is the NAFPs responsibility.

◈ The NAFP upon specific request by SADCA shall select candidates from his/her country to be trained as SADCAS assessors/trainers based on the country's need for their expertise. The SADCA Executive Committee (EXCO) shall indicate the number of nominations required. The SADCA Committee member shall assist the NAFP in identifying candidates.

◈ Nominated candidates shall have suitable technical qualifications i.e. a diploma or degree in a technical field and appropriate experience to meet their country's accreditation needs. Nominated candidates shall have experience in implementing a management system in their organization be it a testing or calibration laboratory, inspection or certification body.

◈ An interview shall be undertaken by the NAFP with the candidate to:

- Confirm academic and professional qualifications;
- Ascertain the candidate's current experience in laboratory, inspection or certification work. It is essential that the technical experience of the nominee is current;
- Ascertain candidate's familiarity with appropriate standards such as ISO/IEC 17025, ISO/IEC 17020, ISO/IEC 17021-1, ISO/IEC 17065, ISO 9001, ISO 14001 etc.
- Confirm candidate's willingness and commitment, if successful, to undertake assessments on behalf of SADCAS when called upon to do so. A letter of commitment by

the employer to release the candidate may be necessary to support this;

- Ascertain whether candidate's technical experience relates to the priority areas of the country in question and SADCAS areas of demand; and
- Ascertain whether candidate has the attributes for a good assessor i.e. good communication skills, ethical, open minded, diplomatic, observant, perceptive and a pleasant character but assertive.

- The NAFP shall select suitable candidate(s) and submit, within the timelines indicated by the SADCA EXCO, the name(s) and brief resume(s) covering aspects outlined above including the NAFP's recommendation, to the SADCA EXCO for consideration.

- The NAFP shall notify all the applicants of the outcome of their applications and in the case of selected candidate(s) advise of the next stage.

- The final selection of candidates for training shall be undertaken by the SADCA EXCO who shall advise the NAFP of its decision and advise of the dates of the training.

- The NAFP shall in turn advise the selected candidate of the SADCA EXCO decision and explain to the selected candidate the training programme to be undertaken and preliminary advise of the dates which the training will be undertaken upon completion of the training programme.

- The SADCA EXCO shall advise the expert through the NAFP of the outcome of the training programme.

SADCAS AP 01: Nomination, Selection, and Training of SADCAS Assessors/Technical Experts; Selection of SADCAS Assessment Members; and Monitoring of SADCAS Assessors/Technical Experts; Performance outlines the system of nominating and selecting candidates for training as SADCAS assessors etc. as summarized above. The procedure is available on the SADCAS website www.sadcas.org/under Accreditation Documents

2.6 NAFP Award

SADCAS realizes the important role that NAFPs play in pursuing SADCAS goals. In an effort to show its recognition and appreciation for the hard work and commitment by NAFPs towards SADCAS goals, an award is presented to deserving NAFPs. Two Certificates of Recognition are awarded as follows:

- Most Effective NAFP; and
- Most Improved NAFP.

The NAFP certificates of recognition are presented to the deserving NAFPs annually at a special recognition ceremony normally held in conjunction with the SADCAS Annual General Meeting.

2.6.1 Eligibility

The award is open to all NAFPs who have been appointed by their respective government to serve in the NAFP office. The candidate shall have served as an NAFP for at least one (1) year and must regularly and timeously submit quarterly reports on activities undertaken and must have effectively progressed the implementation of their respective country's action plan on accreditation and contributed towards SADCAS accreditation goals. Refer to Table 4 for the Award criteria and scores.

Table 4 – NAFP Award Criteria and Scores	
Criteria	**Total Score**
Appointed by respective government to serve as NAFP	10
Shall have served as an NAFP for at least one (1) years	5
Regularly and timeously submits quarterly reports on activities to SADCAS	20
Effectively progressed implementation of their respective country's action plan	30
Contributed towards SADCAS goals	35

2.6.2 Selection procedure

The SADCAS Technical Manager is responsible for nominating NAFPs to be considered for the award at least one and a half (1.5) months prior to the SADCAS Annual General Meeting. The SADCAS CEO is responsible for checking the nominations, evaluating and making recommendations to the SADCAS Board of Directors for decision making at least one (1) month prior to the SADCAS Annual General Meeting.

The SADCAS Board is responsible for deciding on the NAFP to receive the awards.

2.6.3 Presentation of the award

The Awards are presented by the Chairman of the SADCAS Board of Directors annually at a ceremony held in conjunction with the SADCAS Annual General Meeting.

2.6.4The award

The deserving NAFPs receives a framed SADCAS certificate of recognition and a gift. An NAFP recognition award board listing names and country of yearly winners is displayed at SADCAS Office Reception area.

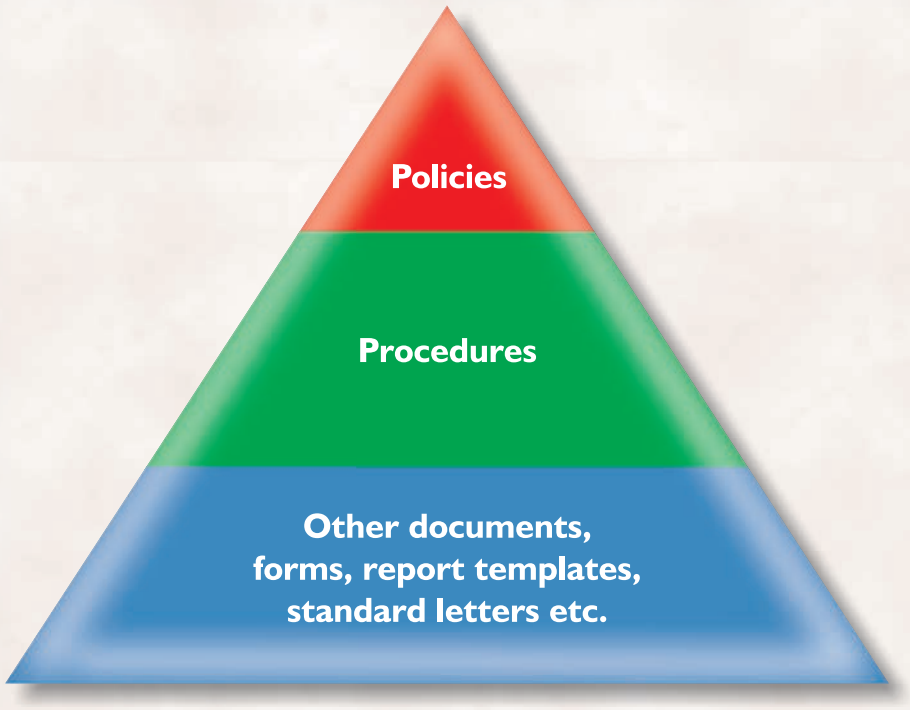
The NAFP Award procedure is outline in SADCAS APP 02: Procedure for Award of Certificate of Recognition to National Accreditation Focal Points.

3. THE SADCAS QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The SADCAS Policy Manual SADCAS PM 01 gives an overview of the organization of SADCAS and describes the key elements of the SADCAS Quality Management System (QMS). The SADCAS QMS is based on ISO/IEC 17011 and serves as SADCAS springboard for quality service delivery. All SADCAS personnel including NAFPs are required to be fully aware of the requirements of the SADCAS QMS and to follow it at all times. The SADCAS QMS consists of 3 key elements.

- Policy Manual SADCAS PM 01 describes SADCAS QMS;
- Procedures Manual comprises a number of procedures that detail routines to be followed in undertaking SADCAS work; and
- Other documents, standard letters, forms etc. published to provide information to applicants and other interested parties and to facilitate SADCAS daily work.

Figure 1 – SADCAS QMS Structure



The SADCAS Policy manual consists of 6 sections as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 – Sections of the SADCAS Policy Manual	
Section 1	Purpose and scope
Section 2	SADCAS Policy Statement
Section 3	Impartiality Statement
Section 4	General Requirements
Section 5	Structural Requirements
Section 6	Resource Requirements
Section 7	Processing Requirements
Section 8	Information Requirements
Section 9	SADCAS Quality Management System
Section 10	Cross Frontier Accreditation
Section 11	Proficiency Testing/Interlaboratory Comparisons for Laboratories
Section 12	Traceability

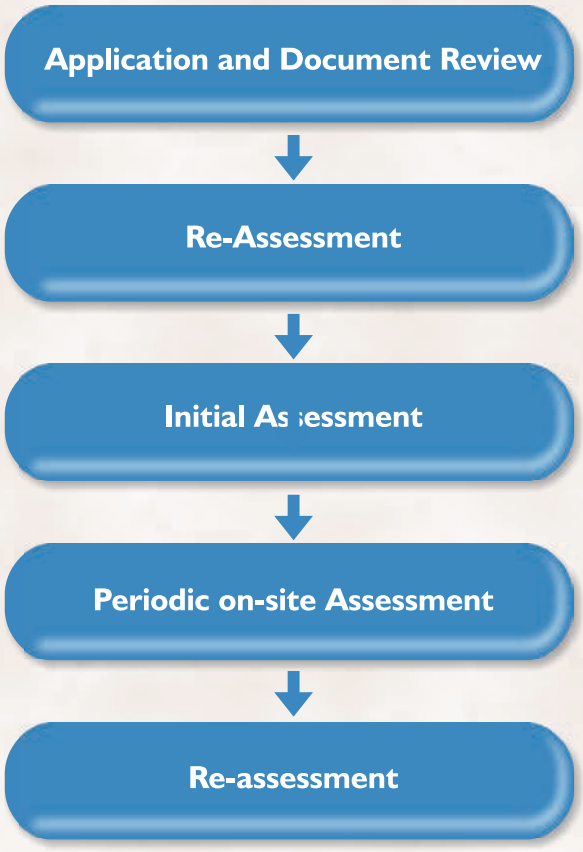
Each section of the SADCAS Policy Manual refers to the relevant documents including applicable procedures. The SADCAS Policy Manual is available on the SADCAS website:https://www.sadcas.org/sadcas-policy-manual. The documents can be downloaded from the website.

4. THE SADCAS ACCREDITATION PROCESS

SADCAS offers accreditation Schemes for calibration laboratories (CLAP) in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025, testing laboratories (TLAS) in according with ISO/IEC 17025, medical laboratories (MLAS) in accordance with ISO 15189, management systems certification bodies (CBAS) in accordance with ISO/IEC 17021, product certification bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 and personnel certification bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17024. Accreditation is granted to organizations that fully meet the requirements of the relevant international standard. The SADCAS Accreditation Process is outlined in SADCAS AP 12: Part 1: Accreditation Process for Testing/ Calibration/ Medical Laboratories, SADCAS AP 12: Part 2: Accreditation of Inspection Bodies Operating in the Regulatory/Voluntary Areas, Accreditation Process, SADCAS AP 12:Part 3: General Principles for the Assessment of Management System, Product, Personnel Certification Bodies. SADCAS TG 01 provides information to organizations applying for accreditation. SADCAS AP 02 outlines the SADCAS fee structure and fees estimates. The fees contained in SADCAS AP 02 are estimates. Individual quotations will be given based on the fee estimates and taking into account the scope of application.

SADCAS accreditation is achieved through 5 stages. Refer to Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Route to Accreditation1.1Application and Document Review



4.1 Applicant submits directly to SADCAS the following documents:

- Duly completed relevant accreditation application form SADCAS F 43 (a) for calibration laboratories, F 43 (b) for testing laboratories, F 43 (c) for medical laboratories, F 43 (d) for management systems certification bodies, F 43 e for product certification bodies, F 43 (h) for inspection bodies, F43 (i) for legal metrology, and F 43 (g) for personnel certification bodies. SADCAS TG 03 contains the field/scope of accreditation and shall be used to determine scope of application when filling in the ap plication form;

- Duly completed SADCAS F 43 (f) – Application for approval of personnel i.e. nominated representatives/ management representatives in all the above cases and technical signatories only applicable to calibration, testing, legal metrology and inspection body applications

Quality Manual; and

SADCAS F 44 – SADCAS accreditation agreement.

Upon receipt, SADCAS undertakes a completeness check of the application documents and provides the applicant with a detailed quotation based on the scope of application. If acceptable, the applicant signs and returns the duly signed quotation to SADCAS who will then raise an invoice on which payment will be made. Invoices are raised for each stage upon completion of the previous stage.

SADCAS undertakes a documentation review of the applicant's quality manual and provides feedback to the applicant who, if there are nonconformities institute corrective action. If the quality manual addresses all the requirements of the standard then the application proceeds to the assessment stage.

4.2 Pre-assessment

Pre-assessments are optional but may be compulsory depending on the regulator's condition for acceptance where required. Pre-assessment is an on-site visit to check the readiness of applicant for accreditation and is undertaken by either a Team Leader or Technical Assessor.

4.3 Initial Assessment

An initial assessment of the organization's competence is undertaken on-site and involves an opening meeting, assessment, witnessing of select technical activities and a closing meeting. Findings from the assessment are recorded as nonconformities where the laboratory needs to institute corrective action. Organizations are given one month to identify and propose corrective action and to address them within 3 months from the date of initial assessment.

Assessors are experts from the public and private sectors as well as from 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. An assessment is undertaken by an assessment team consisting of a Team Leader and at least one Technical Assessor/Technical Expert with expertise in the scope of assessment. The assessment team makes recommendations for accreditation.

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

4.4 Periodic on-site Assessment

In order to maintain accreditation periodic assessments are conducted on-site. The first periodic on-site assessment is undertaken not more than twelve (12) months after accreditation thereafter annually throughout the accreditation cycle of five (5) years.

4.5 Re-assessment

Re-assessments are conducted at least 6 months before the end of the assessment cycle of five (5) years.

4.6 Appeals

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

All the referred to documents are available from the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org

5. MARKETING OF SADCAS SERVICES

Being a fairly young organization servicing the accreditation needs of developing countries where the concept of accreditation is still fairly new, SADCAS thrust is on promoting the benefits and importance of accreditation and marketing SADCAS services amongst stakeholders including regulators. NAFPs main duty is therefore to promote accreditation and market SADCAS services in their respective countries. NAFPs are required to have good communication skills in order to effectively undertake promotional and marketing activities.

Promotional and marketing activities shall be as outlined in the annual marketing plan and geared towards achievements of the objectives set out in the SADCAS Strategic Plan. These objectives will be achieved through the following marketing strategies:

- Creating a database of CABs operating in the Member States serviced by SADCAS.
- Organizing awareness seminars on accreditation in the Member States serviced by SADCA
- Undertaking marketing visits to CABs in Member States serviced by SADCA
- Organizing World Accreditation Day (WAD) commemorations annually.
- Distributing promotional materials including press releases and advertisements to stakeholders and the media.
- Participating in exhibitions.
- Participating in meetings/ seminars/ workshops conferences and making presentations on accreditation and SADCAS etc.

In undertaking the promotional and marketing activities, NAFPs shall utilize the SADCAS promotional materials available on the SADCAS website: http://www.sadcas.org/promotional-material and any NAFP promotional materials approved by SADCAS. Table 4 lists the SADCAS promotional materials that are currently available for use in promotional and marketing activities.

Other promotional materials are being developed.

Table 6 – List SADCAS Promotional Materials

Promotional Materials	Language		
	English	French	Portuguese
Corporate Brochure	✓	✓	✓
Benefits of Accreditation	✓	✓	✓
Accreditation Process	✓	✓	✓
Accreditation of Laboratory or ISO 9001 Certification?	✓	✓	✓
Training Services	✓	✓	✓
Testing Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (TLAS)	✓	✓	✓
Calibration Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (CLAS)	✓	✓	✓
Medical Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (MLAS)	✓	✓	✓
Inspection Bodies Accreditation Scheme (IBAS)	✓	✓	✓
Management Systems Certification Bodies Accreditation (CBAS – MS)	✓	✓	✓
Product Certification Bodies Accreditation Scheme (CBAS – Prod)	✓	✓	✓

6. SADCAS TRAINING SERVICES

SADCAS provides training for conformity assessment bodies' management and staff. Conformity assessment bodies (CABs) include calibration/ testing laboratories, medical laboratories, and certification and inspection bodies. The trainers are drawn from a pool of qualified and experienced experts from the SADC region who have up to date involvement in accreditation matters be it system implementation and/or assessments.

SADCAS currently offers the following accreditation training courses:

- **One day awareness** training courses on the various key accreditation standards. The objective of the one day awareness training courses is to create awareness on the benefits and importance of accreditation and the requirements of the respective accreditation standards.
- **Five days' requirements, implementation and internal auditing** courses on the various key accreditation standards and whose objective is to provide an insight into the respective system standards requirements, implementation as well as to guide conformity assessment bodies' (CABs) personnel on how to prepare and carry out an internal audit so as to monitor compliance with the system standard.
- **Three days' internal auditing** courses whose objective is to impart internal auditing knowledge and skills so that conformity assessment bodies are able to monitor compliance with the respective key accreditation standards.
- **Five days' intensive course on Method Validation and Measurement Uncertainty** (MV & MU) covers statistical fundamentals and advanced concepts of statistical techniques that are used in both method validation/verification and in calculating measurement uncertainty of test results.

The SADCAS courses can be conducted in-house. In-house courses have the following benefits:

- You choose the venue of the course
- You choose the date of the course
- Cost effective as a number of staff can be trained at the same time
- Promotes team work as members have access to the same consistent information

The training courses are designed to create awareness on the benefits and importance of accreditation and to promote an understanding of the requirements of the key accreditation standards. SADCAS training courses are made relevant and practical as they include case studies and exercises that reflect the respective professional disciplines. In order to objectively assess participants, an examination is written at the end of the 5 and 3 day courses. Participants are also evaluated throughout the course.

Besides the above courses, SADCAS can also offer other courses depending on needs. SADCAS courses are offered in English, French and Portuguese, the three (3) official languages of SADC.

SADCAS makes available training material to course participants only. SADCAS training material is **copyrighted** and shall not be reproduced or utilized for other training purposes. SADCAS reserves the right to amend the content of its training programs and to change the trainers involved.

The above courses are designed for management and staff of CABs involved in the implementation and maintenance of a CAB's system as well as those who are involved in monitoring system compliance through internal audits.

In order not to compromise its impartiality principles and status in training service delivery, SADCAS

does not give specific advice for the development of an organization's operations. Furthermore the training delivered or facilitated by SADCAS are not a pre-condition of accreditation neither do they guarantee accreditation by SADCAS.

Scheduled annual training courses are indicated in the SADCAS Training Calendar available on the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org/training_service.php.

In order to book to participate in a SADCAS training course as scheduled in the calendar or as advertized, a client shall complete SADCAS F 70 (b): Training Booking Form and return duly completed form to the NAFP office or directly to SADCAS. Where the form has been submitted through the NAFP, the NAFP shall immediately forward it to SADCAS. Where a client is interested in a SADCAS course but the course is not scheduled, the client shall complete SADCAS F 70 (a): Interest in SADCAS Training Courses and return duly completed form to the NAFP office or directly to SADCAS. Where the form has been submitted through the NAFP, the NAFP shall in turn and immediately forward it to SADCAS. Upon receipt SADCAS shall act upon the matter and respond to the expressed interest.

SADCAS F 70 (a) and (b) are available on the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org/sadcas_form.php.

Whilst the training courses are administered by SADCAS, NAFPs are expected to assist in the administration by:

- Identifying training needs in their respective countries and submitting the annual needs to SADCAS by 31 January of the preceding financial year.

- Promoting scheduled training courses in their respective countries by circulating course adverts directly to CABs using database of CABs and also placing advertisements in local media as necessary.

- Assist the trainer in registering training course participants and making opening and closing remarks when requested to do so by SADCAS.

7. HANDLING OF ENQUIRIES

The effective handling of enquiries is key to SADCAS promotion and marketing efforts. Enquiries on accreditation and SADCAS services can be directed to SADCAS office in Botswana or to the NAFP offices in the respective countries serviced by SADCAS. Such enquiries can be received via telephone, fax, letter, email, personal visits or can be raised at workshops, meetings and seminars.

Upon receipt of an enquiry, the NAFP/SADCAS shall complete SADCAS F 71: Enquiries form and record the date when enquiry was received, the contact details of the enquirer, the nature of the information requested and the applicable service for the information requested.

The NAFP/SADCAS shall respond to the enquiry making reference to the information supplied in this Handbook and in particular answers given under the frequently asked questions or any other information source such as the SADCAS website or approved documents. Where the NAFP is not able to answer the query the matter shall be referred to SADCAS office attention of Accreditation Administrator who shall provide the information to the NAFP.

Once all the information has been gathered the NAFP shall respond according to the enquirer and complete SADCAS F 71 to close the enquiry. The NAFP shall report on enquiries handled in their respective country in quarterly report to SADCAS for monitoring purposes.

SADCAS F 71 can be downloaded on the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org/sadcas_form.php.

8. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is the process of providing recognition to an organization for its competence in performing specific tasks. It involves the assessment of technical competence of organizations in providing conformity assessment services.

What is Conformity Assessment?

Conformity assessment is a demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled. Conformity assessment service providers include testing/ calibration laboratories, management systems/ product/ personnel, certification and inspection bodies.

What is Accreditation vs. Certification?

Accreditation as defined above determines technical competence. The technical competence of a conformity assessment service provider depends on a number of factors including as relevant:

- Qualifications, training and experience of staff
- The right equipment which is appropriately calibrated and maintained
- Adequate quality assurance control procedures
- Sound testing/ inspection procedures
- Accurate recording and reporting of data
- Appropriate test environment

Certification on the other hand is third party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons. ISO 9001 is widely used in manufacturing and service organization to evaluate their system for managing the quality of their product or service.

Whilst ISO 9001 is an effective management tool, certification does not provide assurance on technical competence.

What are the Benefits of Accreditation?

Accreditation is a tool for providing the acceptance and recognition of conformity assessment results. Accreditation is now increasingly accepted worldwide as the most transparent and non-discriminatory mechanism to assure competence of conformity assessment service providers both in the voluntary and regulatory areas:

- **To industry and trade**, accreditation facilitates trade and eliminates the need for repetitive testing, certification and inspection.

- **To regulators**, accreditation provides reliable and impartial basis for sound decision making.

- **To conformity assessment service providers**, [testing/ calibration laboratories, certification bodies (management systems/ product/ personnel) and inspection bodies], accreditation is a means of demonstrating competence to your client.

- **To users of accredited services and consumers at large**, accreditation is a guarantee for reliable and comparable conformity assessment results. Accreditation increases reliability of products.

What are Criteria for Accreditation?

Testing/ calibration laboratories seeking to be accredited need to comply with the International Standard ISO/IEC 17025: General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

Medical laboratories seeking to be accredited need to comply with the International Standard ISO 15189: General requirements for the competence of medical laboratories.

Inspection bodies seeking to be accredited need to comply with the International Standard ISO/IEC 17020: General criteria for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection and ILAC/IAF A4: Guidance on the application of ISO/IEC 17020.

Management systems certification bodies seeking to be accredited need to comply with the International Standard ISO/IEC 17021: Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.
Product certification bodies seeking to be accredited need to comply with the International Standard ISO/IEC 17065: **Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.**

Personnel Certification bodies seeking to be accredited need to comply with ISO/IEC 17024: **General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons.**

Who can accredit my laboratory/ certification body/ inspection body?

The Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS) a Subsidiarity Institution of SADC is a multi-economy accreditation body established to meet the accreditation needs of the SADC Member States without own national accreditation bodies. Within the SADC region only South Africa and Mauritius have their own national accreditation bodies namely South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) and Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) respectively. The remaining thirteen (13) country namely Angola, Botswana DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe do not have their own national accreditation bodies hence serviced by SADCAS.

Who monitors an Accreditation Body's performance?

In order to enhance the credibility of its services, SADCAS is working towards signatory status in the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement and the IAF Multilateral Arrangement. In order to achieve this status, thus demonstrate compliance with ISO/IEC 17011, SADCAS was peer evaluated by peers from other credible ABs who evaluated SADCAS compliance with ISO/IEC 17011 and other IAF/ ILAC requirements. SADCAS is a signatory to the AFRAC and ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangements for Testing and Calibration (ISO/IEC 17025), Inspection(ISO/IEC 17020 and Medical(ISO 15189)..SADCAS is also signatory to IAF MLA for Main Scope Management Systems(ISO/IEC 17021-1) and Sub-scope (ISO/IEC 17021-3) QMS With this achievement the accreditation certificates issued by SADCAS are internationally recognized.

What are the accreditation requirements for a laboratory/certification/ inspection body?

SADCAS TG 01: Information to organizations applying for accreditation provides information to applicant organizations about procedures related to the handling of application for accreditation and some of the obligations for accreditation. SADCAS TG 01 is available on the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org/policies_n_procedures.php.

What are the applicable scopes of accreditation?

The scope of accreditation of the various accreditation schemes offered by SADCAS are contained in SADCAS TG 03: Area of Accreditation which is available on the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org/policies_n_procedures.php.

What process would my organization have to undergo in order to be accredited?

Generally, a testing/ calibration/ certification body/ inspection body submits to SADCAS duly completed:

- Appropriate form together with the quality manual;
- SADCAS F 43 (f): Application for approval of personnel i.e. nominated representative in all cases and technical signatory in the case of calibration/ testing laboratories and inspection bodies; and
- SADCAS F 44: SADCAS accreditation agreement.

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 an onsite visit to check the readiness of applicant for accreditation.
- An **initial assessment** of the organization's competence is undertaken onsite and involves an opening meeting, assessment, witnessing of select technical activities and a closing meeting. Findings from the assessment are recorded as nonconformities where the laboratory needs to institute corrective action.

Who undertakes the assessments?

SADCAS accreditation assessments are undertaken by Assessors who are experts from the public and private sectors as well as from 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. An assessment is undertaken by an assessment team consisting of Team Leader and at least one Technical Assessor/Technical Expert with expertise in the scope of assessment. The assessment team makes recommendations for accreditation.

What is the fee for the accreditation process?

SADCAS accreditation fees are contained in SADCAS AP 02: SADCAS service fees. The fees contained

therein are estimates. Individual quotations depending on scope of application are provided based on the fee estimates contained in SADCAS AP 02. SADCAS accreditation fees are reviewed annually. SADCAS AP 02 is available on the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org/policies_n_procedures.php.

How long does the accreditation process take?

The accreditation process from submission of application documents to issuance of accreditation certificate takes at least seven (7) months depending on completeness of application documents at submission stage, acceptance of quotation, timeous settlement of invoiced amounts and implementation of corrective action on raised nonconformities.

Who decides on whether or not to accredit my organization?

Accreditation decision is made by the Accreditation Approval Committee (AAC) based mainly on the information gathered during the assessment and the recommendations made there from by the assessment team.

What do we get for being accredited?

If the decision of the AAC is to accredit then the organization gets an accreditation certificate which is valid for 5 years. The accreditation certificate is always accompanied by an accreditation schedule specifically detailing the scope of accreditation and the approved personnel. In addition the organization is listed in the SADCAS directory for accredited facilities which is available on the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org/accredited_organizations.php.

In order to maintain accreditation **periodic assessments** are conducted onsite. The first periodic assessments is undertaken not more than twelve (12) months after accreditation thereafter annually throughout the accreditation cycle of five (5) years.

Re-assessments are conducted at least 6 months before the end of the assessment cycle of five (5) years.

What is the appeal process in the case where my organization is not happy with the accreditation decision?

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

What is a Quality Management System (QMS)?

A QMS is a web of interconnected processes that utilize resources to turn inputs into outputs. The system is essentially comprised of policies, procedures, instructions, forms and records. The design of the QMS will vary depending on the type, size and output of the conformity assessment body. The QMS documents may be kept in various forms such as hard copy electronic or in any other media.

What is calibration?

Calibration is the process of comparing measuring instrument against a measurement standard. The purpose of calibration is to eliminate or reduce bias in measurement system relative to the reference

bases. All measuring devices usually need to be calibrated whether they are simple devices or state of the art because certain characteristics change with time. Calibration frequency can be established based on manufacturers' recommendations or suggested by the calibration laboratory. In order to provide confidence in the accuracy of calibration results, the measurement must show traceability.

What is traceability?

The result of a measurement must be related to appropriate measurement standards (national or international) through an unbroken chain of comparisons in which all uncertainties are indicated. It should be noted that instrument itself is not traceable but the result produced by the instrument is.

What is measurement uncertainty?

Measurements are subjected to imperfections in each step of the process from sampling to final measurement. Measurement uncertainty which is also referred to as uncertainty of measurement is a term used to describe this imperfection. It is defined as the parameter associated with the result of measurement which defines the range of values that could reasonably be attributed to the measured quantity. Measurement uncertainty provides valuable information about the accuracy and reliability of the test/ calibration data.

What is method validation?

Method validation is defined as the confirmation, through the provision of objective evidence that the requirements for a specific intended use or application have been fulfilled. The purpose of validation is to establish operational limits and performance characteristics of a new, modified or otherwise inadequately characterized test method. Method validation should be conducted with calibrated equipment and by a technical/analyst who is competent in the field and capable of decision making.

What is method verification?

Method verification is a simplified validation process designed to check a test method's performance characteristic. It typically includes a subset of parameters evaluated during a validation process. Verification is done before a new externally validated method is utilized to report results.

What is Proficiency Testing?

Proficiency testing (PT) is the evaluation of a laboratory's ability to competently perform specific measurements. PT supplements the laboratory's own internal quality control by providing an independent determination of the laboratory's testing capability.

What are inter - laboratory comparisons?

Inter - laboratory comparisons are organization, performance and evaluation of tests on the same or similar test items by two (2) or more laboratories in accordance with predetermined conditions.

What is the importance of participating in PT?

Participation in PT provides the laboratories with objective means of assessing and demonstrating the reliability of the data they are producing. It is a means of identifying and correcting problems in the measurement process. Such correction may include for example, operator/technician training, modification of methods or equipment and improvement in data processing.

How can I access information on Proficiency Testing Schemes?

Participation in PT or other inter - laboratory comparison programmes where available and appropriate is a requirement of ISO/IEC 17011.

The SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org provides a link to the website of various PT service providers.

What is an internal audit?

An internal audit (IA) is a means of monitoring compliance and the effectiveness and the suitability of an organization's QMS internal audits are carried out periodically and shall be planned so that all aspects of the CABs QMS are covered.

Who conducts internal audits?

Internal audits are conducted by staff who have been trained in the techniques of auditing. The staff appointed to carry out internal audits shall not audit their own activities.

What is a SADCAS Assessor?

Assessors are experts from the public and private sectors as well as from technical institutions/ associations in the SADC region who have been trained, qualified and registered to undertake independent assessments of CABs on behalf of SADCAS. Assessors trained and qualified by other accreditation bodies and evaluated for competence can also undertake assessments on behalf of SADCAS. An assessment is undertaken by an assessment team consisting of a Team Leader and at least one Technical Assessor/Technical Expert with expertise in the scope of assessment.

I would like to learn more about the requirements of my organization's applicable accreditation standards. Who offers training courses on these standards?

SADCAS provides training for conformity assessment bodies' management and staff. Conformity assessment bodies (CABs) include calibration/testing laboratories, certification and inspection bodies.

SADCAS currently offers five (5) day's long requirements, implementation and internal auditing and one day awareness courses on the key accreditation standards.

The objective of the five (5) days courses is to provide an insight into the respective system standards' requirements and implementation as well as to guide CABs' personnel on how to prepare and carry-out an internal audit so as to monitor compliance with the system standard whilst the one day courses are designed to create awareness on accreditation and the requirements of the standards.

SADCAS training courses are made relevant and practical as they include case studies and exercises that reflect the respective professional disciplines. In order to objectively assess participants, an examination is written at the end of each course. Participants are also evaluated throughout the course.

Besides the above courses, SADCAS can also offer other courses depending on your needs.

How are the courses conducted?

Courses can be conducted in-house or as open courses. In-house courses have the following benefits:

- You choose the venue of the course
- You choose the date of the course
- Cost effective as a number of staff can be trained at the same time
- Promotes team work as members have access to the same consistent information

Who conducts the training courses?

SADCAS training courses are administered by SADCAS and facilitated by NAFPs. Trainers who are drawn from a pool of qualified and experienced experts from the SADC region who have up to date involvement in accreditation matters be it system implementation and/or assessments.

How does SADCAS ensure impartiality between its accreditation and training services?

In order not to compromise its impartiality principles and status in training service delivery, SADCAS does not give specific advice for the development of an organization's operations. Furthermore, the training delivered or facilitated by SADCAS are not a pre-condition of accreditation neither do they guarantee accreditation by SADCAS.

How can I register to attend a SADCAS course?

If you are interested in a SADCAS course please complete SADCAS F 70(a) – Interest in SADCAS Courses available on the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org and return duly completed form to the Accreditation Administrator. If you wish to register on an advertised SADCAS course please complete SADCAS F 70 (b) available on the SADCAS website and return duly completed form to the Accreditation Administrator.

How can I access SADCAS accreditation documents?

SADCAS accreditation documents are available from the SADCAS website: www.sadcas.org/policies_n_procedures.php.

9. REFERENCES

Botswana Companies Act, 2003 (Act No. 32 of 2004)

SADC SQAM Memorandum of Understanding

SADCAS/ SADC Memorandum of Understanding on General Cooperation

TBT Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade

SADCAS Memorandum and Articles of Association

ISO 15189	Conformity assessment – General requirements for the competence of medical laboratories
ISO/IEC 17011	Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
ISO/IEC 17020	Conformity assessment – General criteria for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection
ISO/IEC 17021	**Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems**
ISO/IEC 17024	Conformity assessment – **General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons**
ISO/IEC 17025	General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories
ISO/IEC 17065	**Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services**
ILAC/IAF A4	Guidance on the application of ISO/IEC 17020
SADCAS F 43 (a)	Application for accreditation of calibration laboratory
SADCAS F 43 (b)	Application for accreditation of testing laboratory
SADCAS F 43 (c)	Application for accreditation of medical laboratory
SADCAS F 43 (d)	Application for accreditation of certification body – Management systems
SADCAS F 43 (e)	Application for accreditation of certification body – Product
SADCAS F43 (f)	Application for approval of personnel
SADCAS F 43 (h)	Application for accreditation of inspection body
SADCAS F 43 (g)	Application for accreditation of certification body for personnel

SADCAS F 44	SADCAS accreditation agreement
SADCAS F 70 (a)	Interest in SADCAS Training programmes form
SADCAS F 70 (b)	Training booking form
SADCAS F 71	Enquiries
SADCAS AP 01	Nomination, selection, and training of SADCAS assessors; selection of SADCAS assessment members; and monitoring of SADCAS assessors' performance
SADCAS AP 02	SADCAS service fees
SADCAS AP 08	Customer feedback handling procedure
SADCAS APP 02	Procedure for Award of certificate of recognition to National Accreditation Focal Points
SADCAS PM 01	SADCAS Policy Manual
SADCAS TG 01	Information to organizations applying for accreditation
SADCAS TG 03	Area of Accreditation
SADCAS TR 01: Part 1	Conditions for the use of SADCAS Accreditation mark
SADCAS TR 01: Part 2	Use of combined marks
SADCAS TR 02	Accreditation requirements
SADCAS/ SANAS Twinning Partnership Arrangement	

For more information on laboratory accreditation contact SADCAS on:

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