

SADCAS ACHIEVES 98% TRANSITION TO ISO/IEC 17025:2017

ISO/IEC 17025:2017: General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories was published on 30 November 2017. On 4 November 2016, and ahead of its publication, the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) published a resolution on the transition period for the implementation of ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

ILAC Resolution GA 20.15: *“As the revised version of ISO/IEC 17025 is scheduled for publication in 2017, the General Assembly endorses the recommendation of the AIC that a transition period* of 3 years from the date of publication be adopted. At the end of the transition period*, accreditation of a laboratory to ISO/IEC 17025:2005 will not be recognized under the ILAC Arrangement.”*

Following the recommendation of the ILAC Arrangement Management Committee (ILAC AMC) and as a result of ILAC Ballot which closed on 3 June 2020, the 2016 ILAC Resolution GA 20.15 was revised to extend the end of the transition period from November 2020 to 1 June 2021. ILAC and ISO have agreed to this extension to ensure all laboratories are able to be transitioned following the restrictions imposed as a result of the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak.

As part of its preparations for the implementation of the ILAC Resolution GA 20.15 and following the publication of ISO/IEC 17025:2017, SADCAS undertook the following:

- Issued TR 14: SADCAS Policy Transition to ISO/IEC 17025: 2017; and
- With funding from PTB Germany, trained SADCAS staff and assessors for the Testing/Calibration Laboratories Accreditation Schemes on ISO/IEC 17025:2017 and risk- based assessments in December 2018;

Transition plans from all facilities accredited to ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and from applicants whose applications were submitted before 1 July 2018 according to ISO/IEC 17025:2005 were received and evaluated by SADCAS with implementation of the respective transition plans being monitored and evaluated by the assessment team during scheduled assessments after 1 December 2018.

By the transition deadline of 1 June 2021, SADCAS had assessed and accredited 21 new applications to the new standard ISO/IEC 17025:2017. A total of 53 out of the 53 (100%) testing laboratories had successfully transitioned to the new standard. Ten (10) out of the 11 (91%) calibration laboratories had successfully transitioned to the new standard and one (100%) verification laboratory had successfully transitioned to ISO/IEC 17025:2017. The overall transition rate was 64 out of 65 i.e., **98%**. This represents an achievement of 108% against the anticipated 90% transition rate.



Seychelles Bureau of Standards Microbiology Laboratory
amongst testing laboratories that transitioned in time



Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC) –
Mechanical Meter Verification Laboratory
transitioned on time

Only one calibration laboratory failed to meet the extended transition deadline. The facility which was under suspension and had a reinstatement assessment in December 2020, failed to have a Clearance of Findings

assessment on time due to COVID-19 pandemic as staff of the laboratory were down with COVID. On expiry of the transition period and in line with TR 14, the facility's accreditation was withdrawn with effect from 1 June 2021 and the Laboratory's listing on SADCAS' directory of accredited facilities was removed. In line with the requirements of TR 14 which states that nonconformities raised shall be dealt with in accordance with the SADCAS normal processes and must be cleared within the set timelines before accreditation can be granted, the Laboratory was therefore advised to address the outstanding nonconformities and arrange for a Clearance of Findings assessment on or before 01 August 2021. A report was submitted to AFRAC on the actions taken on CABs that did not meet the transition timeline.

Speaking during a staff meeting, the SADCAS CEO congratulated the Technical Unit for the achievement of 98% transition rate which she attributed to the dedicated and hardworking assessors, staff and the CABs in spite of the challenges presented by the operating environment.

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