REMOTE ASSESSMENTS –
MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTION

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1.   PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document defines the requirements to conduct assessments remotely without compromising the integrity of the accreditation granted by SADCAS when it may not be possible or feasible to conduct on-site assessments due to unforeseen circumstances.

The scope of this document is limited to:
- Extraordinary events or circumstances;
- Travel to a CAB or specific location not permitted or possible (i.e. for safety reasons, travel restrictions, etc.);
- Periodic on-site assessments or reassessments;
- Extensions to a non-critical scope;
- Extensions not requiring a separate set of competencies;
- Extensions within an existing scope;
- Approval of personnel (meeting prerequisite recognition and approval requirements); or
- Follow-up assessments where only the management system is to be verified.

The SADCAS CEO may approve the use of this document in circumstances other than the above-listed on the basis of a justification and recommendation by the SADCAS Technical Manager

The document is applicable to all accreditation schemes currently offered by SADCAS.

2.   DEFINITIONS

2.1.   Definitions

2.1.1.   Assessment Technique means method used by an accreditation body to perform an assessment.
Note 1: Assessment techniques, can include, but are not limited to:
- on-site assessment;
- remote assessment;
- witnessing;
- document review;
- file review;
- measurement audits;
- review of performance in proficiency testing or interlaboratory comparisons;
- validation audits;
- unannounced visits; and
- interviewing.
Refer to ISO/IEC 17011:2017

2.1.2.   Extraordinary Event or Circumstance means a circumstance beyond the control of the organization, commonly referred to as "Force Majeure" or "Act of God". Examples are war, strike, riot, political instability, geopolitical tension, terrorism, crime, epidemic, pandemic, flooding,

earthquake, malicious computer hacking, other natural or man-made disasters.   Refer to IAF ID 3:2011

2.1.3. **Residual risk** means risk remaining after risk treatment.
Note 1: Residual risk can contain "unidentified risk".
Note 2: Residual risk can also be known as "retained risk".
Refer to ISO Guide 73

2.1.4. **Remote Assessment** means assessment of the physical location or virtual site of a conformity assessment body, using electronic means. Remote assessments include assessments conducted via electronic means such as online access, video links, web conferencing, telephone interviews, desktop assessment of documents/records, etc.
Note 1: A virtual site is an online environment allowing persons to execute processes, e.g. in a cloud environment.
Refer to ISO/IEC 17011:2017

2.1.5.   Desktop Review means an assessment technique used under circumstances of low risk or low residual risk, for example, where an extension of range is required to an existing method and equipment, or a new test method is requested using an existing measurement platform, or new personnel need to be approved. A Desktop Review is a limited form of a remote assessment.

2.1.6 **Desktop Assessment-** the process of determining the conformity of the CAB by assessing documented evidence remotely, and resulting in a formal assessment report and, where applicable, findings.

2.2.7 **Teleconferencing**- the use of telecommunication devices to hold discussions/meetings between participants at different locations.

3.   **GENERAL**

The assessment process is critical to ensure the integrity of accreditation, and this is typically achieved through an on-site assessment activity of the accredited CAB.

ISO/IEC 17011:2017 makes provision for on-site assessments to be replaced with other assessment techniques where an on-site assessment is not applicable When another assessment technique(e.g., remote assessment) is used, such technique shall achieve the same objective as the on-site assessment being replaced.

Due to extraordinary circumstances, SADCAS may also determine that an on-site assessment is not possible, and in such cases resort to remote assessments.

The Scheme Coordinator in consultation with the Technical Manager shall justify the use of remote assessments. SADCAS F 128 – Remote Assessment – Risk Evaluation Form shall be completed prior to performing a remote assessment.

4. PREREQUISITE REQUIREMENTS FOR REMOTE ASSESSMENTS

The following requirements must be in place in order to conduct assessments remotely, as applicable:

4.1. Preferably and where possible a suitable private meeting room where the assessment team can all be present;

4.2. Where it is not possible for the assessors to meet in one location, they must be able to remain in regular contact with the Team Leader or the Scheme Coordinator;

4.3. Access to the Internet through a fast, reliable internet connection, by all the team members as well as the CAB;

4.4 Suitable video conferencing, teleconferencing or communication software (e.g. Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp Group call, webcams, email, etc.), and associated computer network to enable communication with the CAB as necessary, including opening and closing meetings;

4.5 Confirmation of confidentiality of information that will be accessed via the internet shall be obtained before the remote assessment may be scheduled;

4.6 Where necessary a separate computer to run the communication channel, especially where the assessors are using their own laptops to access records and complete SADCAS assessment forms;

4.7 The standard SADCAS assessment pack forms are to be made available electronically; and

4.8 Assessment team members must have access to CAB contact person at all times, and the rest of the staff to be available, as far as possible, for interview purposes.

5. RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION TO BE SUBMITTED

5.1. The CAB is required to submit, as applicable, electronically (into a drop-box, email or similar) the following documents at least 2 weeks prior to the assessment:

- Management and Technical requirements checklists completed by the CAB, e.g. F 40 (a), F 40 (b), F 40 (d), F 60 (a), F 60 (b) and F 78 (a), or other checklists required by each accreditation scheme and communicated by the Scheme Coordinator.

Note: The CAB's comments are to be comprehensive, and must include applicable references to the CAB's Documented Information (Quality Manual/ policies/ procedures/ forms/ work instructions etc.) where the requirements listed in the checklists have been addressed;

- A copy of their Management System Quality Manual (policies, procedures, methods and work instructions);

- The Internal audit schedule;

- The latest Internal Audit report(s), not older than 12 months;

- The names of all internal auditors, along with their competency records;

- A copy of the Management Review minutes or records, not older than 12 months;

- A list of all records of appeals and complaints received and how these have been addressed since the CAB's last assessment;

- A list of non-conformities and corrective actions taken;

- For all Testing, Calibration and Medical Laboratories, a completed F 61 (e) and F 78 (d) - Proficiency Testing requirements checklist;

- A copy of the laboratory's PT Participation Plan (where applicable);

- Evidence of corrective action taken for PT/ILC deviations or unsatisfactory results;

- Copies of the PT, Comparison or other approved suitable alternative reports since the last assessment;

- For all Testing and Calibration Laboratories, and Inspection and Legal Metrology Bodies, a partially completed SADCAS F121 i.e. first 4 columns of pages 3 and 4 with the CAB's measuring equipment details and Calibration Service Providers. Supporting Calibration Certificates and/or reports to be submitted;

- Samples or a list, as applicable of request forms, test reports and or certificates issued by the CAB since the last assessment; and

- The assessor(s) would then select from the samples or list submitted a number of request forms, test reports and or certificates issued by the CAB from which to conduct vertical assessments.

5.2. The CAB will be notified of which selected certificates and/or reports and records (and client files where applicable) that they are required to submit, to be used for the vertical assessment(s):

- A copy of the reports or certificates to be evaluated, in the same format as that sent to their client, i.e. so that a full evaluation of all certificate(s)/report(s) including the use of the SADCAS accreditation symbol can be evaluated;

- Copies of the raw data generated to perform the activity;

- A copy of the procedure, method and work instruction used to perform the activity;

- Personnel records of all staff involved in the preparation of the certificate(s)/report(s). These records must include:
  a) a CV, if applicable;
  b) a copy of their Job description;
  c) a copy of the competence evaluation records; and
  d) a copy of the authorization record for the individual.

- Traceability: copies of the calibration certificates/records for all equipment used to perform the test/calibration/ inspection, etc. (if not submitted under section 5.1 with the SADCAS F121)

- Identification of all equipment used to monitor the environment during the activity, along with the relevant calibration certificate and records (where applicable). (if not submitted under section 5.1 with the SADCAS F121)

5.3. The Team may ask for an activity, or part thereof, to be video-recorded and the clip shared with the team. Thereafter the Technical Assessor may complete the witnessing activity SADCAS F 60 (d) form of part of it.

6. THE REMOTE ASSESSMENT

6.1. Confidentiality

The Assessment team members shall complete and sign the SADCAS F 45 (a) - Non-disclosure Confidentiality form.

6.2.   The Opening Meeting

6.2.1   The opening meeting is facilitated using a suitable electronic communication channel (e.g. Skype, Zoom, teleconferencing etc.).

6.2.2   The remote assessment opening meeting will be conducted using the standard assessment agenda F 46 (a) and is chaired by the assessment Team Leader.

6.2.3   The assessment team must complete the Attendance Register SADCAS F 46 (c), the CAB will also be requested to complete the attendance register and submit this to the assessment team via the drop box or email.

6.2.4   The Team Leader must establish the names of the personnel who will provide additional information, along with contact information should they not be available (over and above the records submitted prior to the assessment).

6.3.   The Assessment

6.3.1   The assessment team members will review the records submitted and complete the applicable SADCAS assessment forms.

6.3.2   The assessment team shall interview the CAB staff as needed to seek additional evidence, clarifications and/or confirmations, using the established communication channel or any other channels.

6.3.3   Where nonconformities are identified, this must be discussed and verified with the CAB to ensure correctness of information.

6.3.4   All findings must be submitted to the Team Leader for review, who will then seek any clarifications from the team members.

6.4.   The Closing Meeting

6.4.1   The closing meeting will be held on conclusion of the remote assessment, using the standard SADCAS Agenda F 46 (b).

6.4.2   The Team Leader will communicate with the CAB the recommendation reached by the assessment team (F 61 (c), as well as the findings. The recommendation may indicate whether or not an on-site visit will be required. The CAB will be given the opportunity to seek clarification on any findings raised.

6.4.3   The copy of F 61 (c): Assessment Recommendation Report and all findings raised during the remote assessment must be signed by the Team Leader, and then sent using electronic means to the CAB without undue delay.

6.4.4   The CAB must then sign the Assessment Recommendation Report and findings raised and send back to the relevant SADCAS Scheme Coordinator within 7 days.

7.   REQUIREMENTS FOR A DESKTOP REVIEW

7.1.   A desk top review may be conducted in circumstances where a full assessment is not required, for example a scope extension or personnel evaluation, and where the residual risk is low.

7.2.   Having a low residual risk may be as a result of the CAB already having accreditation in which the same or similar measurement platform or method is the subject of the extension, where the CAB has participated in an ILC, PT or approved suitable alternative confirming their competence, etc.

8.   REFERENCES

• IAF ID 3:2011	:	Informative Document for Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations
• ISO/IEC 17011: 2017	:	Conformity Assessment – Requirements for Accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
• ISO Guide 73	:	Risk Management - Vocabulary
• AP 12: Part 1	:	Accreditation Process for Testing/Calibration/Medical Testing Laboratories
• AP 12: Part 2		Accreditation of Inspection Bodies Operating in the Regulatory/Voluntary Area
• AP 12: Part 3		General Principles for the Assessment of Management Systems/ Product/Persons Certification Bodies
• F 40 (a)	:	Checklist ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Conformity Assessment - Requirements for Bodies Providing Audit and Cert MS
• F 40 (b)	:	Checklist ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 Conformity assessment - requirements for bodies certifying products processes & Services
• F 40 (d)	:	Checklist ISO/IEC 17020 for Accreditation of Various Types of Bodies Performing Inspection
• F 45 (a)	:	Nondisclosure/Confidentiality Statement – Assessors / Technical Experts

• F 46 (a)	:	Onsite Assessment - Opening Meeting Agenda
• F 46 (b)	:	Onsite Assessment - Closing Meeting Agenda
• F 46 (c)	:	Attendance Register-Onsite Assessment Opening-Closing Meetings
• F 60 (a)	:	Management Requirements ISO IEC 17025-2017
• F 60 (b)	:	Technical Requirements ISO IEC 17025-2017
• F 60 (d)	:	Witnessing of Activity
• F 61 (c)	:	Assessment Recommendation Report
• F 61 (e)	:	Proficiency Testing Requirements ISO-IEC 17025-2017 Clause 7.7 & SADCAS Requirements
• F 78 (a)	:	Management and Technical Requirements for Medical laboratories ISO 15189-2012
• F 78 (d)	:	Proficiency Testing Requirements ISO 15189 Clause 5.6 and SADCAS Requirements
• F 121	:	Compliance to SADCAS Policy on Metrological Traceability
• PM 01	:	SADCAS Policy Manual
• F 128		Remote Assessment – Risk Evaluation Form

APPENDIX – AMENDMENT RECORD

Revision Status	Change			Approved by	Effective Date
	Page	Clause/ Subclause	Description of Change		
Issue 1	-	-	-	CEO	2020-04-01
Issue 1	7	6.1	Deleted requirement for assessment team to confirm deletion of any confidential documents, images, recordings, from personal computers after an assessment	CEO	2021-02-08
Issue 2	4	3	1st paragraph: Deleted "or may not be possible, and the information is available electronically, e.g., where there is no premises and the company is cloud based." 1st paragraph: Added "When another assessment technique (e.g., remote assessment) is used, such technique shall achieve the same objective as the on-site assessment being replaced." 4th paragraph: Added "SADCAS F 128 – Remote Assessment – Risk Evaluation Form shall be completed prior to performing a remote assessment"	CEO	2023-02-28