



SADCAS Inspection Bodies Accreditation Scheme (IBAS)

Background

The SADCAS Inspection Bodies Accreditation Scheme (IBAS) was established in June 2010. The IBAS is operated in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011: Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

The Need for Accreditation

Inspection is the examination of a product design, product service, process or plant and the determination of conformity with specific requirements on the basis of professional judgment. Inspection involves examination by qualified personnel using techniques including visual examination, dimensional checks and examinations using gauges and instruments. All inspection bodies need to ensure that they have the people, facilities, technical expertise and management systems in order to undertake inspections professionally and competently thus deliver technically accurate inspection results to their clients. Accreditation which is the process of providing recognition to a conformity assessment body for its competence in performing specific tasks is the strategy for inspection bodies to achieve this. For inspection bodies concerned with demonstrating competence underpinned by a quality system, the appropriate International Standard is ISO/IEC 17020 which specifies criteria for the operation of the various bodies performing inspections irrespective of the sector involved. It is the standard against which inspection bodies are accredited. Throughout the world many countries now rely on accreditation as a means of independently evaluating competence of inspection bodies. With the launches of the Southern African Development Community Free Trade Areas in 2008, the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) in March 2018 and the Tripartite Free Trade Area in August 2018, accreditation is poised to play a key role in facilitating trade.

Accreditation of an inspection body in accordance with ISO/IEC 17020 provides a number of benefits:

- It is a means of providing independent assurance of inspection bodies' technical competency and integrity;
- It provides confidence in the quality of services provided by inspection bodies;
- It enhances credibility and reputation of inspection bodies;
- It reduces costs associated with repetitive inspections and lost time is minimized;
- It provides a benchmark with international best practices;

- It reduces risk associated with accidents and injuries;
- It can be used as a defense against litigation;
- It improves acceptance of goods internationally thus facilitates trade and economic development.

Scope of Inspection

The current fields of inspection offered on the SADCAS IBAS are:

- Food;
- Textiles/Clothing/Leather/footwear;
- Vessels under pressure;
- Timber;
- Electrical;
- Risk Assessment;
- Gas Stations.

The fields of inspection are listed in SADCAS TG 03: Area of accreditation.

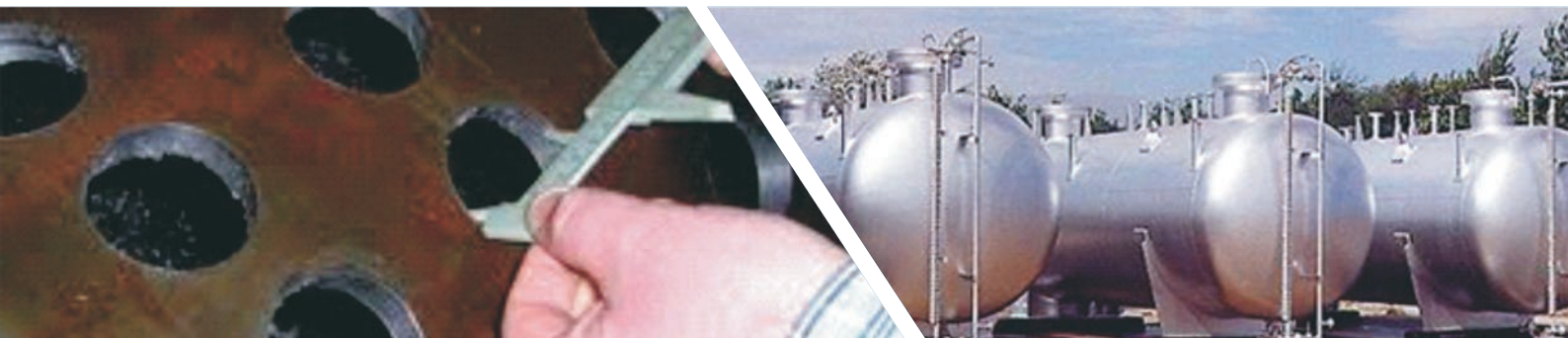
Accreditation Criteria

Inspection bodies seeking to be accredited on the SADCAS IBAS 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.

The Accreditation Process

An inspection body wishing to be accredited

- Submits directly to SADCAS duly completed SADCAS F 43 (h): Application for accreditation of inspection bodies together with the inspection bodies' quality manual, and duly completed SADCAS F 43 (f): Application for approval of personnel i.e. nominated representative and technical signatory in the case of 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 on-site visit to check the readiness of applicant for accreditation. In the case of inspection bodies and on positive recommendation from the pre-assessment team and depending on the regulator's requirement, SADCAS will issue an indicative letter which the regulator can use as the basis for granting approval subject to the inspection body obtaining accreditation within a prescribed period of time.
- 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 non conformities where the inspection body needs to institute corrective action.

Assessors

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 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 IBAS.

Periodic On-site Assessment and Re-assessment

In order to maintain accreditation **periodic assessments** are conducted on-site. The first periodic on-site assessment is undertaken not more than 12 months after accreditation thereafter annually throughout the accreditation cycle of 5 years. The intervals between periodic on-site visits can be extended depending on the risks associated but must not exceed two years.

Re-assessments are conducted at least 6 months prior to the end of the accreditation cycle of 5 years.

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 Quality Manager.

Appeals

Appeals from inspection 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 independency 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:

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