

TERMS OF REFERENCE, REGISTRATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

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1. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this document is to define the process for the application, selection and appointment of Advisory Committee members who are responsible for providing technical guidance to SADCAS.

2. **GENERAL**

SADCAS must ensure that it remains relevant within the technical fields in which it offers accreditation services. SADCAS uses Advisory Committees to provide appropriate technical guidance on all matters within a specific field of expertise.

The Advisory Committee is a fundamental and vital component of operating a technically relevant and credible accreditation system. Amongst other things, Advisory Committees guide technical policy and provide important support in technical matters to the assessment process within a specified area of accreditation. This document has been created to ensure coordination of activities within and between the various Advisory Committees operated by SADCAS.

The activities of the Advisory Committee are considered to be for regional good. SADCAS does not remunerate members for attendance to meetings, participation in working groups or the generation of Technical Documents. SADCAS may, from time to time, reimburse members for incidental costs such as travel costs, accommodation and subsistence allowance. Such incidental expenses must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

3. **INPUTS TO AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

In order to properly fulfill its function, it is important that agenda items for an Advisory Committee meeting are focused on issues affecting the technical integrity of the processes within a specific field of accreditation activity.

Issues that need discussion and appropriate resolution at an Advisory Committee meeting could arise for example from the initiation of a new field of accreditation, the assessment process in specific fields and related traceability in measurement, results obtained from Proficiency Testing activity or inconsistent practice due to ambiguity in requirement documents etc. Any field specific and technical issue that would, unless appropriately resolved, cause the accredited facilities in a specific area to produce data that might lead to unexplainable contradictions with results from other accredited facilities, could potentially form the basis for an input to an Advisory Committee meeting.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Given the potential for a diverse set of technical issues to be raised within an Advisory Committee, it is vital that its members are carefully selected. Regional experts in specific fields should be identified and invited. It is also important that they bring current knowledge to a debate.

Selected representatives of accredited organizations, with the relevant technical experience and expertise, are important members of a SADCAS Advisory Committee. They have a vital role in ensuring that all Advisory Committee deliberations also consider and embody current realities. It is important however that so called “commercial pressures” do not unduly sway the committee into making sub-optimal recommendations based on seemingly persuasive but ultimately narrow and self-serving arguments. In this regard, active and appropriate representation from independent associations of interested stakeholders in SADC region play a vital role in ensuring that appropriate and widely supported recommendations are arrived at. The committee composition and membership remain the responsibility of SADCAS. SADCAS must ensure, in terms of international requirements, that not only appropriate technical expertise is available but also an appropriate balance of interests is maintained for each of its Advisory Committee.

4.1. Composition of Advisory Committee

4.1.1. To be considered for membership to an Advisory Committee, all nominees are required to complete the appropriate application forms, SADCAS F 43 (f) - Application for the Approval of Personnel and submit this together with current Curriculum Vitae to SADCAS. The SADCAS Scheme Coordinator shall review all nominations and evaluate their suitability for Advisory Committee membership.

4.1.2. The Scheme Coordinator recommends the selected Advisory Committee members to the Technical Manager, who has responsibility for the appointment of Advisory Committee members.

4.1.3. Advisory Committee membership shall primarily be based on the following criteria:

- Members shall possess the relevant technical expertise in the specific field of activity.
- Members representing an association shall have the mandate of the association they represent.
- The Advisory Committee Membership in totality should adequately represent a balance of interests of stakeholders and interested parties which, where appropriate, includes business, government and labour.
- The Technical Manager may co-opt additional technical expertise onto the Advisory Committee, if required.

4.1.4. On reaching a positive decision, the Technical Manager shall inform the successful nominee about acceptance. Where a nominee requires the permission of his/her organization, the acceptance of membership shall be counter signed by the employer. SADCAS reserves the right to refuse a nomination without providing an explanation.

4.1.5. Advisory Committee members are appointed for a period of 4 years. After the 4-year cycle, the appointment period may be extended by the Technical Manager following recommendation from the Scheme Coordinator, based on the member still meeting the competence criteria stipulated in this procedure.

4.2. **Other Advisory Committee Members**

4.2.1. **Observer**

Apart from active participants within a specific Advisory Committee, observers also have an important role in ensuring that transparency and impartiality are maintained. Although welcome to attend in limited numbers, it is also expected that they indicate their intention to attend an Advisory Committee at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting, so that appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate them.

Observers are not allowed to participate in discussions or recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

4.2.2. **Concerned Individuals/Groups**

Concerned individuals/ groups normally represent a particular view on a particular issue that could be discussed at an Advisory Committee. Such concerns shall only be allowed on submission to SADCAS, in writing, at least two (2) weeks before the date of a scheduled Advisory Committee meeting where this subject would be discussed.

4.3. **Chairing of an Advisory Committee**

4.3.1 The Advisory Committee Chair shall remain impartial and encourage the members to express their views on the various topics under discussion. The ultimate goal is to obtain consensus in the search of innovative and technically sound and impartial solutions to the issues under discussion.

4.3.2 An appropriate candidate for Chair is therefore someone with the requisite skills, who has the confidence of the members and the ability to bring the often-diverse opinions expressed in a meeting into focus and appropriate resolution.

4.3.3 Chairs of SADCAS Advisory Committees are appointed by the Technical Manager. The Technical Manager in consultation with the Scheme Coordinator will review all nominations submitted and formally appoint a suitable chair for a period of five (5) years. The appointment period may be extended by the Technical Manager subject to a positive recommendation from the Scheme Coordinator. Although nominations may include SADCAS staff members, it is preferred that the nominees originate from amongst the external Advisory Committee membership.

4.3.4 In the absence of the Chair, the relevant SADCAS Scheme Coordinator will automatically assume the position.

4.4. **Duties and Responsibilities of Chairs of Advisory Committees**

- 4.4.1. Advisory Chairs are appointed by the Technical Manager and may be a SADCAS staff member or an external Advisory Committee member.
- 4.4.2. The position will be reviewed every five (5) years by the Advisory Committee and the Technical Manager or a person appointed by him/her.
- 4.4.3. External Chairpersons will be accountable to the relevant Technical Manager.
- 4.4.4. Duties and responsibilities include:
 - a) Assist SADCAS Scheme Coordinator with the identification of potential members with suitable technical expertise;
 - b) Identify relevant items for discussion at meetings;
 - c) Preparation of agenda;
 - d) Assist the secretariat with the minutes of the proceedings of meetings;
 - e) Edit and approve minutes;
 - f) Ensure that members, as agreed in meetings, carry out all actions; and
 - g) Collate and evaluate comments received by members.

4.5. **Secretarial Functions**

- 4.5.1. All secretarial and support functions for the Advisory Committee will be managed by SADCAS. These include but are not limited to activities such as meeting notification, preparation of appropriate documentation, venue selection and associated organizational arrangements, production of minutes and associated documents and their distribution and the maintenance of membership details.
- 4.5.2. No meetings of the Advisory Committee will be held without the support of an appropriate and specifically nominated SADCAS Scheme Coordinator unless special dispensation is provided by the Technical Manager
- 4.5.3. All approved minutes of the Advisory Committee shall be published within thirty (30) working days after the Advisory Committee meeting.

5. **ADVISORY COMMITTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1. Advisory Committees act in an advisory capacity and make recommendations to the Technical Manager concerning all technical matters pertaining to those fields for which the members have expertise.

- 5.2. In particular, each Advisory Committee advises the Technical Manager in its own field, on the following:
- a) All generic technical aspects with respect to accreditation;
 - b) Solution to technical problems in their field of expertise;
 - c) The technical content of SADCAS audits and/or proficiency testing programmes if this activity is relevant to the specific field of accreditation;
 - d) Approval of the content of SADCAS Technical Guidance documents;
 - e) Provision of SADCAS input regarding metrological traceability requirements;
 - f) Maintenance of the criteria for demonstration of competence in their field of expertise;
 - g) Provision of specialized input to regional and international standards; and
 - h) Provision of specialized input to appropriate work items and/or documents of regional or international accreditation forums or cooperations.
- 5.3. Wherever possible consensus should be reached amongst the committee members. Where this is not possible and if the matter is of generic nature affecting many areas of operation, SADCAS shall be responsible for determining if the matter should be referred to the Technical Manager. If the matter is of nature sufficiently specific to the Advisory Committee, then it can be voted on by the Advisory Committee.
- 5.4. As a group providing guidance on technical matters for SADCAS, members of Advisory Committee are in addition, expected to assist in the ongoing improvement of the standard of calibration, testing, inspection and certification in the SADC region.

6. **FREQUENCY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- 6.1. SADCAS Advisory Committee meetings shall be scheduled at least once a year and as and when necessary and may be held in the form of face-to-face or virtual meetings. The frequency of meetings for a specific Advisory Committee will depend on the work being undertaken and the urgency of its activities. SADCAS will inform all members of an Advisory Committee meeting at least 4 weeks prior to the meeting.

7. **VOTING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

7.1. **Voting**

The Chair of the Advisory Committee will manage the meeting in such a way as to encourage the members to reach consensus wherever possible. If no consensus is possible, a two thirds majority of the Advisory Committee members present at a meeting is required for a recommendation to be passed.

7.2. Quorum

A quorum for an Advisory Committee meeting will be twenty-five percent of all registered Advisory Committee members.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- 8.1. Once the Chair feels that an agreement has been reached, the meeting can then record its recommendations for the various items under deliberation. If no progress is made on a particular agenda item, the meeting might agree that further work is required. It is important that the scope and depth of such further work is discussed and agreed upon, and a suitable plan of action, with appropriate deadlines, is agreed with those accepting responsibility for the activity. In moving from an Advisory Committee recommendation to a SADCAS decision, further work including regional and international benchmarking where applicable, might be required to ensure that international recognition is achieved and maintained. Such follow up activity will normally be managed by the SADCAS staff allocated to a specific Advisory Committee.
- 8.2. Once appropriate additional information has been obtained, a decision may be made. It is important that such decisions are documented and communicated to accredited facilities, assessors and wider stakeholder community. Several communication channels are used such as the SADCAS website, monthly newsletters, communications meetings and assessor conclaves.
- 8.3. An important element of transparency and communication is the creation of a set of appropriately detailed minutes that reflect the issues discussed and the actions proposed. Although the creation and distribution of Advisory Committee minutes is the responsibility of the full time SADCAS representatives to the meeting, all members have a responsibility to assist in ensuring that the minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting deliberations.

9. WORKING GROUPS

- 9.1. The Advisory Committee may from time to time appoint, from amongst its members, working groups to deal with a specific technical issue that might require additional research or focus. The Advisory Committee will set broad objectives for the working group, who will then determine their terms of reference. These terms of reference shall be approved by the Advisory Committee. The results of the working group shall be tabled at the Advisory Committee meeting for discussion and recommendation where relevant.
- 9.2. The Advisory Committee shall appoint a Convener from amongst the working group members.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER PARTNERS

- 10.1. It is possible that issues will arise during deliberations that fall outside the direct responsibility of SADCAS. The representatives from associations and organizations present would be encouraged to take such issues back to their parent organizations for further discussions and appropriate action. If this is not possible, SADCAS staff members present would normally take the responsibility for further communication between SADCAS and such organizations.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 11.1. Information discussed at an Advisory Committee would normally already be in the public domain. Members may however be required to sign SADCAS F 45d - Nondisclosure-Confidentiality Statement - SADCAS Board-Committee Members if matters on an agenda require it. An example could concern a specific organization, which without relevant and confidential detail, the Advisory Committee would not be in a position to provide an informed opinion on the related technical issue. Only the generic principle and the agreed outcome of such discussion would be recorded and made available for more general consumption.

12. RECORDS

12.1. Advisory Committee Member Records

A file for each Advisory Committee member is maintained by the Scheme Coordinator and shall contain the following information:

- A current CV. Members are required to submit an updated CV at least every two years
- A completed SADCAS F 43 (f)- Application for the Approval of Personnel.

12.2. Advisory Committee Chair Records

Records of Advisory Committee Chair nominations and the approval of the Chair shall be maintained by the Technical Manager in an "Advisory Committee Chair" file.

12.3. Advisory Committee Meeting Records

The following documentation from each Advisory Committee meeting shall be maintained by the relevant Scheme Coordinator:

- The Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda;
- The signed attendance register;
- The minutes of both the signed minutes of the previous and the current Advisory Committee meeting minutes, showing records of actions and decisions;
- Where required, signed nondisclosure statements;

- Any supporting documentation (e.g., SADCAS documents and requirements, technical issues);
- Minutes of working groups formed, and their members;
- Terms of reference for the working groups;
- Minutes of working group meetings, actions and decisions.

13. **CONCLUSION**

- 13.1. The operation of an internationally recognized regional accreditation body presupposes ready access to a pool of regional expertise in each of the fields in which it operates. Relevant expertise needs to be identified periodically, and then invited to join the membership of the appropriate Advisory Committee. It is also important that strong and symbiotic relationships are maintained with appropriate partners within the regional standardization, quality assurance, accreditation and metrology (SQAM) community so that the platforms for regional technical competence and credibility are created and maintained.

14. **REFERENCE**

- SADCAS F 43 (f) – Application for the Approval of Personnel
- SADCAS F 45d - Nondisclosure-Confidentiality Statement - SADCAS Board-Committee Members

APPENDIX – AMENDMENT RECORD

Revision status	Change			Approved by	Effective Date
	Page No.	Clause	Description of change		
Issue 1	-	-	-	CEO	2010-04-12
Issue 2	1	-	<u>Footer</u> – Reformatted cover as per new format.	CEO	2014-03-13
	2	-	<u>Contents</u> – Added “Appendix – Amendment Record”	CEO	
	All	-	All pages – Deleted “Issue No. 1” and substituted with “Issue No. 2”	CEO	
Issue 2	6 and 9	4.3.4; 4.4.4; 4.5.2 and 12.3	In all these clauses: “Technical Manager” deleted and substituted with “Scheme Coordinator”	CEO	2018-11-20
Issue 3	5	4.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line 3: Changed the appointment period of SADCAS Advisory Committees Chairpersons from two (2) to five (5) years 	CEO	2021-05-21
	6	4.4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line 1: Changed the term of office of Advisory Committee Chair from two (2) years to five (5) years 		
	7	6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line 1: Added “as and when necessary and may be held in the form of virtual meetings” at the end of first sentence Line 3: Deleted “Scheduling of Advisory Committee meetings is managed as part of the SADCAS annual planning meeting”. 		
	All pages	1 - 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made editorial changes Responsibilities revised taking into account developments in SADCAS. 		
	10	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added “SADCAS F 45d - Nondisclosure-Confidentiality Statement - SADCAS Board-Committee Members “ 		