

AFREXIMBANK CONTRIBUTING TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF SADCAS

SADCAS has secured funding from the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) to extend the scope of SADCAS international recognition in the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC)/International Accreditation Forum (IAF) multilateral recognition arrangements in order to enhance the competitiveness of products thus assist SADC manufacturers to access international markets, support government in executing the health, safety and environment protection mandate and to ensure the success of development partners' investments in Africa.

Enhancing global acceptance of SADC products has been a key strategic objective of SADCAS. In implementing this key strategic objective and over the years in 2015, 2017 and 2019, SADCAS has achieved international recognition of seven out of the eight (8) accreditation schemes it offers namely: Testing; Calibration; Medical Testing; Verification; Inspection; Management Systems in the sub scopes Quality Management Systems (QMS), Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS), Environmental Management Systems (QMS). This means that the certificates issued by SADCAS accredited calibration/testing/veterinary/verification/medical laboratories, and certification and inspection bodies are recognized in worldwide thus removing the need for repetitive conformity assessment checks. Effectively this means that through internationally recognized accreditation SADC Member States serviced by SADCAS have better access to foreign markets worldwide – A truly global reach!

Third party product certification is a frequently specified requirement to operate in the global market place. The overall aim of certifying products, processes or services is to give confidence to all interested parties that a product, process or service fulfils specified requirements. The International standard ISO/IEC 17065 specifies requirements, the observance of which is intended to ensure that certification bodies operate certification schemes in a competent, consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of such bodies and the acceptance of certified products, processes and services on a national and international basis thus furthering international trade.

Supporting the continued movement of products and services between countries is therefore of huge importance not only to the health and wellbeing of individuals but also to the economic health of entire nations in SADC, the continent and around the globe. Throughout the world many countries now rely on accreditation as a means of independently evaluating competence of certification bodies. With the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement, accreditation is poised to play a key role in facilitating trade.



Accreditation Exporting your Business

The SADCAS product certification bodies accreditation schemes (CBAS- Prod) was established in June 2010. The scheme is operated in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011: Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies. SADCAS has a number of applications under

process and expects to receive more applications in the future. SADCAS currently accredits product certification bodies operating in the various key developmental industrial sectors including the food products, beverages and tobacco, textiles, pharmaceuticals, leather and leather products, pulp and paper, fishing, agriculture etc.

Extension of the SADCAS scope of signatory status in the AFRAC/IAF multilateral recognition arrangements is dependent upon SADCAS building up the competence to accredit in the said scopes and then being successfully evaluated by peers from internationally recognized in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011 and the relevant AFRAC/IAF documents. The intention is for SADCAS to undergo peer evaluation during the re-evaluation of SADCAS set to be conducted in June 2023.

The objectives of the Afreximbank funded project are therefore to:

- Build the capacity of SADCAS to accredit under the Main scope product Certification and sub-scope Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS);
- Develop promotional materials for the said schemes;
- Translate relevant quality management systems documents into French and Portuguese the other official business language in the SADC region;
- Undertake internal audits of the said schemes; and
- Undergo and achieve international recognition.

In an effort to achieving their mandate of promoting intra and extra African trade, Afreximbank currently has a number of initiatives to further regional trade and integration with a focus on developing Quality Infrastructure and harmonization of standards. The Bank is assisting in the set -up of African Quality Assurance Centers focusing on key development sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, textiles etc and in value addition value chains and also supporting the harmonization of standards in Africa by the African Regional Standards Organization (ARSO).

Afreximbank is a Pan-African multilateral financial institution with the mandate of financing and promoting intra- and extra-African trade. Afreximbank was established in October 1993 and owned by African governments, the African Development Bank, and other African multilateral financial institutions as well as African and non-African public and private investors. The Bank was established under two constitutive documents, an Agreement signed by member states, which confers on the Bank the status of an international organization, and a Charter signed by all Shareholders, which governs its corporate structure and operations. Afreximbank deploys innovative structures to deliver financing solutions that are supporting the transformation of the structure of Africa's trade, accelerating industrialization and intra-regional trade, thereby sustaining economic expansion in Africa.

Speaking after the signing of the Agreement Mrs Mutasa, SADCAS CEO remarked "We are enthused and delighted because this to us is a first where we have received assistance from within the continent thus reducing our over dependence on benevolent international donors"

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