

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2021 IAF ANNUAL MEETINGS

The IAF annual meetings were held virtually from 9 September 2021 culminating in the IAF General Assembly (GA) on 4 November 2021. SADCAS was represented at these meetings by Mrs Maureen Primrose Mutasa, the Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Pinkie Malebe, the Technical Manager, Mr Xavier Mugari, the Quality Manager, Mr Victor Mundembe, Scheme Coordinator for Certification Bodies. This was the third time that the ILAC / IAF meetings were held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 400 delegates attended the annual meetings.

The following IAF and joint IAF/ILAC meetings were attended by SADCAS representatives:

- IAF Executive Committee Meeting, 9 September 2021 representing SADC Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA);
- Joint Working Group Communications (JWGC) – Accreditation Body Communication Professionals, 20 & 22 September 2021;
- Joint Management Committee (JMC), 29 September 2021 representing African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC);
- IAF Technical Committee (TC) Management System Certification Working Group, 5 October 2021
- IAF TC Food Working Group, 6 October 2021;
- JDSC, 13 & 14 October 2021;
- IAF TC, 26, 27 & 28 October 2021; and
- 35th IAF General Assembly (GA), 4 November 2021.

The 35th IAF General Assembly passed a total of 34 resolutions. The highlights of the IAF annual meetings with key issues summarized from discussions at the IAF GA and resolutions and related meetings are as follows:

IAF CertSearch Database

- Matt Gantley, the Database Management Committee (DMC) Chair presented essential modifications to IAF CertSearch database principles to achieve global database of accredited Certifications
- Designed to achieve the vision of certified once accepted everywhere
- Features:
 - IAF will own the database
 - DMC will have representatives from regions
 - Personal information is not required on the database
 - Contractual arrangements on data ownership, protection, management and security between CBs, ABs, IAF Database LLC and the service provider Quality Trade
 - Covers accredited Management Systems Certification only
- Consultative communications ongoing until April 2022 through FAQs and workshops
- SADCA held a successful consultative workshop with stakeholders on 27 October 2021
- Final DMC presentation will be made in April 2022 following which a ballot will be undertaken.

Response to and Future Impact of COVID-19

- The following are activities that were undertaken by various stakeholders in response to COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Transition to ISO/IEC 17011: 2017 and the Coronavirus Outbreak (joint IAF / ILAC position paper in which IAF was anticipating possible delayed evaluations and impact on transition to ISO/IEC 17011:2017)

- UNIDO has published '*Quality and Standards and Their Role in Responding to COVID-19*', a document examining the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade and the role that the Quality Infrastructure can play in mitigating negative impacts and supporting the SDGs
- Development & publication of "IAF/ILAC-A1/A2: Addendum 01/2021 - IAF/ILAC Approach to Remote Peer Evaluations of Regions and Single Accreditation Bodies during the COVID-19 Pandemic" by JWG A-series.
 - **IAF activities in response to COVID 19**
 - IAF COVID-19 FAQs which have been translated into Spanish, Italian and Korean
 - IAF Statement on COVID-19 (a reminder to use MD04 and ID03)
 - Joint IAF/ILAC Statement on: Replacement of assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - IAF GA Resolution 2020-16 – IAF COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 - Survey undertaken by IAF, ILAC and ISO to collect the views of the conformity assessment community and users on the use of remote techniques.
 - **Concerns for the future**
 - How to prepare for the post-pandemic phase. It will be necessary to quickly update the requirements applicable to accreditation bodies (ABs) or conformity assessment bodies (CABs), or offer unambiguous interpretations on how to manage this new normal.
 - It will take years to incorporate the lessons learned during the pandemic before standards or IAF mandatory documents are changed.
- The plan is not to modify the 34 FAQs published on the <https://iaffaq.com>, to avoid market problems; Start a new list of FAQs aimed at the post-pandemic phase; collaborate with ILAC and ISO so as to come up with a harmonized approach; not to disband the TF at this moment.

Technical Committee

- IAF MD X:202X Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes was distributed for 30-day ballot on the 23rd of October 2021.
- The IAF Mandatory Document (MD) associated with the Transition requirements for ISO 50003 was distributed for 30-day ballot on the 6 October 2021.
- IAF MD 9:202X Application of ISO/IEC 17021-1 in the Field of Medical Device Quality Management Systems (ISO 13485) was revised as a result of the comments received from the 60-day comment period and provided to TC Chair for review, prior to being distributed for ballot.
- IAF MD 11:2019 IAF Mandatory Document for the Application of ISO/IEC 17021-1 for Audits of Integrated Management Systems has been revised to align with ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 requirements and provided to the TC Chair for review. The TC Chair is currently seeking approval from the TC to waive the 30-day TC comment period.
- IAF MD20 (Generic competencies of AB Assessors) is to be revised in a one step process, to remove duplicative competencies covered in ISO/IEC 17011:2017 and insert level 3 standard competencies once developed. When complete, the TF will recommend to the TC if the document should remain as a MD or be converted into an Informative Document (ID).
- IAF MD15:2014 IAF Mandatory Document for the Collection of Data to Provide Indicators of Management System Certification Bodies' Performance –To be revised by a joint Task Force (TF) between the WG Management Systems Certification and the new WG Accreditation.
- IAF MD16:2015 Application of ISO/IEC 17011 for the Accreditation of Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) Certification Bodies - Amended and sent to IAF TC members for 30-day comment. The comments are currently being considered by the WG Food.

- IAF MD4:2018 IAF Mandatory Document for the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes - Issue 2 Version 2 published 03 August 2021 with updated links to the new website.
- In May 2021, the draft ISO 22000 expected outcomes document was sent to the IAF TC for 30-day comment. Substantial comments were received, and another round of TC comment is required. The document is being developed in association with ISO. The document was submitted for a further 30-day comment period in September 2021.

Revision of ISO/TS 22003

- JWG36 was set up in 2017 to revise ISO TS 22003:2013
- In 2019 Part 2 NWIP was balloted in both committees
- CD for both parts were balloted and approved by both committees in 2019 for Part 1 and in 2021 for Part 2
- Ballots for DIS are organized to run parallel for both Parts 1 and 2
- DIS Ballots opened on 11 August 2021 and closes on 3 November 2021
- Next meeting will be held in December 2021 to address comments on DIS. During that meeting it will be decided whether to go to FDIS stage or not depending on the comments received on the DIS.
- If the documents do not go through the FDIS stage then the documents will be published early 2022.
- Plans to have a workshop on the revised standards at the 2022 mid-term meetings.

CODEX voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) programmes

- Codex has come up with guidelines for the use of voluntary 3rd party assurance programmes
- Structure of the standard besides the normal clauses [Preamble, Scope and definitions (mainly from ISO/IEC 17000 and ISO/IEC 17065)] contains
- Principles
 - Approach can be tailored to national settings
 - The approach allows authorities to adjust their risk-based inspection model based on a more accurate risk profiling of FBOs
 - The depth of any assessment of integrity and credibility should be proportionate to intended use to avoid unnecessary burdens
 - There should be close alignment between requirements set down in the VTPA standard and the regulatory requirements
 - Transparency may be aided by formalizing arrangements in say an MOU
- Roles, responsibilities and relevant activities
- Criteria to assess the credibility and integrity of the vTPA (Voluntary 3rd Party Authority)
- Regulatory approaches for the use of vTPA information data
 - Process considerations
 - Policy options
 - Key Reflections
 - Sharing of information is what makes this approach viable
 - The granularity of the data shared can be used to inform revisions to inspections
 - Food Business Operators (FBOs) own the data generated - confidentiality of what is shared and transparency in how it is used, are both critical to maintaining confidence
 - vTPA owners should commit to alerting the authority immediately if their auditors are concerned about potential serious/imminent risk
 - Pragmatic approach and a good demonstration of how public sector can work with private sector to reduce duplication of effort. Why waste resources on premises that are compliant rather than concentrate them on those premises that do not comply. Information serves as a basis of how we can work with regulators thus complement Governments. Third party certificate is valuable.

- The developed countries are the frontrunners in using the approach. The UK being a case. Chile African countries are working with UNIDO. This approach may help bring out the benefits of accreditation and an approach that supports making accreditation mandatory in such areas where safety of the public is concerned.
- Discussion papers
 - One discussion paper in relation to IAF MD5 was discussed, and consensus met in relation to the TC's response. The consensus position will be included in the TC decision log.
- Change in Personnel
 - Wolfram Hartmann was endorsed as a co-convenor of the Food WG.
 - Wolfram Hartmann was endorsed as a co-convenor of the Accreditation WG.
 - Nardia Page was endorsed as a co-convenor of the Certification of Persons WG.
- The TF Remote Auditing/Assessment amended terms of reference so as to develop document(s) or content to be added to existing IAF documents to address remote auditing/assessment.

MLA Committee

- 140 % growth in sub-scopes from 5 to 12
- Three (3) new regional groups 2 already MLA signatories and the 3rd under Peer Evaluation so in future all applications will be held at regions.
- There are a total of 6 regions of which 5 are recognized and the 6th SADC Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA) is currently undergoing peer evaluation.
- Transitions to ISO/IEC 17011: 2017 was completed all ABs transitioned on time.
- IAF MLA 17029 - Electronic balloting on 2 Resolutions started before the IAF GA in order to allow adaptation of regions and ABs to the transfer from the ISO 14065:2013 Level 3 MLA to the ISO/IEC 17029:2018 Level 3 MLA with ISO 14065:2020 as Level 4 document and phasing out the ISO 14065:2013 MLA.
- Documents
 - IAF PL3: electronic balloting started in October 2021.
 - IAF ML2: electronic balloting starting in November 2021.
 - IAF ML4: to be amended to include
 - Content of IAF Resolution 2016-24 and the operational sub-scope extension process
 - Amended Clause 2.5.1 on withdrawal/suspension of IAF MLA membership status
 - Requirements on ABs on CB uploading certificates to IAF CertSearch
 - First draft transmitted to IAF MLA MC members for commenting
- AB IAF MLA Scope Extensions since the 2020 General Assembly:
 - SADCAS Southern Africa (AFRAC) - Main Scope: Management Systems Certification – ISO/IEC 17021-1; *Sub-Scope: Level 4: ISO/TS 22003; Sub-Scope: Level 5: ISO 22000.*

Joint Development Support Committee (JDSC)

- Sharing of experiences workshops in 2020 and again October 2021 on remote techniques in regional activities including assessments.
- Workshop on IAF MD held in October 2021.
- Updated JDSC funding Policy.

Communications and Marketing Committee

- Covid an opportunity in terms of communication Committee more members attending meetings.
- Launched new website for IAF 400,000 views of new website compared to 100,000 before.
- Decision to go for LinkedIn was good a lot of interest on the platform as well as twitter handle.
- You-tube working well with WAD videos receiving a lot of views 47,000 views

- WAD webinar held on 9 June 2021 with Chairs of IAF and ILAC speaking.
- WAD 2022 – agreed on the theme **Accreditation Sustainability in economic growth and the environment**
- Podcast on Accreditation Matters where stakeholders will be invited to talk about accreditation, a promotion tool

User Advisory Committee (UAC)

- Concerns from UAC:
 - IAF CertSearch
 - The UAC unanimously agreed to support of the database. UAC members hope that the delay in decision-making regarding IAF CertSearch will allow ABs and CBs to continue to work together to improve the DMC proposed model in order to better meet user, industry and regulators needs.
 - As supply chain decisions are made in real time, there is a need for faster, simpler ways to verify accredited management system certificates - If IAF cannot prove the relevance and effectiveness of accreditation going forward (such as through an effective database) the market will develop solutions.

Conformity Assessment Body Advisory Committee Report (CABAC)

- Pushed for a number of activities in support of use of remote technique during COVID pandemic such as FAQs. Continued IAF leadership in this is key.
- CABAC will continue to closely monitor developments in the single organization so as to ensure good outcomes of IAF work.

JWG A-Series Report

- JWG A-series document “IAF/ILAC Approach to Remote Peer Evaluations of Regions and Single Accreditation Bodies during the COVID-19 Pandemic” published in January 2021 (less than 4 months from start to publication). This document supplements the Peer Evaluation requirements of IAF/ILAC A1 and A2 in the COVID-19 pandemic

Reports by Regional Accreditation Groups

- Regional reports received from all 6 regions namely: African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC); Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC); Arab Accreditation Cooperation (ARAC); European Accreditation (EA); InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC); and SADCA.

Election of IAF Directors

- The following Directors were elected to the IAF Board for a three-year term ending at the 2024 General Assembly:
 - Mr Emanuele Riva (ACCREDIA) elected as IAF Chair for an initial three-year term.
 - Ms Lori Gillespie (ANAB) elected as IAF Vice-Chair for an initial three-year term.
 - Mr Emmanuilo Geneiatakis (FAMI-QS) elected as Director representing Users and Industry Association Members for an initial three-year term.
- Mr Ekanit Romyanon (NSC) will complete his first term as Director Representing Low- and Medium-Income Economies at the 2022 General Assembly Meeting.

Resolutions

- Ballots of resolutions undertaken by election runner between 5 to 9 November 2021.
- Nine (9) resolutions adopted.

Future Annual Meetings

- 2022 Joint Annual Meetings, Montreal, Canada
 - Mid-term 2022 – A paper put together for a vote on the mid-term meetings. There are still many impediments, slow vaccination rates, quarantine requirements still significant and costly. Hotel rates still very high. Mid-term meetings likely to be virtual
 - Contract signed for face-to-face 2022 annual meetings which will be held in Montreal Canada

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