

SADCAS HOLDS 4th ASSESSOR CONCLAVE

The SADCAS 4th Assessor Conclave was held remotely for the first time on 11 December 2020. The Assessor Conclave was attended by a record 219 assessors, technical experts, SADCAS staff and facilitators. Accreditation assessments are undertaken, on behalf of SADCAS, by a pool of SADCAS registered assessors and technical experts who make recommendations for accreditation by the SADCAS Accreditation Approvals Committee (AAC). By 31 January 2021, SADCAS has registered 120 Technical Assessors and 42 Team Leaders and 6 Technical Experts.

The objective of the half- day assessor conclave was to inform about how SADCAS has been ensuring continuity in accreditation service delivery amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, to share experiences in remote assessments and to hear first-hand from assessors and technical experts how SADCAS can continuously enhance service delivery not only in terms of quality of service but more importantly how to ensure the integrity, information security and confidence of remote assessments. The assessor conclave was also an opportunity to present to the assessors the revised SADCAS Quality Management System (QMS) and to discuss assessor specific issues such as assessor conduct, contract and assessor claims.

The assessor conclave started with opening and welcome remarks by the SADCAS CEO, Mrs Maureen Mutasa during which she gave an update on developments in SADCAS and outlined the objective of the conclave and programme of the day. The assessors were then updated on how SADCAS has been ensuring continuity in accreditation service delivery under COVID-19 pandemic through a presentation from Mr Xavier Mugari, the SADCAS Quality Manager.

The session on sharing experiences in remote assessment was kick-started by the first guest speaker from peer ILAC/IAF Signatory Accreditation Bodies. Mr Alok Jain – Director, Training and Capacity Building, Quality Council of India (National Accreditation Board for Laboratories and the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies) gave the first presentation that was followed by that of Ms Hellen Morokane – Assessment Specialist, South African National Accreditation System, SANAS. The last guest speaker was Mr Jeff Ruddle – Strategic Development Director, United Kingdom Accreditation Service, UKAS.



Mr Jain Guest Speaker from NABCB



Mrs Morokane Guest Speaker from SANAS



Mr Ruddle Guest Speaker from UKAS

Mrs Pinkie Malebe, the Assessor conclave Programme Director and SADCAS Technical Manager, presented highlights on procedure *SADCAS AP 23 - Remote Assessments - Management and Execution*. The session on Sharing of experiences on Remote assessments by SADCAS assessors was initiated by Mr Benson Gabi, Team Leader, Technical Assessor and Trainer, who shared his experiences while undertaking remote assessment of the SADCAS Testing Laboratories Accreditation Scheme (TLAS). Mr William Abram, SADCAS Technical Assessor shared his experiences on remote assessment in the Medical Laboratories Accreditation Scheme (MLAS) from his base in Australia. Mr Ranganai Mutonono, Team Leader and Technical Assessor also shared his experiences on remote assessments that included witnessing of audits and office file reviews for the SADCAS Certification Bodies Accreditation Scheme (CBAS).



Mrs Malebe SADCAS Technical Manager presenting on SADCAS AP 23



Mr Gabi presenting on his experiences with remote assessments TLAS



Mr Abram presenting on his experiences with remote assessments MLAS



Mr Mutonono presenting on his experiences with remote assessments CBAS

During the session on Assessor Issues, Mr Xavier Mugari, SADCAS Quality Manager presented the Revised SADCAS QMS documents following which Mrs Eva Muronda, the SADCAS Scheme Coordinator

for the Medical Laboratories Accreditation Scheme (MLAS) presented on Assessor Conduct, SADCAS F 49 – Independent Contractor Arrangement amendments and Assessor claims.



Mr Mugari SADCAS Quality Manager presenting the revised SADCAS QMS



Mrs Eva Muronda presenting on Assessor conduct

Mr Victor Mundembe, SADCAS Scheme Coordinator for the calibration laboratories, certification, inspection and legal metrology accreditation schemes (CLAS, CBAS, IBAS and LMAS) facilitated the discussions on various presentations on key issues to strengthen *SADCAS AP 23* to ensure the integrity, information security and confidence of remote assessments and on assessor issues.

The credibility of SADCAS accreditation services hinges on the competence of assessors and technical experts who undertake assessments on behalf of SADCAS. Continuous communication between SADCAS and the pool of assessors and experts is key in ensuring consistency, integrity and continuous improvement of SADCAS services. The assessor conclave provides the platform to do just this. All the presentations made at the Conclave were made available to all assessors and technical experts. The next Assessor meeting will be held in 2022 at a date still to be advised.