

WORKSHOP ON ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS OF NAFPS

The workshop on enhancing the effectiveness of National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs) in the work of SADC Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA) and SADC Accreditation Service (SADCAS) was held virtually from 22 - 23 November 2021 with the 2nd day devoted to SADCAS activities. The workshop was attended by 13 NAFPs from 10 SADC Member States serviced by SADCAS. NAFPs from Angola (1) Botswana (1), DRC (1), Eswatini (1), Lesotho (2), Malawi (1), Namibia (1), Seychelles (2), Zambia (1) and Zimbabwe (2) attended the workshop. NAFPs Comoros, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Tanzania did not attend the workshop.

The workshop was facilitated by Dr Ron Josias, the SADCAS Chair and Mr Steve Bruce Sidney, the SADCAS Board Chair. SADCAS was represented at the workshop by Mrs Maureen P Mutasa, SADCAS CEO; Mr Xavier Mugari, Quality Manager; and Mr Mogae Molaoa, the Training Administrator.

The 2-day workshop was funded by PTB Germany under the PTB/SADC SQAM Support Project on Strengthening Quality Infrastructure for Trade and Enhancement, Competitiveness and Consumer Protection in SADC. The main purpose of the workshop was to review the NAFP model and their performance and to hear at first hand the challenges that NAFPs face in executing their roles and responsibilities and to find ways of enhancing their effectiveness in SADCA and SADCAS.

On Day 1, Dr Josias presented an overview of SADCA, achievements and future plans for SADCA, rights and obligations of Ordinary Members (NAFPs) and review of the effectiveness of Ordinary Members. This was followed by discussions on challenges faced and strategies to enhance the effectiveness of Ordinary Members. Day 2 focused on overview of SADCAS, achievements and future plans of SADCAS, review of NAFP Model, review of NAFP Job Description and Job Specification and review of NAFPs effectiveness in SADCAS. The day was concluded with discussions on challenges faced and strategies to enhance the effectiveness of NAFPs.

The following were some of the strategies identified to enhance the effectiveness of NAFPs:

- Need to familiarize NAFP supervisors of the responsibilities of the NAFPs and the important role the NAFPs play in SADCAS activities so that they can allocate enough resources to NAFP work in SADCAS.
- Fully familiarize NAFPs with the roles and responsibilities of NAFPs.
- Retrain NAFPs on the SADCAS Quality Management System.
- Need for NAFPs to dedicate a percentage of their time every month to do NAFP activities taking into account the needs of the country and planning activities accordingly. Share accreditation related news and articles with all concerned, assist CAB's as much as possible with required information on accreditation and keep on motivating CABs and assisting them to achieve accreditation.
- Need for NAFPs to have marketing skills and database of key accreditation stakeholders including CABs and regulators operating in the country.
- Level of NAFPs in their countries must be such that they can be able to meet with decision makers and have the necessary knowledge on accreditation and conformity assessment.
- Should be able to garner support from relevant stakeholders, effective supervision of the NAFP office by management and one not being complacent.
- Language diversity not taken into account in the day-to-day work involvement of SADCAS activities which are conducted in English as well as the annual meetings and workshops.

The output of the 2-day workshop will be discussed by the SADCA Executive Committee and the SADCAS Board of directors who shall come up with an action programme for the identified strategies to enhance the effectiveness of NAFPs.

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