

ACCREDITATION: SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)



Accreditation: Supporting the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the theme for 2021 World Accreditation Day which will be celebrated worldwide on 9 June 2021. This theme highlights the role of accreditation in supporting the implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) have maintained a close strategic partnership and technical cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as it recognizes the important role that accreditation plays in the achievement of the sustainable development agenda and its impact on industrial development and economic growth. Accreditation, in collaboration with other quality infrastructure institutions, provides the technical foundations that are critical to the functioning of developed and developing societies. It enables industrial development, trade competitiveness in global markets, efficient use of natural and human resources, food safety, and health and environmental protection.

The SDGs are at the core of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a broad and ambitious plan of action with the overarching objective of leaving no one behind. The UN's SDGs represent a blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future. These SDGs address global challenges including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, and justice.

There are 17 SDGs with 169 associated targets which seek to guide all global, regional and national development endeavors. Accreditation and, with its other quality infrastructure (QI) institutions including metrology, standardization, conformity assessment and market surveillance, is a critical cornerstone in supporting the SDGs and the three interrelated thematic priorities: creating shared prosperity, advancing economic competitiveness and safeguarding the environment.

The technical and operational foundations that are critical to the functioning of developed and developing societies are delivered through accreditation. Accreditation supports policy objectives in areas including cross-border trade, food safety, health and environmental protection, and industrial and infrastructural development. Accreditation provides a trusted platform for defining, developing and verifying requirements for products and services, helping to ensure and demonstrate that products and services meet specified requirements. It also provides policymakers, businesses and other stakeholders with the technical knowledge and capacity to strengthen the implementation, measurement and monitoring of many of the objectives and targets contained in the SDGs, and support to achieve them.

While there have been a number of successes around the world, the theme of this year's World Accreditation Day 2021 has been chosen to ensure that policymakers continue to use accreditation and QI services to support their SDG Agenda. World Accreditation Day provides the opportunity for ILAC and IAF members to share examples of how accreditation may be applied to meet objectives such as increasing trade, addressing health and safety concerns, and improving the general overall quality of output in an economy. The theme can also act as a trigger for evolution, and to ensure that accreditation continues to be relevant in the face of ever more rapid technological innovations,

the impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution and the threats posed by climate change, pollution, and the diminution of resources.

Resources such as www.business-benefits.org and <http://www.publicsectorassurance.org/> will support events, press and television coverage, and workshops and seminars taking place in conjunction with the celebration of World Accreditation Day in over 100 economies to raise awareness of the value that accreditation plays in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. World Accreditation Day 2021 enables the IAF (www.iaf.nu), the ILAC (www.ilac.org) and their members to highlight the role of accreditation in supporting the implementation of SDGs.

The Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS) is a multi-economy accreditation body established in terms of Article 15 B of the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade with the primary purpose of ensuring that conformity assessment service providers operating in those SADC Member States which do not have national accreditation bodies are subject to an oversight by an authoritative body. Typically, in the developed world, each country has its own accreditation body but within the SADC region considering the cost of establishing and sustaining such a body and further taking into account the limited financial and human resources, the region decided to establish one accreditation body which services the accreditation needs of a number of countries. Over the years, SADCAS the first multi economy accreditation body in the world has proved to be a viable, cost effective and sustainable model which optimizes limited financial and human resources. A number of other regions in the world such as the Gulf region, Economic Community of West African States (UEMOA), have benchmarked on the “home grown” SADCAS model, a concept developed by a group of experts from the SADC region.

SADCAS services the accreditation needs of 14 SADC Member States namely: Angola; Botswana; Comoros; Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); Eswatini; Lesotho; Madagascar; Malawi; Mozambique; Namibia; Seychelles; Tanzania; Zambia; and Zimbabwe. SADCAS provides accreditation services to organizations that perform calibration, testing including medical testing, inspection, certification (personnel, product and management systems) and those that provide legal metrology services against international standards. SADCAS will broaden its scope of accreditation as needs arise. SADCAS also offers training services on accreditation related activities. Seven (7) out of nine (9) accreditation schemes offered by SADCAS are internationally recognized. Hence the accreditation certificates issued by SADCAS for testing/calibration/medical laboratories, inspection bodies and management systems certification bodies’ accreditation schemes in the sub-scopes quality/environmental/occupational health and safety managements systems are recognized 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 – A truly global reach!

SADCAS is now in its 13th year of operation and accreditations continue to grow in terms of field and scope of accreditation, sectorial coverage and also in terms of geographical diversity having issued 198 accreditation certificates to 163 accredited facilities in 13 SADC Member States and 2 non-SADC Countries Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire by 30 April 2021. At the same time, SADCAS had 54 accreditation applications from 8 SADC MS at the various stages of processing. SADCAS had cumulatively conducted 195 training courses in most SADC Member States as part of its efforts to develop capacity of conformity assessment bodies for accreditation. SADCAS services are focused on the priority sectors for development in selected value chains as identified in the SADC Industrial Policy.

For more information, please visit the SADCAS website www.sadcas.org

OR

Contact

The National Accreditation Focal Point in your country