

SADCAS ASSESSOR/TECHNICAL EXPERT INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE HANDBOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This guidance handbook is a consolidation of information for reference by assessors and technical experts. It provides guidance for use by assessors and technical experts appointed by the Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS) to conduct assessments of conformity assessment bodies (CAB) for the purposes of accreditation. This handbook is aimed at enabling SADCAS assessors and technical experts to carry out the assessment activities efficiently and effectively with the view to arriving at the same conclusions.

This handbook also serves as a training tool that explains:

- The responsibility of an assessor or technical expert throughout the assessment process from preparation, conducting to reporting and follow up on assessments;
- The processes and techniques involved in providing a thorough and well documented assessment report; and
- The ethical conduct expected of SADCAS assessors and technical experts.

2. DEFINITIONS

The definitions in ISO/IEC 17000, ISO/IEC 17025, ISO/IEC 17020, ISO/IEC 17021-1, ISO/IEC 17065, ISO/IEC 17024 and ISO 15189 are applicable.

The assessments and accreditation process defined in this guidance document are in line with SADCAS TG 01: Information to Organizations Applying for Accreditation and in accordance with the process described in SADCAS AP 12:Part 1 – Accreditation Process for Testing-Calibration-Medical Laboratories, SADCAS AP 12:Part 2 – Accreditation of Inspection Bodies Operating in the Regulatory /Voluntary Area and SADCASAP 12:Part 3 – General Principles for the Assessment of Management Systems/Product/Persons Certification Bodies.

2.1. Appropriate

Suitable, fitting, or proper in a particular circumstance or for a particular purpose – It is therefore the responsibility of assessors/technical experts to apply their knowledge, expertise, experience and assessment skills to evaluate the suitability taking particular circumstance into consideration.

2.2. Pre-assessment

Prior to embarking on the formal accreditation process, laboratories that seek accreditation may voluntarily request SADCAS to conduct a pre-assessment. The purpose of the pre-assessment is to evaluate the organization's readiness for accreditation.

2.3. Initial Assessment

Initial assessment is an onsite assessment at the applicant's premises and consists of an assessment of the organization's competence to perform specific tasks for which

accreditation is sought. SADCAS assessors and technical experts shall be able to evaluate the functionality of the applicant's quality management system, examine if all requirements are fulfilled, assess the implementation of the system and witness technical activities. The frequency and results of laboratories' participation to Proficiency Testing (PT) schemes or Inter laboratory Comparisons (ILCs) are reviewed. Refer to SADCAS TR 04: Proficiency Testing and other Comparison Programme Requirements for Calibration Laboratories and SADCAS TR 08: Proficiency Testing and other Comparison Programme Requirements for Testing and Medical Laboratories.

2.4. Periodic Assessment

After granting accreditation SADCAS shall undertake periodic on-site assessments at the applicant's premises in order to have confidence that the organization always fulfils the accreditation requirements.

The first periodic on-site assessment shall be undertaken not more than twelve (12) months after accreditation. Thereafter periodic on-site visits are scheduled throughout the accreditation cycle of five (5) years. Intervals between periodic on-site assessments shall not exceed 2 years. The periodic on-site assessments activities vary based on the experience of each organization, consistency and taking into consideration the risk based approach. It can vary between assessment visits to document review of different aspects together with witnessing of Accredited conformity assessment activities. SADCAS selects the activities to be witnessed and ensures that the full accredited scope is covered by the end of the accreditation cycle.

If SADCAS determines that an on-site assessment is not possible or feasible, another assessment technique (e.g. remote assessment) shall be used to achieve the same objective as the on-site assessment being replaced.

SADCAS may conduct extraordinary assessments when it is considered necessary. The organization shall be informed of such assessments and the scope and reasons thereof.

2.5. Reassessment

An accreditation is valid for five (5) years provided all accreditation requirements are fulfilled during the period. The accredited facility shall submit to SADCAS an application for accreditation renewal nine months prior to expiry of accreditation certificate, with fully completed management and technical checklists containing comments on how the requirements of the relevant standard are implemented and in which clauses of the facility's policies and procedures they are addressed.

Re-assessment visits will consider information gathered from assessments performed within the accreditation cycle. This information is normally obtained from the assessment matrix forms completed for the cycle. The same criteria used for assessment will be considered when determining the number and type of tests/calibration, and the personnel to be assessed. The reassessment shall confirm the competence of the laboratory and cover all the requirements of the standard(s) for which the laboratory is accredited

2.6. Extension of Accreditation

An accredited laboratory can at any time apply for extension of its accreditation scope to SADCAS. Extensions of accreditation scope may be within an existing scope or sub-scope, or may be a new scope altogether. The assessment duration of an extended scope shall be determined by SADCAS and agreed with the facility. If the application is received by SADCAS six (6) weeks before a scheduled periodic assessment, the scope extension could be assessed during the planned assessment. SADCAS can also assess extension of scope separately. Accreditation scopes are documented in SADCAS TG 03: Area of Accreditation.

2.7. Assessment Report

After each assessment, the Team Leader shall submit the assessment report (SADCAS F61€) to SADCAS within one (1) week after the assessment. The report shall include all inputs and recommendations from the assessment team.

2.8. Nonconformity

A nonconformity is defined as a non-fulfilment of the requirements.

Nonconformities are graded into two categories:

- **Major** – A nonconformity which directly affects the quality management system and the results of tests/verification.
- **Minor** – A nonconformity which does not affect the results of conformity assessment activity.

2.9. Observation

An observation is defined as an opportunity for improvement which may prejudice a CAB's ability to meet the SADCAS accreditation requirements if left unaddressed. In case of transition periods, a finding raised against the requirements of the new standard that is not a nonconformity against the old version of the standard shall be recorded as observations to highlight the gap identified.

Note: A representative of the CAB must acknowledge (by signature) that the nonconformity or observation has been accurately recorded. All findings and opportunities for improvement shall be presented to the CAB during the closing meeting. The assessment team must avoid recommending specific solutions.

3. THE PURPOSE OF AN ASSESSMENT

The purpose of an assessment is to:

- Examine and evaluate the technical competence of a conformity assessment body (CAB) to perform calibrations, tests, inspections, verifications, certifications and/or other conformity assessment services covered by their scope of accreditation;

- Evaluate whether the CAB's documented management system complies with the requirements of the relevant accreditation standard;
- Confirm that the operational and technical activities being performed by the CAB are technically valid, appropriate and conform to the CAB's documented management system;
- Seek confirmation that the management system is appropriate to the CAB's needs, organisational arrangements and methods of operation including multiple location operations and number of staff members; and
- Establish whether a CAB satisfies SADCAS' and all relevant international requirements for accreditation. This information forms the basis for SADCAS' decision to grant, extend, suspend, reduce or withdraw accreditation.

4. ACCEPTING AN ASSESSMENT

SADCAS may contact an assessor/technical expert to ascertain their availability to conduct an assessment.

When accepting the assessment(s), assessors/technical experts need to make sure that:

- There is no conflict of interest:
 - You may not accept an assessment if you have worked for or consulted with the CAB you have been asked to assess within 2 years before the assessment date.
 - You may also not have or have had any relationship with the CAB or its personnel which could compromise the assessment process.
 - If you are not sure if there is anything that could be considered or perceived as conflict of interest, please contact the relevant SADCAS Scheme Coordinator who will advise you accordingly.
- You are able to assess the technical scope.

You will be selected as a technical assessor/technical expert according to your specific expertise. This information is obtained from your CV, proof of qualifications and SADCAS F 26: Assessors - Experts Information Record that you have submitted to SADCAS. However, you will still need to advise SADCAS should there be anything in the scope that have been assigned to you that you are not able to or uncomfortable to assess.

In the event that you accept to participate in an assessment you are obliged to sign SADCAS F 45 (a)-Nondisclosure/Confidentiality Statement for the assignment to be undertaken and for which availability has been confirmed.

5. PREPARING FOR AN ASSESSMENT

The assessment team should receive the assessment plan (SADCAS SL 20) /briefing notification from the team leader at least 2 weeks before an assessment.

5.1 The briefing material includes:

- Information on the purpose of the assessment;
- The date and starting times of the assessment;
- The address and contact details of the CAB;
- A draft schedule of accreditation;
- The proficiency testing (PT) programmes in which the CAB participates and results of its performance (where applicable);
- Details of the last assessment and scope covered; and
- Other specific instructions that the team leader may deem necessary.

5.2 To prepare for the assessment, you must:

- Review the briefing material as soon as you receive it so that enough time is available to obtain any further information that you may need and give feedback to the team leader;
- Examine the scope of the assessment and confirm that your expertise is appropriate to cover the scope;
- Refresh your knowledge of the relevant standards or test methods;
- Re-familiarize yourself with SADCAS' accreditation requirements which include the applicable SADCAS TR documents (these are available on the SADCAS website).

5.3 Cultural Sensitivity

SADCAS is a multi- economy accreditation body servicing the accreditation needs of 14 SADC Member States hence geographical, language and cultural diversities. You may therefore be requested to participate in an assessment outside your country. Where necessary the SADCAS Technical Manager/Scheme Coordinators will provide you with advice on local manners and etiquette. However, you can also take the lead given by the staff of the CAB or undertaking a self-research. It is important to be sensitive to and respectful of different customs. If the facility staff are not fluent in English speak slowly and clearly and use simple sentences for ease of understanding. SADCAS is making effort to service in the three (3) official languages of the region.

6. ROLE OF TEAM LEADER

6.1 Document Review

Upon receipt of the CAB's application for accreditation, the SADCAS Scheme Coordinator will review the documents for completeness. If the documents are complete, they shall be given to the appointed team leader and team members who in turn shall undertake a document review of the CAB's quality manual for compliance with the relevant standard as well as SADCAS requirements. The team leader shall compile a document review report on SADCAS F 61 (a-1/a-2/a-3/a-4/a-5/a-6) which shall be submitted to the applicant CAB through SADCAS. The report shall contain comments on any nonconformities, areas which are not addressed or where actions are needed, areas where there are concerns or weaknesses and a recommendation on the way forward.

The CAB shall be given up to six (6) months to address the findings of the document review. Failure to address the findings within 6 months will result in the entire process being repeated should the CAB still be interested in seeking accreditation.

6.2 Pre-assessment

Although not mandatory a pre-assessment can be carried out, if required by the applicant CAB. The pre-assessment is normally carried out by the team leader and takes a day.

Note: A pre-assessment may be compulsory for CABs that are required to demonstrate their competence prior to approval by the relevant Government Department or Regulator.

The pre-assessment is carried out at a specified location (generally the central office of the CAB to:

- a) Discuss any findings related to documentation;
- b) Seek further information on the management system;
- c) Briefly examine the system which has been established and implemented;
- d) Discuss accreditation requirements, the accreditation process, time limits and costs associated with accreditation;
- e) Discuss any arrangements which have been made to include multiple locations, sub-contacted activities, etc.;
- f) Determine the number of assessors/technical experts required for the initial assessment.

Note: Due care shall be exercised to avoid consultancy during a pre-assessment. No technical assessment of the CAB's technical capabilities of competence will be conducted during the assessment.

After the pre-assessment the Team Leader shall submit a report on SADCAS F 61 (d) to the SADCAS Scheme Coordinator who in turn shall forward it to the applicant CAB.

6.3 Assessment

The role of a team leader shall be to:

- Conduct opening and closing meetings using SADCAS F 46(a)/46(b);
- Undertake the assessment of the CAB's management system using relevant SADCAS checklists;
- Ensure that nonconformities raised are reported on SADCAS F 61(b);
- Manage the assessment team and ensure thoroughness and completeness of the assessment;
- Collate the findings raised and prepare a summary report containing recommendations on SADCAS F 61 (c); and
- Present the findings to the CAB's management and other representatives.

7. ROLE OF TECHNICAL ASSESSOR/TECHNICAL EXPERT

7.1 Role of Technical Assessor

The role of a technical assessor shall be to:

- Undertake the assessment of the CAB technical system using relevant SADCAS checklists;
- Witness the laboratory's technical personnel undertaking calibrations/tests/ inspections/ verifications within the scope of accreditation applied for and report on SADCAS F 60(d);
- Witness of certification body auditors carrying out an audit under the scope of accreditation and report on SADCAS F 61(h)/F 61 (h-2);
- Carry out the vertical assessment of an activity or files of certification bodies which also includes checking the technical competence of personnel and report on SADCAS F 60 (c)/f 78 (b)/F 61(f)/F 61 (g).
- Assess the adequacy of qualifications, experience and competence of technical staff through interviews and review of CVs and files;
- Evaluate the suitability of equipment, range of use, the status of calibration of each equipment used, maintenance and labelling of equipment and compliance to SADCAS policy on metrological traceability, and report on SADCAS F 121;
- Assess the appropriateness of the methods or procedures;
- Evaluate the suitability of the premises of the laboratory for the scope applied for, check that the environmental parameters have been recorded and if the laboratory has a system for following up on results of such measurements;
- Evaluate the results of internal quality control; and
- Evaluate the traceability of each method, Proficiency Testing or other Inter Laboratory comparisons and report on relevant SADCAS checklists.

7.2 Role of Technical Expert

The role of a technical expert shall be:

- Provide specific knowledge or expertise within the scope of assessment;
- Witness the laboratory's technical personnel undertaking selected activities within the scope of accreditation applied for;
- Witness of certification body auditors carrying out an audit under the scope of accreditation;
- Carry out the vertical assessment of an activity or files of certification bodies which also includes checking the technical competence of personnel;
- Work under the supervision of an experienced team leader or technical assessor during the assessment and assist in the completion of the relevant assessment forms.

7.3 Role of Legal Technical Expert

The role of a Legal technical expert shall be to:

- Interpret to the assessment team the requirements of the relevant applicable regulations;
- Check if the facility activities are carried out in accordance with the existing regulations;
- Witness an activity with the Technical Assessor and advise on the competency of personnel, methods, equipment, general risks requirements and the compliance with the applicable regulations; and
- Check and confirm if the facility reports which were presented to the assessment team during a vertical assessment were acceptable to the relevant regulatory authority.

8. CONDUCTING THE ASSESSMENT

The overall flow of assessments follows a consistent pattern involving the following sequential stages:

- a) Team briefing or Pre-opening meeting;
- b) Opening meeting;
- c) Evaluation of the technical competence of the CAB and examination of the implementation of the documented management system and its compliance with the relevant accreditation standard;
- d) Pre-closing meeting or final team meeting; and
- e) Closing meeting.

8.1 Team briefing/Pre-opening meeting

The intention of the team briefing is for the team leader to meet with the assessment team members before the opening meeting to confirm the assessment plan and confirm the respective roles of all team members. The team members shall sign the confidentiality and nondisclosure form (SADCAS F 45a) if they have not done so already.

8.2 Opening meeting

The opening meeting is a meeting chaired by the team leader and held between the assessment team and the CAB staff. The team leader will conduct the meeting following SADCAS F 46 (a) – Onsite Assessment Opening Meeting Agenda.

The opening meeting agenda shall include:

- a) Introduction of the assessment team and the CAB's representative and an outline of the meeting agenda;
- b) Review of the purpose, scope and extent of the assessment;
- c) Confirmation of any changes with the organisation since the last contact;
- d) Outline of the functions and responsibilities of each member of the assessment team;
- e) Review of the assessment procedure including areas/activities to be covered, and the assessment schedule;
- f) Confirmation of the resources and facilities required by the assessment team including confirmation of the representatives from the CAB who will accompany the assessment team;
- g) Outline of the principle of confidentiality; and
- h) Answer/clarify any questions raised by the CAB's management representatives.

8.3 Evaluation of Technical Competence

Once the opening meeting is complete you will start with the assessment.

The assessment is conducted to confirm that activities within the scope of the accreditation are being executed competently at a technical level. It is important that technical assessors/technical experts limit their activities to the work covered by the scope of the application/accreditation and the SADCAS accreditation requirements and keep within the

scope of assigned assessment tasks, including the agreed timetable throughout the assessment process.

The responsibility of technical assessors/technical experts is to confirm the technical competence of the CAB to produce reliable results/reports. It must be established through objective evidence and by using techniques such as file reviews, witnessing and vertical assessments, that:

- The CAB has the necessary technical expertise, conducive environment, equipment and procedures and/or work instructions required for establishing their competence for the scope of work done as requested or covered in their schedule of accreditation;
- All of the technical accreditation requirements as well as the requirements of the relevant standard have been appropriately addressed;
- The CAB has implemented all the technical requirements of the management system to ensure valid results/data/reports are generated each and every day; and
- The operational, administrative and technical procedures used to support the management system manual are complete, technically valid and appropriate.

For each function or activity, technical assessors/technical experts would need to examine all the important features and assess (as applicable for the relevant accreditation standard) the following:

- a) Relevant documentation (including its validity status);
- b) Appropriateness of methods and procedures;
- c) Suitability of equipment, machinery or instruments (including their calibration where applicable);
- d) Suitability of the environment and supporting services;
- e) Adequacy of personnel (number, training, skills, declaration of competence as bestowed on their staff by the CAB etc.);
- f) Monitoring of processes/quality control measures;
- g) Handling and identification of samples, specimens or test items; and
- h) Recording and reporting of results.

8.4 Throughout the assessment

Each member of the assessment team will conduct their evaluation as assigned by the team leader.

Technical assessors/technical experts must always:

- Keep within the scope of their assigned assessment tasks, including the agreed timetable;
- Collect and record specific evidence to support observations on the appropriate checklist or other relevant field/or scheme-specific documents including:
 - For conforming situations, a note to this effect and the 'sample' size taken;
 - For non-conforming situations, details such as 'what' was incorrect and the record/report/equipment identifiers;
 - For observations, note any areas for improvement or positive feedback.

- Be objective and impartial in collection of this evidence;
- Be alert for indications of other evidence that might need to be probed; and
- Use the appropriate checklists or other relevant field/scheme record sheet to record observations/conclusions concerning activities witnessed in the course of the assessment. The record of evaluation(s) will be in the completion of the relevant witnessing and/or vertical assessment forms.
- Avoid providing any advice.

9. TECHNICAL CRITERIA

Where appropriate, the following criteria are examined by the technical assessor/technical expert under the guidance of the SADCAS team leader during an assessment.

9.1 Competency Aspects

As a routine aspect of every assessment, an appropriate range of conformity assessment activities should be witnessed to ensure that:

- Staff are familiar with the CAB's methods and are capable of carrying them out;
- Appropriate training and education has been provided;
- Staff are appropriately supervised and technical direction is provided. The level of supervision will depend on the education, level of competency and risk of the task being performed; and
- Staff understand conformity assessment principles and limitations according to their responsibility.

9.2 Controlled Environment e.g. Laboratories, some Inspections and legal metrology bodies

For controlled environments you need to ensure that:

- Relevant monitoring equipment (e.g. thermohygrometers etc.) is appropriately located and calibrated;
 - The potential for contamination or interference is minimised;
 - The lighting provided is adequate;
 - The ventilation is adequate;
 - The benches/test areas are "fit for purpose";
 - The access to the CAB and storage areas is controlled; and
- a) The consumables are stored appropriately

9.3 Management of equipment

The management of equipment must be reviewed to ensure that:

- The CAB has all the necessary equipment;
- The equipment is operating correctly and is maintained in good working order;
- The operating instructions are adequately documented and available;
- Staff are competent in the use of the equipment;

- Safeguards are in place to prevent accidental adjustments that could invalidate results;
- Equipment that is damaged or requiring calibration is kept out of use;
- Appropriate checks are done on borrowed equipment;
- All significant items of equipment are uniquely identified, and relevant records kept; and
- Appropriate preventive maintenance programs are in place.

9.4 Calibration and metrological traceability

Calibrations and performance checks shall be evaluated to ensure that they meet requirements of SADCAS TR 09 - Criteria for Performing Calibration and Intermediate Checks on Equipment used in Accredited Facilities. Details of equipment and sources of metrological traceability must be documented on SADCAS F 121 - Compliance on Metrological Traceability.

Where equipment has an effect on accuracy or validity of results, technical assessors/technical experts must ensure that:

- The initial calibration, recalibrations and performance checks are appropriate;
- The calibration schedule includes all relevant equipment;
- The frequency of recalibrations and performance checks are appropriate;
- The traceability of reference standards and equipment involving physical measurements is appropriate.

9.5 Reference materials and metrological traceability

It is important to ensure that (where applicable) reference materials used are:

- Identified appropriately;
- Traceable to national/international standards of measurement or to national/international standard reference materials (where possible); and
- Stored correctly.

9.6 In-house calibrations and performance checks

In-house calibrations and performance checks are reviewed to ensure that:

- They are carried out by trained staff;
- They are appropriately documented; and
- They are recorded accurately; and
- They meet the requirements of ILAC P 10 "ILAC policy on traceability of measurement results".

9.7 Method documentation and validation

All methods should be reviewed to ensure that:

- They are documented clearly, in sufficient detail, suitable for a new staff member with basic training (or for the lowest level of experience of staff who will be involved);
- They are readily available and used by staff; and
- They have appropriate "document control".

Non-standard or in-house methods should be reviewed to ensure records of validation and suitability are adequate for the intended purpose.

9.8 Measurement Uncertainty

The method of calculating measurement uncertainty should be examined (if appropriate). Refer to SADCAS TR 12 “Estimation of uncertainty of measurement by calibration laboratories and specifications of calibration and measurement capability on schedules of accreditation.”

9.9 Document control of methods

Methods are examined to ensure that:

- A formal mechanism to update national/international standard methods is in place;
- Only current versions of methods are in use (unless superseded methods are required legally or by a contract);
- Extracts from methods are under document control;
- No unauthorised amendments are made to methods; and
- There are no obsolete copies of methods in use.

9.10 Sampling and handling of items (or samples)

Sampling techniques are examined to ensure that:

- Documented procedures are available to staff at the sampling location;
- Sampling is statistically valid (if appropriate);
- Staff are adequately trained; and
- Adequate records are kept.

Sample identification is reviewed to ensure that:

- Identification is unique and traceable for each sample;
- Identification is legible and permanently applied;
- Identification is linked to records;
- Where relevant, a procedure is in place for sub-sampling and the identification of sub-samples is appropriate; and
- Where samples are unsuitable or identification is in doubt, the customer is contacted.

Sample handling is examined to ensure that:

- Sample receipt registration, preparation and disposal is carried out as per procedure;
- Procedures are in place to prevent deterioration of items;
- If preconditioning or storage under specific conditions is required, conditions are monitored and records are kept.

Refer to SADCAS AP 20 “Sampling for assessment purposes”.

9.11 Monitoring the validity and reliability of results

Records of external monitoring (quality assurance) are reviewed to ensure that:

- The CAB participates in all appropriate proficiency testing programs (for calibration activities, the laboratory's performance in an interlaboratory comparison carried out prior to the assessment is reviewed);
- The corrective actions are carried out where necessary.

Records of internal monitoring (quality control) are reviewed to ensure that:

- The 'internal quality control' program covers all accredited conformity assessment activities and involves all relevant staff;
- Tests are monitored using replicate testing by the same or different operators;
- Results are reviewed and corrective actions are carried out where necessary;
- Statistical techniques are applied correctly;
- Infrequently performed tests are performed routinely to maintain competence;
- The performance of equipment is monitored appropriately.

9.12 Records and reports (including record of sample traceability)

Records are examined to ensure:

- Traceability of all steps including test requests, sample registrations and raw data; and
- Copies of all records and documents are retained.

Test/Inspection records are examined to ensure:

- Sufficient information is recorded to allow critical review of the results and for traceability;
- They are legible and are of a permanent nature;
- Corrections to errors are authorised;
- They are securely stored for a defined period, protected against loss or deterioration, and confidentiality is maintained;
- The integrity of data capture and transfer in computer controlled equipment;
- The validation of computer software;
- Appropriate evidence of checking calculations and data transfers;
- They contain the content as required by the relevant accreditation standard (for example, ISO/IEC 17025), the relevant field application document and the test or inspection method;
- Any variations to methods are clearly noted;
- Sub-contracted results are clearly identified;
- No interpretive comments have been made unless exempted by SADCAS;
- Appropriate use of SADCAS' symbol and endorsement;
- Integrity and confidentiality is maintained when transmitted electronically; and
- Where there is any doubt about the validity of issued results, the report is amended and the customer is notified.

9.13 Evaluation of Technical Signatories

At all assessments you will routinely deal with CAB staff and their technical abilities. In addition, you may be required to investigate and assess signatory nominee's abilities as part of the assessment.

During the evaluation of technical signatories the CAB must provide you with evidence that they have evaluated and approved a signatory as competent in their system. Your role will then be to confirm their competence, as declared by the CAB.

The concept of signatories and signatory approval interviews varies between fields depending on policy and practice. This correlates with the availability of industry based qualifications and on-going professional development criteria established and required by the relevant industry professional body. In some fields and industries, it is a normal practice for a signatory to be the technician/technologist actually conducting the relevant tests/inspections. In such cases, the signatory interview must be strongly focussed on the individual under review. In other fields and industries, the signatories may be senior supervising professional staff and the signatory approval process will vary accordingly. Refer to SADCAS TR 03 "Nominated representative and technical signatories: responsibilities, qualification and approval".

You should interview the proposed signatories to confirm that:

- a) They understand significant issues in the calibration/ test/ inspection, etc. processes;
- b) They are able to critically evaluate results;
- c) They take responsibility for the adequacy of results;
- d) They understand the requirements for accreditation and the scope of accreditation held/sought; and
- e) They understand SADCAS and the accreditation requirements.

A signatory interview is not a "closed book" knowledge exam. During the interview, you must encourage the candidate to freely demonstrate whatever their normal practice is, including referencing written procedures and records. This helps to demonstrate familiarity with the system in place as well as an understanding of the technical issues of significance.

The five points listed above may be covered at different times within the assessment process. It may be usual practice in some fields for the team leader to be involved in assessing the candidates' understanding of SADCAS and the accreditation requirements. However, all points need to be covered by the team at the conclusion of the assessment.

You will need to conduct either a witnessing assessment or vertical assessment for each applicant technical signatory and record sufficient objective evidence to support their qualifications, experience and competence, as well as to support your views on the suitability or not, as the case may be, of the candidate as a signatory.

At the pre-closing meeting, each assessor or technical expert must be convinced by all tabled evidence that the candidate has the ability to critically evaluate and take technical responsibility for results reported within the scope of accreditation and approval requested. You must not be tempted to give an indication of the outcome until the situation has been discussed with the team leader.

9.14 Evaluation of the Nominated Representative (NR)/Management Representative (MR)

Although the evaluation of the NR/MR is usually performed by the team leader, technical assessor/technical experts may be required to conduct the evaluation. The NR in some cases referred to as MR is the person responsible for all matters relating to accreditation/compliance of the organization at all times. Refer to SADCAS TR 03 “Nominated representative and technical signatories: responsibilities, qualification and approval”.

You should interview the proposed NR/MR to confirm that he/she:

- a) Is familiar with and fully understands the requirements of the relevant standard or principles applicable to the organisation’s field of accreditation;
- b) Irrespective of other duties and responsibilities has a defined responsibility and the authority to ensure that the management system is implemented and followed at all times to support their proposed/current accreditation schedule;
- c) Has direct access to the highest level of management at which decisions regarding policy or resources are made;
- d) Has an in-depth knowledge of all SADCAS accreditation requirements applicable to the organisation’s field of accreditation; and
- e) Keeps SADCAS informed of changes.

9.15 Decisions on observations

Before confirming the observation as a condition for accreditation, you need to apply a two-fold test to the fact that:

- A deficiency be expressed in words or phrases taken directly from SADCAS’ accreditation requirements or from the CAB’s management system or technical documents;
- There was tangible evidence obtained in the form of specific observations or records which would support the claim (e.g. record/report number).

If both of these conditions have been met, the chances are that what has been identified is a valid condition.

9.16 Recording Assessment Information

In recording assessment information, always remember to:

- a) Collect and record specific evidence to support your observations on the appropriate checklist(s) or document(s) including notes:
 - On conformity to specific requirements and the ‘sample’ size taken;
 - For nonconforming situations, details such as ‘what’ was incorrect and the record/report/equipment identifiers; and
 - For observations, any areas for improvement or positive feedback.
- b) Be objective and impartial in the collection of evidence;
- c) Be alert for indications of other evidence that might need to be probed;
- d) Use the appropriate checklist(s)/assessment forms to record observations/conclusions concerning activities witnessed in the course of the assessment.

- e) Record information whilst witnessing the performance of the work and viewing records, and do not leave to later in the day or after the assessment when it is not as fresh in your mind.
- f) Avoid ticks, “yes” and “no” answers. Your information must be sufficiently comprehensive to allow the Accreditation Approvals Committee (AAC) to support your recommendation and to make a decision on the competence of the CAB.
- g) Where necessary, you may attach additional supporting documentation as evidence of non-compliance or otherwise.

9.17 Recording of findings

The findings may be nonconformities or observations raised against the standard requirements, SADCAS requirements and CAB own quality management documents during an assessment.

Record your own findings during the assessment as you encounter them by completing a separate SADCAS F 61 (b) “Conformity Assessment Body Nonconformity, Corrective Action and Clearance Report” for each observation.

Record only factual findings and be very clear as to what the problem was. Keep in mind that once you leave the assessment, the CAB personnel reading the finding must understand exactly what the finding was about, what was wrong and what it applies to. Reference to the specific clause of the relevant Standard or SADCAS accreditation documents for each finding is compulsory.

As each SADCAS F 61 (b) is completed, the CAB representative in that area must sign the form as evidence that he/she agrees that the finding raised is factual. However, you might come across cases where the representative does not agree to acknowledge the findings and sign SADCAS F 61 (b). This will not invalidate the findings; however, the team leader must be informed of this situation.

9.18 Pre-closing Meeting

Once the assessment is complete, the assessment team will meet with the team leader to summarise the conclusions and contribute to a co-ordinated view of the status of the organisation. The team leader will use the information gathered to prepare the Assessment Recommendation Report on SADCAS F 61 (c) for presentation to the CAB’s representatives at the closing meeting.

The pre-closing meeting normally lasts between ½ and 1 hour. In this relatively short time that is available for this meeting, the assessment team must ensure that:

- a) All of the assessment documentation has been completed comprehensively and in detail, and duly signed and dated where required;
- b) The evidence recorded in support of the findings is tabled at this meeting;
- c) The scopes assessed must be marked off on the schedule of accreditation. This is done by initialling and dating each scope that you have assessed and indicating whether you have conducted a witnessing or vertical assessment;
- d) Each finding recorded on the SADCAS F 61 (b) must:

- Be a non-blaming statement of fact, clearly worded.
- Be supported by objective evidence.
- Be directly related to a specific requirement for accreditation or a method/technique for which accreditation is currently held or sought.
- Include a reference to the relevant clause of the applicable accreditation standard or requirement in which it is in contravention.
- Has been signed by the relevant CAB representative.

Note: At this meeting, similar nonconformities raised by the same or different team members under a particular clause (e.g. Document Control) must be combined and raised as one nonconformity.

9.19 Preparing the Assessment Report

The assessment report must be written in the Language used during the assessment (English/French/Portuguese) and contain only factual observations and information.

The assessment report consists of the:

- Assessment Recommendation Report [SADCAS F 61 (c)];
- Any nonconformities raised [SADCAS F 61 (b)];
- Witnessing of activities [SADCAS F 60 (d)/F 61(h)/F 61 (h-2)/F 81];
- Vertical Assessments [SADCAS F 60 (c)/f 78 (b)/61(f)/61 (g)];
- Management and Technical Checklists [SADCAS F 40(a)/40(d)/60(a)/78(a)/ F 60 (b)]; and
- Where applicable, any additional assessor/technical expert notes that may be included.

Care must be taken to avoid:

- Any provocative or emotive statements;
- Expressions of gratitude or any other sentiments relevant to the assessment;
- Unsubstantiated opinions; and
- Financial or legal commitments or implications.

The team leader will need to prepare the Assessment Recommendation Report [SADCAS F 61 (c)] with the guidance and assistance of the Technical Assessor/Technical Expert. In some cases the Technical Assessor may be required to conduct an assessment without a team leader, in which case the Technical Assessor will be required to complete this form. This includes:

- Making decisions on the classification of nonconformities;
- Reviewing all other assessment findings to ensure that the facility meets the necessary accreditation requirements; and
- Considering the outcome of the assessment and agreeing on a recommendation.

The Assessment Recommendation Report [SADCAS F 61 (c)] must be completed in full and must include the following information:

- The assessment team's recommendations with respect to the application for, or continuance of accreditation;

- A conclusion with respect to the effectiveness of the organization's system, i.e. positive and negative feedback;
- Comments on the PT/ILC activities where applicable;
- The name of the Nominated Representative recommended for approval by SADCAS, including an overview of his/her suitability as Nominated Representative in accordance with SADCAS TR 03; and
- The name(s) of Technical Signatory/Signatories recommended for approval by SADCAS and an indication of the scope(s) for which they are recommended for approval.

Any matters that need to be reported to SADCAS can be done by recording the matter on SADCAS F 57 "Feedback from Assessment".

9.20 Nonconformities

During the pre-closing meeting, as a team, you will need to evaluate the significance of each finding and decide whether it must be converted into nonconformity and if so, whether it should be classified as major or minor nonconformity.

The guideline below will assist you in making that decision and correctly classifying the nonconformities:

- a) When a finding casts doubt on the 'AB's ability to meet the SADCAS accreditation criteria, the finding must be converted into a nonconformity. This will include but not be limited to non-compliance related to:
 - Any of the SADCAS accreditation criteria, the relevant SADCAS Requirements or Technical Requirements;
 - Any of the requirements of the relevant accreditation standard; or
 - The CAB's own documented management system.
- b) If however, a CAB is in the process of transforming to a new standard, the finding does not need to be converted into a nonconformity during the transition stage and can remain as an observation. This observation must be followed up at the next assessment and if still the case, it must then only be converted to a nonconformity.

All nonconformities must be graded as major or minor:

- Major Nonconformity - means a non-conformity against those observations that indicate that the technical competence of the CAB to continually perform work within the limits of its proposed/approved accreditation schedule/scope has either been or is in imminent danger of being seriously compromised.

Minor Nonconformity - means a nonconformity against those observations that indicate that although the CAB has failed to conform to the prescribed accreditation requirements, the failure has no immediate or imminent effect on its competence to perform work within the limits of its proposed/approved accreditation schedule/scope.

9.21 Assessment Recommendations

For each type of assessment, there are different recommendations that can be made. The Technical Assessor/Technical Expert needs to be sure to assist the team leader in making the correct recommendations by following the conditions for each recommendation as described in SADCAS AP 13 “Preparation of Assessment Reports”.

9.22. The Closing Meeting

Following the pre-closing meeting, the assessment team and relevant facility staff gather for the closing meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to present a summary of the findings of the assessment team to the representatives of the facility and to allow discussion of the findings.

The team leader will conduct the meeting following SADCAS F 46 (b) “Onsite Assessment Closing Meeting Agenda”.

The Technical Assessor/Technical Expert will normally be asked to present the nonconformities that he raised. You will do by reading out the nonconformities clearly and as they have been documented. You may indicate whether the nonconformities have been classified as major or minor, and explain the circumstances and justification for each.

10 AFTER THE ASSESSMENT

10.1. CAB Responsibility

Whenever nonconformities have been identified during the assessment, the CAB needs to take corrective action to rectify the problem. The corrective action taken will be documented by the CAB on SADCAS F 61 (b). The completed SADCAS F 61 (b), together with evidence of implementation of the corrective action will need to be submitted to the SADCAS office, within the time-period as specified during the closing meeting and on the Recommendation Report SADCAS F 61 (c). Refer to SADCAS TG 04 “Guidance for addressing and clearing nonconformities”

10.2. Communication

All communication to CAB must be directed through the SADCAS office.

10.3 Clearing the nonconformities

10.3.1 The nature and magnitude of the nonconformities determines the type of verification needed to clear the nonconformities which means:

- a) In the simplest case, submission of documented evidence of corrective action taken; or
- b) In a serious situation, an on-site “clearance of findings” (COF) visit may be required within 3 months of the assessment for the assessors /technical experts to verify implementation of the corrective actions. This visit will be specifically to examine the areas of concern as

disclosed in the previous assessment. However, in some rare situations (e.g. where the CAB has been suspended) the range of condition(s) is so great that a complete re-assessment is required.

- 10.3.2 As soon as the CAB submits their corrective actions to the SADCAS office, you will be sent the corrective actions and supporting evidence for all the nonconformities that you have raised at the assessment.

You will need to review:

- The adequacy and appropriateness of each corrective action; and
- Whether sufficient evidence of effective implementation of the corrective action has been provided.

If you are satisfied with the corrective action and supporting evidence, the nonconformity can be signed off as cleared and dated.

Should you are not be satisfied with the corrective action and/or supporting evidence, the SADCAS office must be informed of what is not acceptable or what information is lacking. The additional information required will be requested from the CAB and sent to you once received.

All the signed SADCAS F 61(b) reports must be submitted back to the SADCAS office, within 5 working days of you receiving them.

11 ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

- 11.1. Throughout the assessment the team members should be aware of the two main objectives of their visit to the CAB:

- a) To determine whether the CAB's operations and facilities comply with the accreditation criteria; and
- b) To establish the extent of demonstrated competence.

During the time allocated for the assessment, the assessors /technical experts must:

- a) Gather all the information about the CAB as efficiently and effectively as possible;
- b) Constantly evaluate findings against the CAB's documented management system (i.e. against its policies, operational procedures, methods, etc.) and the SADCAS accreditation requirements;
- c) Identify through objective evidence any breakdown in the technical system or departures from operating procedures;
- d) Be thorough and objective at all times.

- 11.2. The important tools used to gather information effectively, efficiently and thoroughly are by:

- Asking questions;
- Listening to the answers;
- Witnessing activities;

- Examining facilities; and
- Reviewing records.

11.2.1. Asking questions

Questions should always be asked on the basis of the CAB's own management system, the SADCAS accreditation requirements and the relative technical practices. Answers provided must be verified against records (objective evidence) to demonstrate that the management system and technical competence aspects are maintained to ensure validity of the results. Hypothetical questions can be used to establish understanding beyond the existing situation and action that can be taken in the event of deviations.

11.2.2. Listening

Asking the right question is just the start of the information gathering process. It is only when the answer begins that the information starts flowing back to us. If we are not listening carefully, we are going to miss some of it.

11.2.3. Witnessing activities

You will obtain a great deal of information from the questions you ask and the answers you receive. However, what is documented in the procedures or told to you may not be occurring in practice. This may be because:

- The answers given to you may not be the truth. Deliberate deception happens occasionally but not very often. Honest misunderstandings are far more common than deliberate deception;
- There may be special variants of procedures which have not been documented in the manual and were not elicited during the discussions;
- Unknown to the supervisors, staff may not be following the standard procedures through carelessness, ignorance or inadequacies in the system or the resources available to them.

In addition, there will be aspects of the implementation of the management system and the procedures which cannot be explored by discussion and can only be established by examination.

Witnessing activities will help assessors /technical experts to:

- a) See whether or not prescribed procedures are being followed;
- b) Determine whether or not staff have the skills required to perform tasks;
- c) Evaluate the effectiveness of the training and supervision provided;
- d) Evaluate adequacy of resources available;
- e) Detect defects in the equipment, for example, equipment instability; and
- f) Confirm the answers to questions asked earlier.

11.2.4 Routine work

Observing the normal routine work of the CAB is better than witnessing a special demonstration. Seeing people working at their normal tasks and undertaking ongoing activities will enable you to appraise the real standard of a CAB's operation. Work not being performed can be discussed in the hypothetical sense. It is also possible to arrange the performance of a test or inspection by requesting this prior to the assessment. This should be discussed with the SADCAS team leader.

11.2.5. Assessment techniques guidelines

The following guidelines should assist you in a standardised approach to the assessment techniques.

a) How to establish that procedures are being correctly and fully implemented?

- Question management and staff who have an involvement in or bearing on the quality of the work;
- Examine records;
- Examine the suitability, maintenance, calibration, control and use of equipment, where applicable; and
- Examine the arrangements for exercising control over subcontractors and suppliers.

b) How to establish the technical competence of personnel in the scope of work covered by the schedule of accreditation?

- Examine the records outlined above;
- Have discussions with staff, supervisors and managers to evaluate their knowledge and understanding of the work performed;
- Witness the performance of staff while they perform calibrations/tests/inspections/verifications/certifications, etc., as the case may be; and
- Assess the reports/results issued by the CAB.

c) How to conduct a witnessing of activity during assessment

While witnessing an activity during an assessment, your role is first to observe; you may not influence the work being performed. You must be looking to see that as a minimum:

- The personnel member has performed the activity competently;
- The personnel member's competence is consistent with his/her records (i.e. training and competency records are in place and are up to date);
- The personnel member has access to all necessary documented methods and procedures;
- The procedures are up-to-date;
- The personnel member has implemented the procedures in full and correctly, i.e. no short cuts, no personalised application where it is not permissible to do so;
- The personnel member records all observations as required by the procedure;

- The records clearly identify what has been calibrated/ tested/ inspected/ verified/ certified, as the case may be;
- The method/procedure/equipment used is recorded as at the date and time (as required by the procedure);
- All records and raw data are signed/initialled/stamped and are traceable as applicable;
- Reports/certificates comply with the CAB's, SADCAS' and relevant accreditation standards' requirements;
- Facilities and equipment used are fit for accreditation purposes.

All the relevant sections of the SADCAS witnessing form SADCAS F 60(d)/61(h)/61(h-2)), as included in the assessment pack must be completed comprehensively and in detail. The witnessing form provides guidance as to the type of information that must be captured. This may differ according to the specific standard.

Note: If a CAB cannot provide witnessing on the day of the assessment, you may consider a "talk through" of the process.

d) How to conduct a vertical assessment

A vertical assessment is an assessment of work previously done (prior to the SADCAS assessment) and where results/reports/certificates have already been issued by the CAB.

This type of assessment is done to confirm that all processes involved in the performance of an activity were done competently and complied with all the requirements of the applicable accreditation standard and the CAB's documented policies and procedures. In other words, it is an audit trail of past events.

During the vertical assessment you need to request a final report/result/certificate of work already performed prior to the assessment. The standard-specific vertical assessment form will guide you as to the aspects you need to verify at the specific time the activity was performed.

All the relevant sections of the SADCAS vertical assessment form SADCAS F 60(c)/61(f)/F 61(g)/78(b), as included in the assessment pack must be completed comprehensively and in detail.

Note: If a CAB cannot provide simulations and/or sufficient supporting evidence in order for a vertical assessment to be conducted, the team leader must be informed of this as soon as possible. The team leader, in consultation with the SADCAS Scheme Coordinator will decide on the course of action to be taken.

12 MAINTAINING A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

Throughout the assessment, it is important to maintain a professional approach by paying attention to the following important aspects:

12.1 Project the right image

One of the most valuable tactics for assessors/technical experts to employ is to project a professional image of him/herself and that of SADCAS.

To project the right image, you need to ensure that:

- a) You look at the part of a smart tidy appearance which creates a favourable impression and boosts self-confidence. You need to smile and be approachable;
- b) You remain calm, self-controlled and courteous. You do not become flustered, emotional, argumentative, or dogmatic. “Please” and “Thank you” are amongst the most powerful words in an assessor’s /technical expert’s vocabulary;
- c) You are precise and do not use loosely phrased questions or requests which cause confusion and waste of time; and
- d) You have been prepared for the assessment which projects a professional image.

12.2. Stay on track

To maintain a professional approach, it is important that you stay on track during the assessment by:

- a) Avoiding diversions, however interesting;
- b) Following your plan (as far as possible);
- c) Managing your time; and
- d) Keeping control of your part of the assessment.

12.3. Keep the Assessment Flowing

It is important to keep the assessment flowing by:

- a) Examining a systematic sequence of activities;
- b) Avoiding back-tracking unnecessarily;
- c) Maintaining an orderly flow of questions;
- d) Avoiding long unnecessary periods of silence; and
- e) Projecting quiet confidence.

12.4. Deal with Tension

An assessment is a stressful experience for staff at every level in the CAB. Pride, reputation and status are all at stake and some people may even feel that their jobs are at risk. Most of us do not look forward to examinations of any kind. These factors can lead to an assessment being a time of tension.

Tension can be reduced in an assessment situation by:

- a) Being human;
- b) Putting people at ease;

- c) Projecting an appropriate image; and
- d) Recognising your own tension.

Tension during an assessment can lead to:

- a) Defensive responses;
- b) Reluctant communication;
- c) Occasional aggression; and
- d) Poor performance.

12.5. Teamwork

A spirit of teamwork is essential. During an assessment, teamwork involves a common purpose amongst all the team members. It involves a mutual understanding of team roles and a willingness to surrender individually to the team unit.

To work as a Team

- Support one another;
- Do not interrupt one another;
- Do not undermine anyone in the team; and
- Respect each team members' approach.

Be aware of the other team member's needs by allowing time for:

- Everyone to collect their thoughts;
- Clarifying questions; and
- Technical support.

If you disagree

- Avoid conflict or arguing with the facility personnel.

If the Technical Assessor/technical expert disagrees with a comment or suggestion made by another team member or the team leader, be sure you:

- Establish whether or not the issue is important enough to be raised;
- Determine whether or not it can wait and be raised at another time;
- In consultation with the team leader, call a team meeting if necessary; and
- Never have an argument with a fellow team member or the team leader in front of others.

13 ASSESSMENT TACTICS

The following are assessment tactics:

- ***Always be fair, flexible and prepared to listen and to reason*** - Make allowances, consider the circumstances surrounding each nonconformity and do not expect unreasonable levels of diligence or reliability from the CAB's staff.
- ***Be sensitive*** - Put staff at their ease. Do not be afraid to admit that you also make mistakes occasionally. Be helpful and constructive at all times.

- **Be factual** - Verify findings. Be aware of producing findings which rely on opinion, whether they be your own or those of the CAB.
- **Be decisive** - Once you have gathered objective evidence to form the basis of judgement, there is no point in going over the same ground again.
- **Bear in mind staff sensitivities** - Do not criticise staff in front of their subordinates or their seniors. It is important to discuss findings on the spot. Do not make notes of nonconformities without discussing the matter fully with CAB's staff.
- **Be aware of time** - If time begins to run short it is better to concentrate on the vital aspects of the CAB's operations.
- **Avoid too many escorts** as this slows down the assessment.

14 TACTICS OF THE CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODY

The following tactics are occasionally adopted by CAB staff, sometimes deliberately or unwittingly, under stress:

- **Long lunch breaks** - The CAB's staff may arrange to take the assessment team to lunch. If this is a restaurant some distance from the CAB, this can be time wasting. Lunch at the CAB premises is preferable.
- **Interruptions** - The CAB's staff may be constantly interrupted during the assessment to take phone calls or attend to queries, etc. In such circumstances, ask politely if such interruptions can be minimized.
- **Tour of CAB** - Some CABs may offer to take the assessment team on a lengthy tour of the CAB. Such tours should be politely declined.

15 ASSESSMENT PACK

After the assessment, the team leader shall submit the assessment recommendation report - SADCAS F 61 (c), nonconformities report - SADCAS F 61 (b) and relevant duly completed checklists/forms to SADCAS within one week after the assessment.

SADCAS AP 13 "Preparation of Assessment Report" outlines the procedure for preparation of an assessment report. The SADCAS Accreditation Administrator shall check the content of the assessment report and seek clarification with the team leader if there is an omission/misunderstanding.

16 ASSESSOR /TECHNICAL EXPERT CLAIM

SADCAS will cover the expenses for travel and subsistence expenses of all assessors/technical experts undertaken for SADCAS. The Assessor/Technical Expert Claim form SADCAS F 58 must be used to claim assessor/technical expert fees and all reasonable expenses that have been

paid for, such as parking fees & road tolls, kilometer rate (for private vehicle use only). Tax invoice receipts must be obtained to substantiate all expenses. Please attach these to the claim form and forward them to the SADCAS Scheme Coordinator not later than 3 months after the assessment.

The SADCAS F 58 form is available on the SADCAS website www.sadcas.org. If there is some deviation from the contract, SADCAS Scheme Coordinator shall be contacted before sending the claim form. SADCAS should, where there are no queries, pay for claims within 30 days.

17 ASSESSOR /TECHNICAL EXPERT ETHICS AND RULES

As an assessor/technical expert, you are a representative of SADCAS. It is therefore important for you to act, look and work in a professional manner that represents SADCAS in a positive and professional light.

- **Dress** - Dressing for an assessment must be neat and professional. Clothes like Jeans, tracksuits, T-shirts and other informal wear may not be worn. You are required to wear the relevant protective clothing appropriate to the area assessed, however, this is normally provided by the CAB being assessed. Should you bring along your own protective clothing it may not display any other company's name or logo. Names/logos of other companies shall be shielded or obscured to avoid questions or doubt about your interests.
- **Politeness** - Be polite and act in a professional manner at all times. Never get into heated debate on any issue and refer any disputes to the team leader.
- **Cell phones** - The use of cell phones during the assessment is strictly prohibited as this distracts both the assessor/technical expert and the staff being assessed. The team leader may however use his/her cell phone to consult with the SADCAS Office during the assessment, on condition that this is done privately. Any urgent calls can be made during tea or lunch breaks.
- **Consulting** - Under no circumstance can an assessor/technical expert advise, teach, give opinions or consult on any issues with the CAB and/or the staff before, during or after the assessment. You may not accept an assessment if you have worked for or consulted with the CAB you have been asked to assess within 2 years before the assessment date.
- **Gifts and Meals** – No gifts shall be accepted from SADCAS clients. The acceptance of dining invitations can be an area of concern. The following guidance may assist you with situations that might arise in the course of participating in assessments.
- **Soliciting for Business** - Assessors/technical experts are strongly discouraged from soliciting for private consultancy business during or after the assessment. An assessor/technical expert shall therefore not market himself/herself for gaining work or misuse his/her position while interacting with SADCAS clients. Business cards or private contact details shall not be exchanged during or after the assessment.

Any dining invitation or gifts offered while participating in an assessment should be viewed as a hospitality token. However, they are not an obligation of the accreditation assessment

process. Under no circumstance should gifts and meals ever be suggested to or expected of a CAB.

The provision of lunch by the CAB is an acceptable time and cost-effective business practice. Occasionally company souvenirs are given e.g. corporate mugs, caps, etc. and when travelling locally or out of the country evening meals may be offered. If provided they are not excessive in value, these are acceptable.

Small gifts may be given at the conclusion of an assessment as a token of appreciation for your time and effort. Often CAB staff will offer to take you for evening meals or on local guided tours in spare time as a measure of hospitality and to allow you to experience more fully the richness of the local culture. Once again, provided these are not excessive in value they are in keeping with local business practices and thus acceptable.

It is up to you as individuals to make appropriate judgement when accepting or declining any gifts or dining invitations. Common sense and awareness of usual business practice within the culture is the best guide. If you are in any way uncomfortable, discuss it with the SADCAS Technical Manager/Scheme Coordinator or gracefully decline. Any monetary gifts may not be accepted. The receipt of all gifts must be disclosed to SADCAS.

18 ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

SADCAS covers all reasonable costs associated with the conduct of assessment activities including:

- Accommodation and subsistence;
- Travel; and
- Insurance.

18.1. Travel

You should carry a copy of the travel itinerary with you at all times to provide evidence of bookings and confirmation of payment arrangements.

18.2. Accommodation

If in order to perform an assessment an overnight stay away from home is required SADCAS will reserve and pay for accommodation, bed and breakfast. SADCAS' policy for accommodation is to provide accommodation that is comfortable, convenient, meets business and personal needs and offers good value. If you have any problem with the selected accommodation please do not hesitate to inform SADCAS.

When departing the hotel/guesthouse, please check the account carefully to ensure the charges incurred are correct. All expenses for which SADCAS is responsible will be charged back to SADCAS so do not pay for these. However, you are responsible for any personal extra expenses such as mini-bar consumption, personal phone calls, meals, etc. and these should be paid for at the time of checking out.

18.3. Insurance

SADCAS maintains insurance cover which includes work undertaken on behalf of SADCAS. SADCAS maintains the following types of policies that are relevant to assessors/technical experts:

Professional Indemnity: indemnifies SADCAS against any claim for civil liability arising from a breach of professional duty in the conduct of business made against SADCAS. This includes any claim arising out of work undertaken by assessors/technical experts appointed by SADCAS.

Corporate Travel Insurance: Cover is provided when on authorised business travel outside your country of residence. The insurance cover includes emergency medical expenses, personal accident, cancellation/curtailment, baggage, personal liability and identity theft.

SADCAS does not provide insurance cover for the following:

- Motor Vehicle Insurance for use of a private vehicle. Assessors/technical experts to maintain own comprehensive motor vehicle insurance;
- When the client arranges travel or drives the team to/from the airport or assessment;
- Workman's compensation; and
- Personal accident insurance.

NEVER sign any waivers or disclaimers that may be presented during the course of undertaking assessments on behalf of SADCAS. Any such documents must be referred to SADCAS for review. In the event of an insurance claim being required, please contact the SADCAS office for information and assistance with the claim process.

18.4 Use of Vehicles during Assessments

SADCAS will not be responsible for any damage, accident, or loss from, or of, a private vehicle used on official duty, or for any fines or third-party claims arising there from.

SADCAS will not be responsible for any damage, accident, or loss from, or of, a car hired by SADCAS used on official duty, or for any fines or third-party claims there from.

The responsibilities of the assessor/technical expert/driver while driving a hired vehicle include, but not limited to, the following:

- Operation of the vehicle in a manner consistent with reasonable practices that avoid abuse, theft, or neglect.
- Avoid driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (including recreational drugs and those prescribed by physicians), to a level that renders the assessor/technical expert /driver incapable of operating a motor vehicle safely.
- Obeying all traffic laws
- Attention to and practice of safe driving techniques and adherence to current safety requirements.
- Restricting the use of vehicle to authorized driver.

All accidents shall be immediately reported to the police who in turn shall issue a police report.

All accidents shall be reported to SADCAS Scheme Coordinator within 24 hours of the incident.

Where an assessor/technical expert has been deemed negligent when using a vehicle hired by SADCAS, he/she shall meet the total cost of repairs.

19 OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Assessors/technical experts are required to continuously update their information.

You must ensure that you provide to SADCAS the following information for inclusion into your "Assessor/technical expert file", and that the file is kept up to date with all the required information:

- A copy of your qualifications in the field of expertise in which you carry out assessments;
- A current dated Curriculum Vitae (CV), an update of which is required at least every three year, and which must include
 - Your name and address;
 - Organisation of Employment and position within the organisation;
 - Education and professional status;
 - Work experience; and
 - Training in management system and assessment and conformity assessment activities.

20 ASSESSOR CONCLAVES

Every two (2) years assessors will be invited to attend the mandatory Assessor Conclave. Your attendance is important as we use these conclaves to transfer information regarding SADCAS, its developments, changes, new or revised accreditation requirements and to standardize assessors' approach to the assessment process.

21 ASSESSOR MONITORING

At least once in every three (3) years, SADCAS need to monitor your performance during an assessment to ensure consistent interpretation and application of the relevant Standards used and to stay active and up-to-date with SADCAS assessment methodology.

22 REFERENCES

- SADCAS F 40 (a) - Checklist ISO/IEC 17021:2015 – Conformity Assessment – Requirements for Bodies Providing Audit and Certification of Management Systems
- SADCAS F 40 (d) - Checklist ISO/IEC 17020:2012 – Accreditation of Various Types of Bodies Performing Inspection
- SADCAS F 46 (a) - Onsite Assessment – Opening Meeting Agenda
- SADCAS F 46 (b) - Onsite Assessment – Opening Meeting Agenda
- SADCAS F 57 - Feedback from Assessment
- SADCAS F 58 – Assessor/Technical Expert Claim Form
- SADCAS F 60 (a) - Management Requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2005
- SADCAS F 60 (b) - Technical Requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2005
- SADCAS F 60 (c) - Vertical Assessment ISO/IEC 17025
- SADCAS F 60 (d) - Witnessing of Activity
- SADCAS F 61 (a-1) - Document Review Report for Laboratories – ISO/IEC 17025
- SADCAS F 61 (a-2) - Document Review Report for Inspection– ISO/IEC 17020
- SADCAS F 61 (a-3) - Document Review Report for Medical Laboratories – ISO 15189
- SADCAS F 61 (a-4) - Document Review Report for Certification of Products, Processes and Services, Systems and Persons
- SADCAS F 61 (a-5) - Document Review Report for Product Certification Bodies
- SADCAS F 61 (a-6) – Document Review Report for Personnel Certification Bodies
- SADCAS F 61 (b) - Conformity Assessment Bodies, Nonconformity, Corrective Action and Clearance Report
- SADCAS F 61 (c) - Assessment Recommendation Report
- SADCAS F 61 (d) - Pre-assessment Report for Laboratories
- SADCAS F 61 (e) - Proficiency Testing Requirements ISO/IEC 17025 and SADCAS Requirements
- SADCAS F 61 (f) - Vertical Assessment Inspection – ISO/IEC 17020
- SADCAS F 61 (g) - Vertical Assessment – ISO/IEC 17021
- SADCAS F 61 (h) - Witnessing a Certification Body – ISO/IEC 17021
- SADCAS F 61 (h-2) - Witnessing a Product Certification Body – ISO/IEC 17065
- SADCAS F 78 (a) - Management & Technical Requirements – ISO 15189
- SADCAS F 78 (b) - Vertical Assessment – ISO 15189
- SADCAS AP 13 - Preparation of Assessment Reports
- SADCAS AP 20 - Sampling for Assessment Purposes
- SADCAS TG 04 - Guidance for Addressing and Clearing Nonconformities
- SADCAS TR 03 - Nominated Representative and Signatories: Responsibilities, Qualification and Approval
- SADCAS TR 12 - Estimation of Uncertainty of Measurement by Calibration Laboratories and Specifications of Calibration and Measurement Capability on Schedules of Accreditation
- ILAC P 10 - ILAC Policy on Traceability of Measurement
- SADCAS AP 23: Remote Assessments- Management and Execution.

APPENDIX – AMENDMENT RECORD

Revision Status	Change			Approved by	Effective Date
	Page	Clause/Sub clause	Description of Change		
Issue 9			In whole document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lead Assessor” deleted and substituted with “Team Leader” • “Expert” deleted and substituted with “Technical Experts • “Surveillance” deleted and substituted with “periodic on-site assessment” • “Programme Coordinator” deleted and substituted with “Scheme Coordinator” 	CEO	2018-11-15
	1		Title: Added “TECHNICAL EXPERT” between “Assessor” and “Information”	CEO	2018-11-15
	4	2.4	Line 5: Added “consistency and taking into consideration the risk based approach” after each organization”	CEO	2018-11-15
	5	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullet 4: “quality” deleted and substituted with “management” • Bullet 5: “reduce” inserted between “suspend” and “or withdraw” 	CEO	2018-11-15
	7	6.1	Paragraph 1, Line 6: Added “a-5/a-6” after “a-4”	CEO	2018-11-15
	8	7	7.2 - New clause added “Role of Technical Expert” Subsequent clause renumbered	CEO	2018-11-15
	13	9.12.2	Bullet 13: “mark” deleted and substituted with “symbol”	CEO	2018-11-15
	30	19	b) - “once a year” deleted and substituted with “every three year”	CEO	2018-11-15
	31	22	Added 2 references after bullet 14: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Review Report for Product Certification Bodies • Document Review Report for Personnel Certification Bodies 	CEO	2018-11-15
Issue 10	5	2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lines 1 and 2 – Deleted “laboratory” and substituted with “CAB” • 	CEO	2019-03-04

Revision Status	Change			Approved by	Effective Date
	Page	Clause/Sub clause	Description of Change		
Issue 10	5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added another sentence which reads "The observation shall be presented to the CAB but assessors must avoid to recommend specific solutions." 	CEO	2019-03-04
		8.4	Added last bullet which reads "Avoid to provide any advice"		
Issue 11			Aligned whole handbook to requirements of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISO/IEC 17011:2017 SADCAS PM 01 SADCAS AP 12: Part 1 SADCAS AP 12: Part 2 SADCAS AP 12: Part 3 	CEO	2020-04-24
	4	2.4	Added "If SADCAS determines that an on-site assessment is not possible or feasible, another assessment technique (e.g. remote assessment) shall be used to achieve the same objective as the on-site assessment being replaced" after paragraph 2.		
		2.5	Inserted the need to consider information gathered from assessments performed within the accreditation cycle when planning and performing reassessments.		
	12	9.4	Inserted reference to SADCAS TR 09 and the need to document sources of metrological traceability on SADCAS F 121.		
	31	18.4	New clause added: "Use of vehicles during assessments".		
	32	22	Added SADCAS AP 23- <i>Remote Assessments- Management and Execution</i> to the list of References		