

## South African National Accreditation System

# Engaging the international landscape

The South African National Accreditation System is one of many globally recognised bodies that serve to accredit conformity assessment bodies in their respective countries

**T**he international landscape, says South African National Accreditation System (Sanas) chair Prags Govender, is defined by the activities the International Laboratory Accreditation Corporation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

These organisations work together to harmonise accreditation across the globe.

“It is important for Sanas to be recognised by these institutions to ensure South Africa’s place in the international market.

“Sanas is a signatory to various multilateral recognition agreements (MLAs) thereby ensuring the global acceptance of South Africa’s products and services.

“These MLAs remove technical barriers to trade (TBTs), which in turn locks out poor quality imports and locks in high quality exports,” he says.

South Africa’s participation in this international network of accreditation bodies allows South African goods and services to continue to be accepted in more than 110 economies across the world, represented by 83 accreditation bodies that are also signatories to the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MRA) without needing to be re-tested, re-certified or re-inspected.

Sanas has been a signatory to the MRA since 2000. A requirement for signatory accreditation bodies to remain part of the accreditation network is that they are evaluated every four years to confirm their signatory status.

To maintain its status, Sanas was successfully re-evaluated five times since 2000 and will undergo its next peer evaluation by ILAC and IAF in August 2015.

Sanas plays a leadership role internationally, continentally and regionally, Govender says.

“Internationally, Sanas participates in ILAC and IAF structures wherein Sanas staff represent South Africa on various technical committees.

“Continentally and regionally, Sanas plays a leading role in various forms.”

Sanas hosts the Southern African

Development Community (SADC) accreditation secretariat.

“Sanas has played a leading role in establishing the accreditation infrastructure under the African Union through the formation of the African Accreditation Corporation (Afrac).

“Currently Sanas’s chief executive, Ron Josias, chairs Afrac and is in the process of working towards the international recognition of the Afrac by ILAC and IAF,” he says.

In collaboration with the Southern African Development Community Co-operation in Accreditation Services (Sadcas), which provides accreditation services to the 13 SADC countries that do not have national accreditation bodies, Sanas supports Sadcas in providing accreditation services to SADC CABs in the 13 SADC member states.

To date, Sanas and Sadcas have accredited 34 conformity assessment bodies, up from 24 in 2012/13, and 23 accredited facilities, up from 16 in 2012/13, in six SADC countries – Botswana, Namibia, Seychelles, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**“Sanas plays a leadership role internationally, continentally and regionally”**



South African National Accreditation System chair Prags Govender. Photo: supplied

### Facilitating Africa in global trade

During the period under review, Sanas continued to lead the process of obtaining the required international recognition for the African accreditation infrastructure through the Afrac.

The establishment of an African technical infrastructure aimed at co-ordinating accreditation activities in Africa is important because it will facilitate the continent’s effective participation in global trade.

Sanas also continues to host the Afrac Secretariat.

Sanas is hosting World Accreditation Day celebrations in South Africa on June 9. “The world

accreditation theme of ‘Support for Energy’ is relevant because sustainable energy remains an issue for countries across the world, not just South Africa,” Govender says.

“Remembering that the UN declared 2012 as the year of sustainable energy for all, it is an appropriate time for the accreditation world to follow through with this theme.

“Addressing the energy challenges in South Africa involves clean energy sources, which in turn helps South Africa to achieve UN Millennium Development Goal 7. Coal at present is the dominant source of energy in South Africa

(65%) with renewable energy accounting for only 8%.

“Hence, within the theme of World Accreditation Day 2014 and in support of government’s industrial development objectives, Sanas has focused on including in its programmes the accreditation of Energy Efficiency Verification Agencies Measurements and an Energy Management Certification Body.

“Sanas will also be assisting in the areas of biofuels and wind energy to provide relevant support in ensuring the successful implementation of programmes in these sustainable energy sources.”

## Who does Sanas accredit?

### Calibration laboratories and proficiency testing schemes

The calibration programme ensures that instruments used in the industry measure accurately. The accredited CABs are used by SA manufacturers and exporters, including the Ipap, which provides a service to all of the Ipap priority sectors.

### Testing laboratories

Testing laboratories play an important role in supporting South African manufacturing and export by providing manufacturers with

objective evidence that a product or service conforms to certain customer requirements or specifications.

### Pharmaceutical laboratories

The pharmaceutical programme provides an important service to the South African pharmaceutical industry, in particular, for chemical and microbiology testing.

### Inspection bodies

Inspection mainly operates within the regulatory domain where regulators, industry and citizens need the confidence that inspection

bodies, for example energy efficiency measurement and verification, inspecting work place health and safety requirements in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and those inspecting compulsory standards in accordance with the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications Act, are competent to do so.

### Legal metrology verification laboratories

The purpose of the verification laboratories, which fall under the domain of legal (trade) metrology, is to

protect consumers from unfair trade practices. These laboratories perform verifications on volume, mass and length measuring instruments.

### Certification bodies

Accredited certification bodies certify other organisations with regard to quality management environmental management, occupational health and safety management systems and food safety management system requirements and validation and verification of greenhouse gas emission organisations and projects

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