

Report from SQAMEG Regional Co-ordinator to SQAMEG for the 33rd SQAMEG meeting, 23 March 2012

Prepared by Senior Programme Officer – Technical Barriers to Trade

1. Establishment of a SADC SPS Co-ordinating Committee

At the meeting held in Windhoek, Namibia in February 2011, CMT approved the establishment of the regional SADC Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Coordinating Committee composed of representatives of Member States' national SPS Coordinating committees (NCCs). CMT further urged Member States that had not yet established their NCCs to do so and notify the Secretariat.

The Secretariat convened and launched the regional SADC SPS Coordinating Committee at a meeting held from 21 – 22 July 2011 in Gaborone, Botswana. At this inaugural meeting the committee developed a regional SPS work programme that included:

- Identification of technical problems which might form the subject of joint projects on SPS,
- Development of mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration in the transfer of expertise in SPS amongst Member States,
- Establishment of regional expert working groups in specific fields (policy, legislation and standards; testing and analysis; inspection, monitoring and conformity assessment; pest and disease control and prevention; epidemiological surveillance and data collection; risk analysis; information and communication; food safety assurance, and capacity building) related to SPS measures,
- Coordination of efforts to present common SADC positions in relevant international organizations in relevant international fora, and
- Development of mechanisms for coordinating the region's liaison with corresponding regional and international organizations in the area of SPS

The committee also agreed to review the SPS Annex and submit to CMT for approval, proposed amendments addressing clauses that were not fully aligned to the WTO SPS agreement. As part of the work programme, the Committee undertook to collaborate with tripartite partners: COMESA, EAC and Trademark Southern Africa (TMSA), to implement capacity building and SPS information management systems activities.

2. COMESA Annual SQAM meetings

The COMESA Annual SQAM meetings were held in Lusaka, Zambia from 8 to 12 August 2011. A statement was made by the SADC Representative reaffirming commitment to work with COMESA on a regular basis towards the harmonization of standards and related activities across the region within the COMESA/EAC/SADC Tripartite Co-operation.

3. Co-operation under the Tripartite Arrangements

At the second tripartite summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2011, Heads of State and Governments adopted a developmental approach to the Tripartite Integration process that would be anchored on three (3) developmental pillars *viz.*,

- Market integration based on the Tripartite Free Trade Area
- Infrastructure development to enhance connectivity and reduce costs of doing business
- Industrial development to address the productive capacity constraints.

The COMESA, EAC and SADC Secretariats are working with Trade Mark Southern Africa to advance the work done in Nairobi, Kenya in October 2008. To this end a workshop was held from 24 to 28 October 2011, Lusaka, Zambia. The minutes of the meetings have been distributed by COMESA to all participants by SADCSTAN, SADC MEL, SADC MET and SADCA who attended the workshop. Each structure is expected to report separately on the outcome of the workshop. A meeting for the accreditation pillar will be held in May 2012.

REC Membership of International Organizations

The SADC Secretariat (REC) has been given Observer Status at ISO and on the WTO SPS Committee.

4. International Leadership Training, giz

The one-year Quality for the World Market International Leadership Training sponsored by giz will be offered in 2012 – 2013. The application phase will be from July – September 2012. A slot has been given to giz to explain this opportunity, which is aimed at industry, during the workshop, to which industry have been invited on 19 March 2012.

5. Financial Aspects

- The TIFI PE Bridging funds made available during 2010/11 were used to sponsor delegates to attend the 2011 AFRAC meeting in Mauritius, the tripartite SQAM meeting in Lusaka, NCSLI in the USA and sponsored an SMC meeting in Botswana in December 2011.
- The SADC SQAM budget allocation was reduced twice during the financial year due to financial constraints at the SADC Secretariat.

6. International Cooperating Partners

Windhoek Declaration

The Windhoek Declaration, which describes the coordination of International Cooperating Partners with SADC is under review.

PTB Funding: Submitted proposals

Several proposals have been submitted to the PTB for funding (Appendix 1) and are at various stages of approval and implementation.

Potential funding from EU via EDF 10 Regional Economic Integration Support (REIS) Programme

The action fiche has been submitted to Brussels for consideration. The REIS programme's support will build on the activities of the earlier EDF 9 financed SQAM project. The proposed support to the implementation of the TBT Annex is given below:

The proposed areas of intervention will reduce technical barriers to trade within SADC.

Long-term private sector expert – will be supported by the REIS programme to capacitate the TIFI TBT and SPS Programme Officers. Support from this expert will primarily be required to develop an outreach and awareness programme among the private sector operatives in the SADC member states. This is intended to increase demand from the private sector for the certification of their products and processes. This long-term expert support will be provided for two years.

A regional framework for prioritising the standards harmonisation process and impact assessment – support from the REIS programme will develop a baseline categorisation of technical regulations, identifying major differences and prioritising those that need to be harmonised urgently. This will be done during the start-up phase of the REIS programme. Assistance will be provided to develop an analytical framework for regulatory impact assessments. This assessment framework will then be embedded at the national and regional levels through, inter alia, training Member States in the tools and processes common to the SADC region. This work with the Member States will be done in the second phase of the REIS programme, with resources required to implement activities at the national level to be provided from the national resources of the respective Member States.

Training for accreditation development in support of SADCAS – the REIS programme's support will build on the activities of the earlier EDF 9 financed SQAM project in the area of training. This will help to create a larger pool of assessors to increase the supply of accreditation services to Conformity Assessment Bodies. The support will identify and train technical and lead assessors. It will also train peer evaluators; identify and train regional trainers for promoting quality awareness and increase awareness of the need for accreditation. Given both industry developments and staff turnover, continued training for National Accreditation Focal Points will be considered. Activities will include training on the requirements of the key accreditation standards, technical assessor courses; lead assessor courses; and on site mentoring, monitoring and evaluation of assessors. Training will be co-ordinated by the

SADC SQAM programme officer. This support will be provided throughout the four years of the REIS programme.

Outreach and awareness raising – outreach and awareness raising will also be an important area for REIS programme support. There are two distinct but related targets. Firstly is industry liaison. The private sector needs to be sensitised to the advantages of standards accreditation and its requirements. Without private sector demand for certifying products and services, technical barriers will remain and even the current level of quality infrastructure will not be sustainable. Stakeholder involvement is also important to prioritise and create demand for policy measures to enhance standards harmonisation in SADC. Secondly, awareness and demand for accreditation services by CABs needs to be increased to sustain and develop the regional network of assessors. This support will be provided throughout the four years of the REIS programme.

The starting date of the programme is expected to be no later than 01 April 2013 should approval be obtained. A Contribution Agreement will be signed between the EU and the SADC Secretariat.

7. Monitoring of the Implementation of the TBT Annex

Council have approved a policy on the monitoring and evaluation of SADC protocols at their meeting in Angola in March 2012. In the light of this, a process has already begun with the assistance of GIZ for the evaluation of the implementation of the TBT Annex to the Protocol on Trade. GIZ have recruited consultant (Mr. Martin Kellerman) to assist in developing a concept note for monitoring of the TBT Annex. Mr Kellerman participated in the SQAMEG meeting held in February 2012 in order to gain an understanding of the expectations of the members when such an exercise is done. Detailed discussions took place between and it was agreed that a concept note would be discussed during the SADC SQAM Annual meetings in Lilongwe Malawi. Mr Kellerman will be presenting the concept note on Thursday, 22 March 2012, 17:30 to 19:30.

8. Vote of Thanks

- The SADC Secretariat gratefully acknowledges the financial support from South Africa to host the Secretariats of the technical structures. We furthermore wish to thank dti, SABS, NRCS, SANAS, NMISA for their dedication and support in hosting the various Secretariats.
- The SADC Secretariat expresses its thanks for the EU, PTB and GIZ for financial and technical assistance in furthering the development of the regional Quality Infrastructure.

Appendix 1

SADC/PTB SQAM SUPPORT PROJECT

PROJECT PHASE: June 2010 – May 2013

PROJECT TITLE: *Strengthening Quality Infrastructure for Trade Enhancement, Competitiveness and Consumer Protection in SADC*

PROJECT NUMBER: 2010.2209.4 – 95060

Financial Value EUR 1,5M

1. Components of the project:

The components of project support comprise:

- Component 1: Capacity and competence of the Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (TIFI) Directorate in the domain of SQAM/TBT are enhanced.
- Component 2: SQAM/TBT Structures contribute to foster regional integration.
- Component 3: Technical competence of the SQAM/TBT Structures is recognised through membership to international organisations, inter-comparisons, Proficiency Testing (PT) schemes (intra-regional and international) and Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA).
- Component 4: Participation of private sector especially in the regulated area is promoted.

In the reporting period, the SADC SQAM officers were supported to participate in two (2) Executive Committee meetings of the SADCTRLC where important details on the development of regional harmonised regulations for the classification and labelling of chemicals were being discussed. *Draft SADC GHS Policy document should become available shortly.*

Planned future work

The following activities are expected to be carried out in 2012:

- (i) A SADCSTAN Operational Officers workshop where delegates will receive training on revised standards harmonization procedures will be supported and is scheduled to take place in Johannesburg in February 2012. A SMC meeting will be held back to back with this event and is being supported by PTB.
- (ii) The Legal Metrology department of Lesotho will be supported in meeting some of their equipment needs. The Department lacks metrology infrastructure and equipment to meet growing market needs to ensure fair trade practices in Lesotho, particularly metrology equipment for verification and calibration of equipment in the areas of mass, volume, length and temperature.
- (iii) SADC MEL has requested support to conduct regional workshops on the OIML documents R49 (Training in verification of potable water meters); R117 (Practical training in type approval testing of liquid meters other than water meters), and R76 (Practical training in type approval testing of non-automatic weighing instruments).

- (iv) Swaziland has requested support for quality management system auditors training.
- (v) A SADCA/SADCAS request for technical assessors' refresher training and monitoring will be supported.
- (vi) A proposal for the establishment of a Laboratory Association in Malawi has been received.
- (vii) A proposal for the conduct of a PT scheme for Cement has been circulated to potential participants in the cement sector of the construction industry. If the response is favorable, the scheme will be initiated next year.

Note: A request to support the translation of SADCSTAN operational documents was refused by PTB on the grounds that MS should/could assist in this regard.