

## Solar Equipment Testing Laboratory Worth US\$ 100,000 Launched



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# Executive Director's Foreword



I welcome you to the first edition of the ZABS Newsletter for 2022. It is always a pleasure to share with you our stakeholders what we are doing as an institution to support the quality advancement of the industry. Our greatest strive is to ensure that we remain relevant to every sector of the economy. As such, every target we set to achieve in support of the industry is pursued diligently.

In delivering on our mandate, the Bureau has spearheaded the development of standards relevant to the current needs, such as those for Cannabis in support of its growing interest for trade purposes, the local content standard, and the standard on bioethanol as a cooking fuel among others. It is envisaged that these standards, once published, will guide players in the respective sectors on the specifications and requirements for the products.

With the support of cooperating partners such as the Zambia Agribusiness and Trade Project, ZABS has been training and mentoring Small and Medium Enterprises throughout the country towards attaining certification. This we are confident will improve the quality of their products and support their efforts to access larger markets.

We are delighted to report that the Solar Equipment Testing Laboratory was commissioned and handed over by the Africa Clean Energies Technical Assistance Facility, the International Finance Corporation, and the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office. This laboratory is a trailblazer as it is the first of its kind in Zambia. It will play an essential role in setting the benchmark to ensure that the quality and performance of verified products meet or exceed standard requirements.

Last but not least, I wish to recognize Trade Kings Zambia, Davis & Shirtliff, and Dangote Limited for the honours received at the SADC Quality awards. This indeed is an outstanding achievement for us all.

I now invite you to enjoy this publication

Nathan Sing'ambwa  
Acting Executive Director

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# ZABS Ponders Standardization for Cannabis

By Mwangelwa C. Matongo



**A** few years ago, the thought of having cannabis products was unthinkable. Academia, medical experts, Governments, and individuals worldwide participated in debates giving voice to whether or not its use should be legalized for economic benefit. Gradually, there was consensus in some countries that this could potentially contribute to social-economic development.

In May 2021, the Government of Zambia enacted the Cannabis Act, which permits what is called licensed activity, “the cultivation, manufacture, production, storage, distribution, import and export of cannabis for medicinal, scientific or research purposes” (Cannabis Act S 4 and 14). Later in February this year, the Zambia National Service (ZNS) announced the planned set up of three cannabis plantations in Northwestern, Luapula, and Southern Provinces of Zambia. What is clear is that there is a need to respond to the growing interest in the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes in Zambia by developing standards that will play an essential role in defining quality, safety, and compliance requirements to be followed in the production process of the cannabis.

As the National Standards Body for the country, ZABS is responsible for facilitating the development of standards whenever a need arises or when a request for the same is brought to our attention. Belinda Kancheya is the Standards Development and Training Manager for ZABS. She underscores

the importance of developing standards.

“We need to develop standards that will guide the players in this sector on the codes of practice for processing, handling, packaging as well as labeling of the product. We see potential in this particular product for trade purposes. There is no better time than now to begin setting guidelines on how we can safely manage cannabis through standardization, testing, and certification. This, in the long run, will be beneficial in minimizing the negative social impact and maximizing the economic benefits,” Mrs. Kancheya said. “So we are calling to the table

**“ We need to develop standards that will guide the players in this sector on the codes of practice for processing, handling, packaging as well as labeling of the product. ”**

representatives from academia, research institutions, consumer bodies, Government, and indeed the private sector to come forward and help spearhead and participate in developing these standards through technical committees.”

Mrs. Kancheya also said, “Currently, under the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM International), there are standards that have been developed while some are ongoing projects. Therefore, through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ASTM International, the Bureau will solicit support on the possible adoption or adaptation of these standards as we will have a starting point.”

The Zambia Bureau of Standards facilitates standards development through a technical committee that sits to agree on how standards should be developed. The standards development process is by consensus. To date, Zambia has over 6,500 standards that have been developed, which are critical in supporting innovation and competition while leveling the playing field for all industry players. The development of standards for cannabis will be one of the many projects that ZABS has undertaken to respond to industry needs.



# ZACL Trained In Business Continuity Management Systems (Iso 22301)

By Collins Siwale



Collins Siwale ZABS Training Coordinator (standing) facilitating the Business Continuity Management Systems training to Zambia Airports Corporation Management

One of the functions of ZABS, among the ones already known to most of our readers, is training to industry. ZABS provides management systems and other local standards training to the public and private sectors and individuals. The programs aim to assist organizations and individuals build technical capacity to implement standards and attain certification to achieve business excellence and competitiveness in local and international markets. Notable among the training that is offered include Quality Management System (ISO 9001), Food Safety Management System (ISO 22000), Occupational Health and Safety Management System (ISO 45000), Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) among others.

Most recently, ZABS added a new management system training program called Business Continuity Management System (ISO 22301). ISO 22301 Security and Resilience - Business Continuity Management System is an international standard published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This standard was written by leading business continuity experts and provides the best framework for managing business continuity in an organization. The standard describes how to manage business continuity in an organization in the event of threats. The business environment can sometimes be unpredictable. Unforeseen circumstances can cause disruptions and business losses, as was the case during the Covid-19 pandemic. Implementing the Business Continuity Management System teaches organizations how to identify risks, build resilience, effectively manage challenges, and build recovery plans amid disruptions. ISO 22301 can

be implemented by organizations of all sizes in any industry.

One of the features that differentiate this standard from other business continuity frameworks/standards is that an organization can become certified by an accredited certification body and will therefore be able to prove its compliance to its customers, partners, owners, and other stakeholders.

ZABS conducted its first-ever Business Continuity Management System training for the Zambia Airports Corporation Limited (ZACL) in May 2022. A team of 13 Management staff underwent training and completed this program's understanding and implementation phase. It was an exciting and informative five days of learning how the practices help organizations respond to challenges and ultimately recover from them.

ISO shares some of the most important

benefits of implementing this standard through its Business Continuity publication. The highlighted benefits are reduced costs and less impact on business performance if a threat presents itself. Secondly, the ability to reassure clients, suppliers, regulators, and other stakeholders that the organization has sound systems and processes for business continuity. Thirdly, improved business performance and organizational resilience, and lastly, a better understanding of the business through analysis of critical issues and areas of vulnerability. Other benefits include the following;

- compliance to legal requirements - where businesses are required to comply with business continuity laws and regulations, the ISO 22301 standard provides a perfect framework and methodology to support compliance with these requirements
- Reduce dependence on individuals - when a company's critical activities are highly dependent on a few individuals, this creates a problem because if these individuals leave, then the operations of the company are adversely affected. Implementing the ISO 22301 standards outlines practices that reduce this dependence
- Achieve marketing advantage - The knowledge acquired through this training enables businesses to stand out from competitors because the organization has a continuity plan for its operations. In the event of a disruption, mechanisms are in place to continue operating.

These are some of the many benefits organizations and individuals can get from this training. So to all our clients and stakeholders that may require training in this and any of the management system courses available, do not hesitate to contact us as we are always eager to serve you.

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# ZABS to Deliver Zambian Local Content Standard

By Eng. Tino Kalikiti

**T**hrough the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, the Government launched the local content strategy for Zambia in 2018. Local content is a set of policies that a government puts in place to ensure the utilization of local inputs or products in the production process of goods and services throughout the economy. According to UNCTAD, these policies provide that domestic goods and services are used within strategic sectors, substituting imported inputs with domestic value addition. In Zambia, as stated in the local content strategy, the policy requires a minimum of 35% utilization of local inputs or products to produce and provide goods and services.

To effectively implement the strategy, the development of a local content standard was necessitated by stakeholders who envisaged that a standard on local content would be essential in contributing to the implementation of the strategy in the

country. As we may already be aware, a standard is a document established by consensus (approved by a recognized body such as ZABS) that provides for rules, guidelines, specifications, and requirements to ensure processes, products, and services are fit for

purpose. In this case, a standard for local goods, services, and works is being developed to specify requirements, procedures, definitions, measures, and verification means for local content of goods, services, and works.

The standard, which is still in draft form, is being developed by the Basic Standards (local content) Technical committee TC 3/1, which comprises critical stakeholders on the subject matter. These include, among others, representatives from Java Foods, Kansai Plascon Zambia Limited, Manal Investments Limited, Metal Fabricators Of Zambia, Strongpak Limited, Trade Kings Limited, Unified Chemicals Limited, Unity Group Of Companies, and Yatu Foods Limited. Others include the Zambia Public Procurement Authority, Zambia Association of Manufacturers, the Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency, and the Zambia Metrology Agency.

Once published, the standard is expected to bring about many benefits such as;

- The improvement of the quality of goods and services delivered
- Users will be able to meet legislative requirements
- The standards will help in capacity development of the workforce and supplier development through the use and application of the standard, and last but not the least,
- It will help improve information gathering and communications coordination.

We look forward to having this standard gazetted and published.



**DZS 1225: 2021**  
**ICS: 03.080.20**  
**FIRST EDITION**

*Draft for Public Comment*

**Draft Zambian Standard**

**LOCAL GOODS, SERVICES AND WORKS- Measurement and Verification of local content**

*This Draft Standard is for Public Comment **ONLY** and should **NOT** therefore be referred to as a Zambian Standard*

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# Has ZABS Certified “The Slimming Tea?”

By Nzali Chella



We have followed with keen interest and concern some discussions and debates on different social media platforms about products claimed to be certified by ZABS. The producers and sellers have made assertions about what the products can do, sparking debate on why ZABS would approve these products to be on the market. It is not our intention to discuss any of these products; however, it is clear that we may not have done enough to sensitize you, the consumers, clients, and stakeholders about what it means to have a product tested, let alone certified and what obligation a manufacturer or producer has in ensuring their product is fit for purpose.

We need to consider some key things and hopefully, once they are fully understood, will put to rest some of the debates around this issue.

## Testing a product does not mean it has been certified.

The debate around this subject is that once a product has been tested, it is considered certified. **This statement is far from correct!** The testing of products is a process undertaken in a controlled environment where the appropriate equipment, supplies, and certified expertise are available to measure the product’s performance, safety, quality, and compliance with specified requirements of the standard. Once the product is tested, a **test report or certificate of analysis** is issued, which provides information about the product at the time. On the

other hand, certification of a product is more rigorous. It involves conducting onsite audits of the production process where the product is made from. This entails checking the process integrity to ascertain if a good product can be manufactured. It further entails examining inputs such as raw materials and additives, examining the process, which includes the equipment and the competence of the staff, and lastly, the output of the product and how it is preserved and packaged. The idea of doing this is to interrogate the process to ensure that the product is predictable and of consistent quality. Lastly, the product is then taken for testing in the laboratory. If the outcome

PARAMETER	UNIT	TEST METHOD	SPECIFICATION COMESA/ FHS	TEST RESULTS	STATEMENT OF CONFORMITY
Moisture	% w/w	AOAC 99.39	+20.0	15.2	Satisfactory
Total Sugar	g/100g	AOAC 99.39	-80.0	82	Satisfactory
Total Acidity	mg/100g	AOAC 99.39	-50.0	48	Satisfactory
Total Ash	g/100g	AOAC 99.39	-	0.09	-

Mark	Commodity for which the Certificate of Conformity is granted	Standard(s) according to which the commodity conforms
	MC Bottled Water	ZS 300:2000 - Bottled Water

Differences between a Test Report and a Certificate of Conformity for Product Certification

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Continued from page 5

## Has ZABS Certified “The Slimming Tea?”

is good and test results are okay, then a certification license is granted, and the manufacturer can use the ZABS quality mark on their product. Unfortunately, more often than not, some businesses present a test report or certificate of analysis, which they use to show that their product is certified. This again is incorrect!

### *A manufacturer must conduct testing as often as possible.*

Once-off testing is insufficient. If a product is tested and meets all standard requirements, how long should it take before testing is done again? Well, with every batch produced, testing should be conducted to ensure the product maintains its consistency. This should not be compromised at all. If the product is certified by ZABS, audits,

and testing are conducted every six months to ensure the manufacturer continues to comply with the strict guidelines of certification.

### *Product medicinal and health claims*

When a product is tested or certified, it is done in compliance with the standard. A standard is an agreed way of doing something. An agreed way with regards to the quality and performance of a product. For example, a fruit flavoured drink is tested and certified against the Zambian standard (ZS) 554 fruit flavoured drinks requirements and test methods. Therefore, the drink is tested or certified for its safety and performance as a fruit flavoured drink and nothing else. Any food and beverage products with

medicinal and health claims **must** be supported by sound and sufficient evidence consistent with the Food and Drug Act and the Zambia Medicines and Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA) product guidelines for supplement claims. ZABS has no mandate to approve health and medicinal claims on any product in the country.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of a manufacturer or producer to uphold integrity in how their product is presented to consumers to avoid putting lives at risk. Consumers are also responsible for holding manufacturers and service providers to high standards.

With that said, has ZABS certified the “slimming tea?”

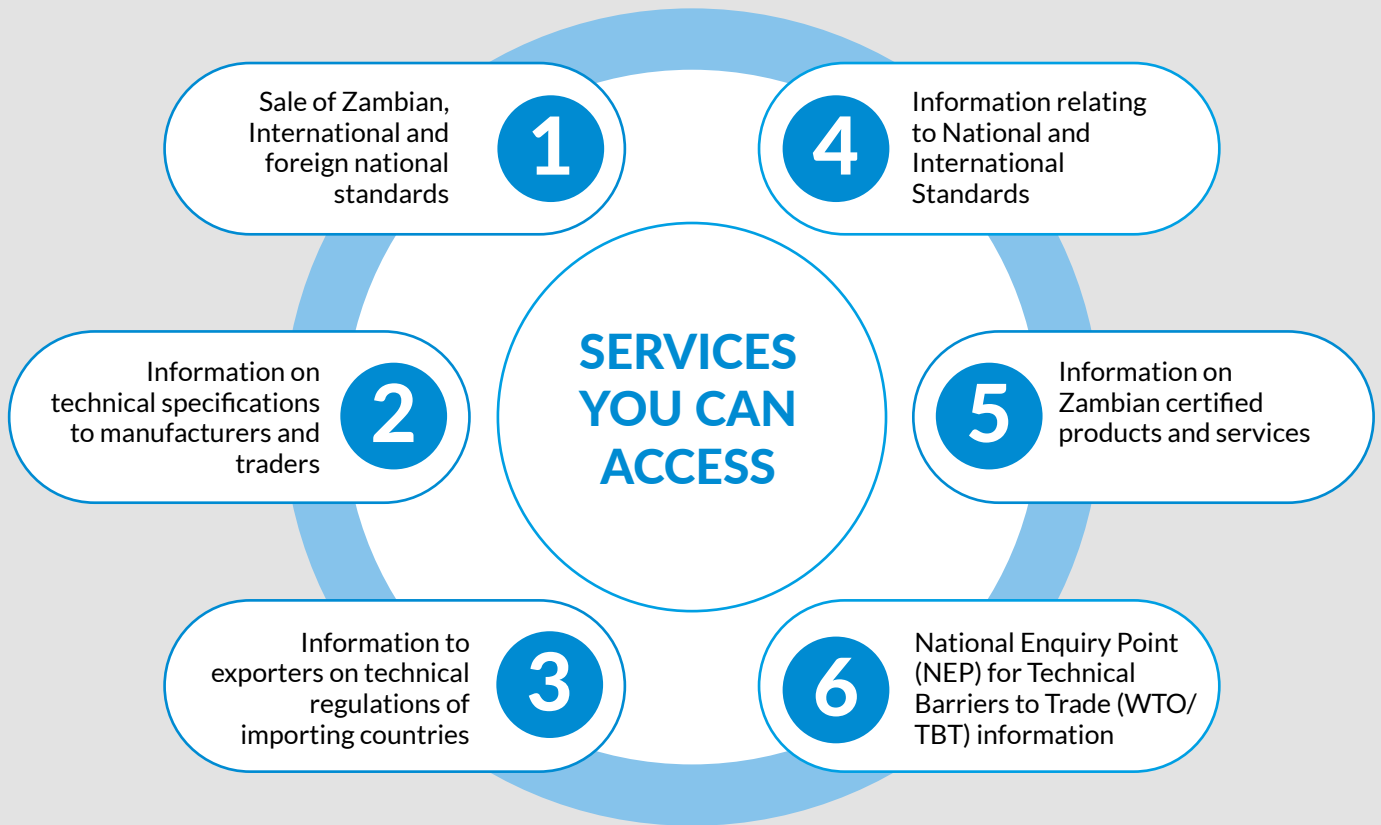


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# Solar Equipment Testing Laboratory Worth US\$ 100,000 Launched

By Lewis Mwila



Laboratory Analyst Lewis Mwila showing stakeholders a home solar panel during the launch of the laboratory

Access to clean, safe, and affordable energy remains a challenge for many African countries, especially rural communities. A most recent study by the [World Bank](#) shows that 789 million people live without electricity, and hundreds of millions live with insufficient or unreliable access to it. The statistics further show that only 43 percent of Zambia's population has access to electricity. With these statistics, efforts need to scale up to ensure access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy.

The rural electrification policy is one of the predominant policy actions designed to increase the well-being of the rural population together with access to clean water, improved health care, education, and economic development. Several strategies have been adopted to support these policies to help implement rural electrification. Prominent among them is the connection to the national or regional electrification grid. In situations where the grid is too far away (too costly), or demand for electrification outweighs access, then off-grid renewable systems become a more affordable option to rely upon.

In Zambia, like many parts of Africa, there has been an increase in the use and reliance on off-grid renewable

systems. With this increase comes an influx of solar products with a risk of substandard products being manufactured or imported into the country. To help address the risk of substandard products, the Africa Clean Energy Technical Assistance Facility (ACE TAF), funded by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), working closely with the Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS) and other strategic partners, embarked on a project to open a laboratory that would support the development of the off-grid solar market and catalyze a market-based approach for private-sector delivery of renewable energy electrification technologies, with a specific focus on high quality stand-alone solar products and systems.

On 20th April 2022, Zambia witnessed

the launch of the first-ever solar products testing laboratory under the Zambia Bureau of Standards. The laboratory, which is approximately worth One hundred thousand dollars (US\$ 100,000, equivalent to K1, 800,000), was officially handed over and opened by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry, Mrs. Chawe Chuulu, during a handover ceremony which was held at the National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research complex, where the facility is housed. The lab has been fully equipped and personnel trained to perform quality assurance testing of off-grid solar energy products according to IEC TS 62257-9-5:2018 and IEC TS 62257-9-8:2020. Some of the products that will be tested include Pico- solar products, solar home system kits, and accompanying appliances such as mobile phones, fans, torches, televisions, and radios. The effects typically include rechargeable batteries and solar modules with Direct Current system voltages not exceeding 35V and peak power ratings not exceeding 350W.

Shortly before the handover, the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Chuulu, thanked the sponsors for the support rendered through the acquisition of the equipment for the laboratory and capacity building for the staff. She said the facility would play a role in providing an evaluation for Standalone (off-grid) renewable energy products by providing quality assurance for the off-grid solar lighting systems while reducing the risk of substandard products and expansion of the quality of the off-grid solar market so that more people in the country can have access to quality reliable and clean electricity. She further shared that the Governments desire is to see the quality infrastructure institutions expand their capacity to serve the growing needs of the economy and ensure the provision of more quality assurance services in sectors such as energy, construction, chemicals, and engineering as they are essential enablers for the New Dawn Industrialization Agenda.



During the event, some partners shared how they envisioned the laboratory would help provide greater access to safe and affordable energy sources. The Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), through its Director, Mr. Steve Beel, was notable among the partners who spoke. He said, "The impact of energy access has a significant and direct impact on human and economic development powering homes so that children can do their homework safely so that women and girls can be safe through the night, so we can avoid the risk of fires that come from candles and kerosene lamps and supporting the establishment of small enterprises and income-generating businesses. Upholding the highest of standards for equipment is a vital part of ensuring that the growth of the solar energy market is sustainable and cost-effective. We cannot have adequate and well-functioning markets that deliver high-quality consumer products without the efforts of ZABS.

We look forward to seeing the laboratory strengthen their vital work in Zambia so that more Zambians, especially the less privileged those who could be most affected by substandard

products in this market, can benefit". His speech read in part.

Ms. Madalo Minofu, IFC Country Representative, expressed optimism that solar energy will play an increasingly vital role in helping countries develop modern, secure energy systems and meet the goals of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7. She said investments in off-grid solar solutions are essential to reducing fossil fuels and increasing access to energy in underserved rural communities in Zambia. "In a country like Zambia, where millions of people still have no access to energy, renewables like off-grid solar products could be the game-changer. Hence, the solar testing laboratory has been established to play a key role in improving the quality of off-grid solar energy products and support the development of Zambia's off-grid solar market". She noted.

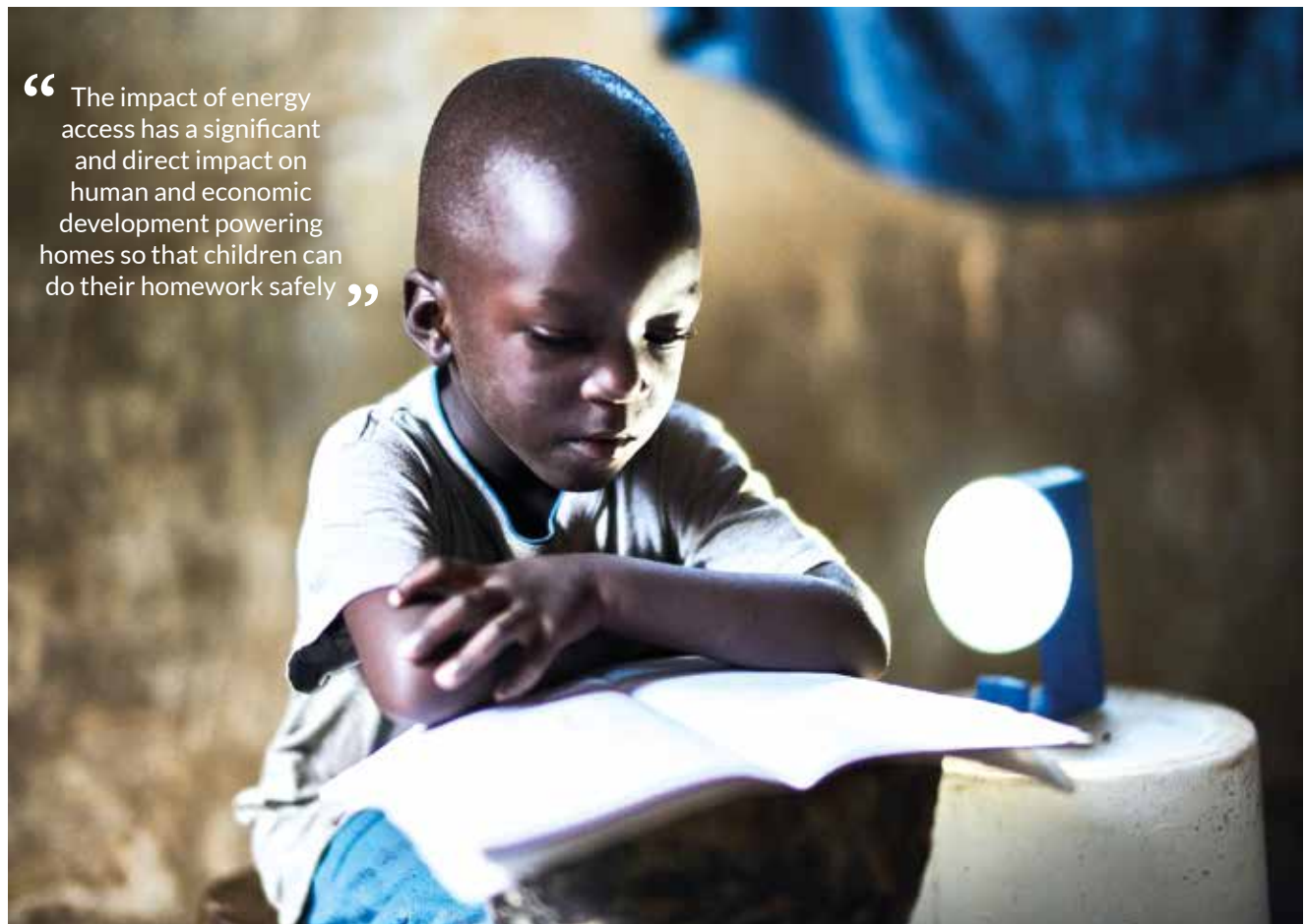
For ZABS, this laboratory is a milestone achieved. According to ZABS Acting Executive Director Nathan Sing'ambwa, the addition of this facility has not only expanded the Bureaus' testing capabilities but is expected to address the immediate need for enhanced

testing and quality checks for products on the market while increasing the services that the Bureau provides to support industry, and in particular the players in the energy sector.

The types of tests that can be conducted on off-grid solar energy products include:

- ✓ Product durability and workmanship tests
- ✓ Light output tests
- ✓ Battery performance tests
- ✓ Solar module tests
- ✓ Protection and performance tests
- ✓ Light output characteristics

Such partnerships have been instrumental in helping ZABS achieve its mission of promoting industry competitiveness and a quality culture. The laboratory is poised to contribute to the much-needed research in renewable energy.



“ The impact of energy access has a significant and direct impact on human and economic development powering homes so that children can do their homework safely ”

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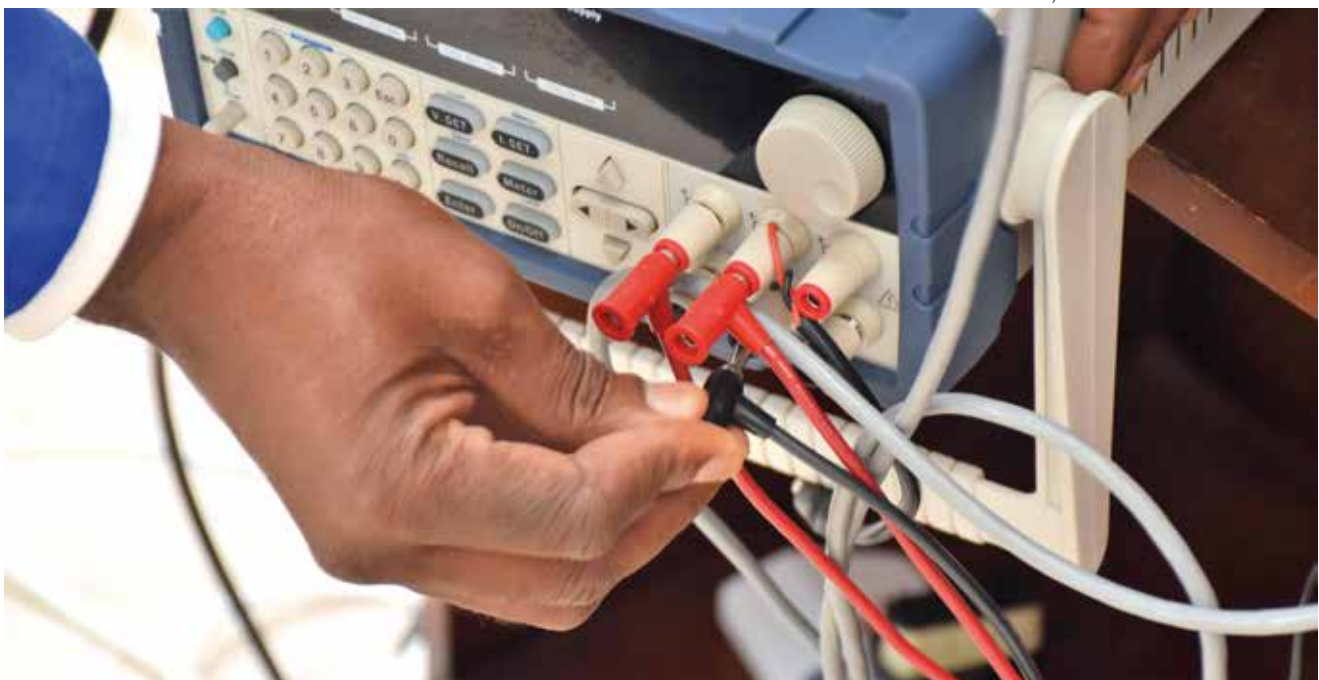
Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry Permanent Secretary Mrs. Chawe Chuulu (4th from left), with ZABS Management at staff at the launch of the Solar equipment testing laboratory



Foreign Commonwealth Development Office Director Mr. Steve Beel giving a speech during the launch of the solar equipment testing laboratory



International Finance Corporation Country Representative Ms. Madalo Minofu giving a speech during the launch of the Solar equipment testing laboratory



Tests being conducted in the Solar equipment laboratory





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# 3 Zambian companies recognized at SADC Quality Awards

By Nzali Chella



**T**he SADC Quality Awards Gala is usually a highlight that member states look forward to during the SADC Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) meetings. The awards ceremony is held every year on the sidelines of the SADC meetings and is hosted by a member state. During this event, we celebrate the achievements of companies or organizations contributing to quality advancement by implementing quality systems, procedures, and processes in line with local, regional, and international best practices and using quality advancement to support national and regional economic development. Recognition is given to the best company, product, exporter, and service of the year in Southern Africa. To be eligible to participate at the SADC level, a company or individual must have won the award at the national level. The competition is one of the ways in which businesses are evaluated and measured against international best practices.

Zambia has conducted the Quality Awards at the National level since 2015. The competition has grown since it was first introduced and is now co-hosted with the Zambia Association of Manufacturers (ZAM) with the support of the Zambia Agribusiness and Trade Project (ZATP).

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the last two years, including this year, the SADC structure meetings have been held virtually, including the announcement of the SADC Quality Award winners with companies unable to travel to receive their awards personally. This, however, takes nothing away from the honour and value of receiving such a prestigious award.

The achievement by 3 Zambian companies in the 2021 SADC Quality Awards competition cannot go unnoticed. Trade Kings Zambia Limited was awarded SADC Product of the Year for Boom Bubble Plus, Davis and Shirliff as first runners up under the SADC Service of the Year

category, and Dangote Cement was awarded a certificate of recognition under the SADC Exporter of the Year category. A deserving award for all the three companies as this demonstrates continuous improvement and the capacity of Zambian businesses to make a meaningful contribution within and beyond the region as long as they invest in quality systems that enhance the competitiveness of products and services.

In accepting their award, Jonathan Mainga, who is Davis & Shirliff's Managing Director, said being recognized for the SADC Service of the Year award is a validation of the company's work over the years as they seek to live their quality values. And Dangote Zambia Chief Executive Officer Vipul Agrawal pledged the company's commitment to manufacturing and exporting high-quality cement. He thanked SADC for its work and dedication to recognizing and appreciating organizations and individuals contributing to quality

advancement. In his acceptance speech, the General Manager for Trade Kings Group, Lux Subramanian, said the awards drive the critical objective to facilitate trade through harmonizing standards based on international standards. He said Trade Kings would continue to innovate, which is vital in growing a business in any environment.

As ZABS, we take pride and share in this achievement as it emphasizes our need to assist the industry and provide standardization and quality assurance services for increased competitiveness and sustained quality culture. The awards are one of the many initiatives to promote standardization and quality assurance.

## Quality Quote

**“ Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives. ”**

**William A. Foster**



# Here's a simple walk through on the procedure to be followed as clients submit **product samples for testing**

1

Inquiry is made to ascertain if the laboratory has capability to have sample tested

2

Get a quotation for testing of product

3

Make upfront payment

4

Samples are submitted. (number of samples to submit are dependent on sample type or as stated on the quotation)

5

Contract signing between client and ZABS for submitting sample and an agreed timeframe for results is generated

6

When results are ready ZABS contacts the client for collection of the report

7

Sample is kept for 90 days in case of any dispute or request for retest is made

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# ZABS seeks to help improve SME participation in trade Activities

By Nzali Chella



*Standards Development and Training Manager Belinda Kancheya responding to questions at the Women in Industry Conference*

**T**he Zambia Association of Manufacturers (ZAM) recently organized a Women in Industry Training and Conference, which we were privileged to attend as ZABS. The theme focused on positioning women in the industry for global leadership and impact. We had the opportunity to meet some of the most resilient and hardworking women entrepreneurs in different sectors. During this conference, our main focus was to promote SMEs' uptake and use of standards and quality assurance services, particularly those women-led. In so doing, better opportunities will be created for trade-related activities.

Belinda Kancheya, the Standards Development and Training Manager for ZABS, revealed during the meeting that ZABS had taken deliberate steps to help mentor SMEs to prepare them for high-value markets such as the Africa Continental Free Trade Area. She said one of the ways that women-led businesses could be assisted to achieve market success is through increasing their uptake and use of standards and conformity assessment services such as testing and certification.

With the support of partners such as the Zambia Agribusiness and Trade Project (ZATP), ZABS has been making headways in mentoring SMEs, of which the majority are women. Specific needs are always identified, which helps to align the support towards meeting those identified needs. The mentorships help improve their processes, increase efficiency and enhance their preparedness for the market. In the first half of 2022, some of the needs identified include non-adherence to



*There are many benefits that SMEs can derive from standardization, such as enhanced performance and competitiveness and overcoming trade obstacles...*

good manufacturing practices and a lack of standard operating procedures for the business. In response to this, training was conducted for over 10 companies on how to implement Good Manufacturing practices (GMP) and develop standard operating procedures. Good Manufacturing Practices is a standard that defines the requirements to enhance small business performance through continual improvement and assurance of quality, environment, and occupational safety and health requirements.

There are many benefits that SMEs can derive from standardization, such as enhanced performance and competitiveness and overcoming trade obstacles which eventually lead to market linkages. It is critical to continue making available information that speaks to the role and benefits of standardization so that SMEs can be more aware of the need to use standards to grow and remain competitive.

Thankfully, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between ZAM and ZABS has played a vital role in bridging the access to information gap on how businesses can fully benefit from standardization.

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# THE ROLE OF STANDARDISATION IN PROMOTING AFRICAN PHARMACEUTICALS AND MEDICAL DEVICES INDUSTRIES IN THE LIGHT OF COVID-19 AND FUTURE PANDEMICS

By Rita Martha Chishala



**T**he COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest global health challenge mankind is currently facing. It has put a strain on all aspects of human life, resulting in physical, social, mental and economic adversity. Africa imports about 95% of its medicines. Many of the countries that Africa has been dependent on have been largely affected by COVID-19 thus limited exports due to lockdown measures and low productivity. While this has put a leaden strain on many African countries, it has presented an opportunity for the African Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Industries to take the lead in providing the needed medicines, vaccines and medical products to combat

COVID-19, and help the African continent be better prepared for future pandemics. Thus, standardization as well as the harmonisation of standards for pharmaceutical products and medical devices in Africa is cardinal. This will not only build resilience against pandemics like COVID-19, but also boost African economies that have been hit to their core by the current pandemic.

placed a huge setback in local production. Due to lack of uniform standards, Africa continues to be plagued by production of poor quality and counterfeit medicines and medical products. Another hurdle is high operating costs. The estimated cost of setting up a pharmaceutical manufacturing company is 2.80 crore which is about 700,000 US Dollars (pharmafranchisehelp.com, 2017). Other barriers encompass weak domestic and international supply chain links, industry fragmentation and limited resources in research.

To address the problems facing pharmaceutical industries in Africa, strategies have been developed to address these problems. These strategic plans include; increased specialist education, political commitment, regulations and investment. The African continent is making huge progress in training more specialists. For instance, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) introduced the Industrial Pharmacy Advanced Training (IPAT) aimed at offering training in drug development, manufacturing as well as regulatory and quality compliance issues. More than 100 participants from 7 countries have successfully completed this programme as of January 2022. The development and alignment of policies and legislation around local production is another key strategic plan. This has been made possible because of political commitment and thought leadership at top level. Ethiopia, for instance, has

The African continent bears a divergent burden of poverty and disease which has been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Reducing the effects of the pandemic on African Economies requires a multifaceted approach and collaboration from all sectors. Investment in science and technology has the potential of building the African economy. Thus, African countries must work at creating science, technology and innovation policies to facilitate regulation and investment. Concurrently, Governments must work on creating an environment that will not only promote discoveries in science and technology but also allow innovations to enter the marketplace promptly. This is imperative to unlocking Africa's potential and accelerating economic growth. Building a healthy and productive economy requires healthy and productive people, which vaccines help to support. While good progress is being made in this regard, there is still a large void in Africa's vaccination coverage needed to be filled. Investment in the pharmaceutical sector has the potential to fill the void and this will support local incomes and jobs, enhance intra-African trade, build resilient healthcare systems and improve African economies.

African pharmaceutical and medical devices industries face many barriers which hinder local production. These barriers cover a wide variety of areas including research and development, regulatory and commercial barriers to mention a few. One specific barrier is inadequate expertise and infrastructure. Africa has a shortage of specialists to conduct clinical research and qualified workforce in the field of industrial pharmacy which is among the key factors constraining the growth and development of local pharmaceutical industries. The African continent has continued to rely on the colonial development of infrastructure which has heavily limited innovation. Poor regulation and production of quality standards is another barrier that has



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developed a National Strategy and Plan of Action for Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Development whose objective is to speed up local African pharmaceutical production (WHO Africa, 2021). Regulatory policies are a crucial step to guarantee the production of high quality medicines and medical supplies across all African borders. This strengthens mechanisms for enforcing regulations to ensure compliance to the set standards for manufacture, distribution, exportation and importation, sale and use of medicines and allied substances.

The implementation of standards has been crucial in creating solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic and better preparedness for future pandemics. Standards establish production of quality and safe products to counterbalance increasing levels of counterfeit products. Many African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) member states have submitted to their Central Secretariat their published standards on COVID-19

interventions. Additionally, African National Standards Bodies (NSBs) have taken the lead role to offer, free of charge, the needed standards and guidelines for the manufacture, testing and certification of Personal Preventive Equipment such as face masks, sanitisers, medical gloves and clinical electrical thermometers (ARSO, 2020). These steps build resilience to combat the current and future pandemics.

In the context of pharmaceuticals and medical devices, standards can be viewed broadly as a consensus between agents to do certain key activities according to agreed-upon rules (Nickerson and Muehlen, 2006). Standards ensure the quality and purity of pharmaceutical products and they are used in the design, production and servicing of medical devices. Now more than ever, there is an increased need for standardisation and the harmonization of standards in Africa. Rising to the need, the International Trade Finance Corporation in partnership with Afreximbank, BADEA and ARSO

have launched an initiative called the Harmonisation of Standards for Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices in Africa. This is aimed at developing common standards to guide production, procurement, pricing, quality and safety compliance, innovation and international accreditation.

Lao-tzu uttered the common saying “the journey of a thousand miles always begins with one determined and purposeful step”. The journey to sustainable local production and access to quality and effective medicines, vaccines and medical products may seem to be long and too far-flung. However, the step to promote standardization and harmonization of standards is a driving step in raising the overall standards of healthcare as well as enhancing intra-African and international trade and investment.

The Author is a 3rd year Pharmacy student at the University of Zambia and winner of the 9th National Essay Writing competition.

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# Businesses need to develop a continuous improvement culture

By Nzali Chella

Certification in management system standards provides a model which companies of all types and sizes can use to build business excellence. It outlines a framework for improving quality and enhancing efficiency for any organization looking to provide products and services that consistently meet the needs and expectations of customers and other relevant interested parties in the most efficient manner. The Zambia Bureau of Standards is a service provider in training and certification in management system standards. We are eager to see more companies in the public and private sector in Zambia implement the Quality Management System standard (ISO 9001) and attain certification

as it demonstrates commitment to quality and continuous improvement of products and services. Businesses need to develop a continuous improvement culture to eliminate substandard products and services and enhance customer satisfaction.

We are seeing a growing trend where Government and private organizations will require a supplier to be ISO 9001 certified before they can engage in any business activity with them, but also it is becoming a necessity in this competitive environment for a business to go over and above to set themselves apart from competitors. Certification in ISO 9001 provides the best option for any business seeking to be set apart.

To date, 22 companies in Zambia have implemented ISO 9001 and have been certified to this standard. Companies in the mining, construction, packaging, telecoms and engineering sectors have attained certification which any organization of any kind and size can do as well. Banks, insurance companies, health institutions, construction companies, Government ministries and Agencies should come on board for training and certification in ISO 9001 as implementing this standard will help you as an organization to focus on the important areas of your business and improve efficiency as you meet your overall objectives. It will show how relentless you are as a business on creating leading products and services.

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# Developing A Learning Culture

By Daniwe Bwanga

The Zambia Institute of Human Resource Management (HRM) Regional Summit and Annual General Meeting, held at Avani Hotel in Livingstone, was a key knowledge interface for all HR practitioners in Zambia and the region. The event was packed with valuable lessons about matters affecting human capital, such as Covid-19, technological changes, and flexible work schedules. Interacting with other practitioners means that we can learn and share best practices to enhance our human resource management role. During the event, we shared what had worked best as we navigated the often difficult and uncertain period of the Covid 19 pandemic. One of the key takeaways from the interface was that organizations need new flexibility, which could only be brought about by having a growth mindset.

We can all agree that Covid 19 forced us to work in ways we had never thought possible. Almost overnight, we had to make decisions for employees to work from home, meetings had to move to virtual spaces, payments went utterly electronic, and audits/training went online. We had to learn stricter hygiene measures and minimize physical interactions internally and with stakeholders. Adapting to all these changes is a testament to the resilient spirit of ZABS.

Hence, the knowledge exchange at the summit could not have come at a better time. The speakers' theme aligned with learning new skills to ensure organizations' preparedness for an ever-changing and challenging environment. As practitioners, we were challenged to embrace a learning attitude, which is a fertile ground for developing a growth mindset.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, learning is the acquisition of knowledge and skills through study, experience, or being taught. One can learn through experience or class lessons. Psychologists often define learning as a relatively permanent change in behavior due to experience. The psychology of learning focuses on various topics related to how people learn and interact with their environments. From a Human resource management perspective, training, development, and education all involve learning. However, employees should focus on learning that enables them to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to their (future)

function. This way, learning creates new business capabilities.

Organizations that adopt a learning culture are likely to reap several benefits. For example, learning improves responses to disruption; it leads to the acquisition of new skills, resulting in the ability to respond to rapidly changing and challenging times quickly. A learning culture converts employee relations from commercial to growth partnerships. The investment in staff training by the organization and employee personal development increases the quality of the service delivered by staff, thereby transforming the relationship from a transactional one to growth partnerships for the betterment of the organization. Furthermore, learning fosters professional growth and development opportunities, contributing to employee satisfaction and motivation.

During the summit, all HR practitioners were challenged to self-reflect to see whether they were consistently learning to enhance their relevance in organizations and positively walking the talk. The reason was that you cannot advocate for a learning culture you have not personally adopted in your behavior and actions. Organizations with strong learning cultures are likely to have innovators capable of providing new solutions in challenging environments.

At an organizational level, the Bureau has a training policy that supports human resource development to effectively and efficiently manage and develop employees to realize the

institution's mission. The training policy aims to prepare employees to adapt to changes and ensure that appropriate training is available to enable individual employees to attain satisfactory levels of competence. In addition, the policy seeks to help improve the performance of employees at all levels through appropriate training. This is done through on-the-job training, attachments, sponsored short/long training programmes, seminars, or workshops.

At an individual level, employees can invest in their personal development through self-sponsored long-term or short-term training. Most training institutions offer work-friendly online or blended programs, meaning the learning can take place while attending to work. The internet has made it easy to acquire knowledge in any field. The key is finding authentic and relevant providers such as LinkedIn Learning etc. Employees can also take an interest in continuous professional development (CPD) courses pertinent to their field. CPD ensures that you maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills you need to deliver a professional service to your customers, clients, and the community. CPD ensures that you and your knowledge stay relevant and up to date. You are more aware of the changing trends and directions in your profession.

In conclusion, adopting a learning culture is a strategic tool for organizations that employees can utilize to improve their skills for their current and future roles. Both the organization and employees own a strong learning culture. It is not just the responsibility of human resources alone; learning is essential to the organization's success. As ZABS sets to implement its new strategic plan for 2022 – 2026, we will endeavor to adopt a strong learning culture through the alignment of values, processes, and practices that create the conditions for employees to naturally learn, grow and evolve through the dynamic environment which we operate in.

## TRAINING CALENDAR - JULY TO DECEMBER 2022

COURSE	DAYS	FEES	VENUE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TRAININGS</b>									
<b>QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</b>									
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 9001:2015 requirements Training	4	K4,500	Lusaka	12 - 15					
ISO 9001:2015 Internal Audit Training	3	K4,000	Lusaka	27 - 29					
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 9001:2015 requirements Training	4	K4,500	Kitwe		9 - 12				
ISO 9001:2015 Internal Audit Training	3	K4,000	Kitwe		29 - 31				
<b>OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</b>									
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 45001:2018 requirements Training	4	K4,500	Lusaka			6 - 9			
ISO 45001:2018 Internal Audit Training	3	K4,000	Lusaka			28 - 30			
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 45001:2018 requirements Training	4	K4,500	Kitwe				4 - 7		
ISO 45001:2018 Internal Auditor	3	K4,000	Kitwe				24 - 26		
<b>FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</b>									
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 22000:2018 requirements Training	4	K4,500	Lusaka	12 - 15					
ISO 22000:2018 Internal Audit Training	3	K4,000	Lusaka	27 - 29					
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 22000:2018 requirements Training	4	K4,500	Kitwe		9 - 12				
ISO 22000:2018 Internal Auditor	3	K4,000	Kitwe		29 - 31				
HACCP Training (Food Safety)	3	K4,000	Lusaka					8 - 9	
HACCP Training (Food Safety)	3	K4,000	Kitwe				4 - 7		
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</b>									
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 14001:2015 requirements Training	4	K4,500	Lusaka					1 - 4	
ISO 14001:2015 Internal Audit Training	3	K4,000	Lusaka					28 - 30	
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 14001:2015 requirements Training	4	K4,500	Kitwe				4 - 7		
ISO 14001:2015 Internal Auditor	3	K4,000	Kitwe				24 - 26		
<b>BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</b>									
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 22301:2019 requirements Training	4	K4,000	Virtual			13 - 16			
Understanding and Implementation of the ISO 22301:2019 requirements Training	4	K4,000	Virtual						6 - 9
<b>SME RELATED TRAININGS</b>									
SME Training - Good Manufacturing and Good Hygiene Practices and other related product Standards training		K350.00 per training/ Half day	Lusaka			28 - 30		28 - 30	
SME Training - Good Manufacturing and Good Hygiene Practices and other related product Standards training		K350.00 per training/ Half day	Kitwe		9 - 12		24 - 26		

1. All our courses are conducted in English.
2. Management Systems (ISO) course fees is subject to a discount of 50% for registered SME's.
3. If the candidate is taking the courses concurrently e.g. from understanding to implementation or understanding to internal Auditor course a discount of 20% shall be awarded.
4. These course will be available virtually on the same date and time frames stipulated in this calendar

**\*ALL COURSES ARE AVAILABLE TO CORPORATE BODIES WITH A MINIMUM OF 5 PARTICIPANTS FOR TAILOR MADE IN-HOUSE TRAINING.**





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