

OECD Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Molecular Genetic Testing

By Dr Notende Mgudlwa

Manager: Special Projects

SANAS would like to bring to the attention of laboratories conducting **Molecular Genetic Testing** that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has published guidelines for quality assurance in this field.

The publishing of the guidelines follows research done in 18 OECD member countries which revealed inconsistencies between countries regarding conformity assessment procedures in laboratories doing molecular genetic testing, particularly involving requirements that need to be met to ensure accurate results; reporting of results for clinical application and competence of laboratory personnel.



Dr Notende Mgudlwa

These inconsistencies led to the draft and adoption of guidelines, comprising of Principles and Best Practices in this field of activity. The principles are policy recommendations aimed at governments and other regulators, whilst the best practices provide guidance to providers of molecular genetic testing in implementing the policies.

The OECD has recommended that all its member countries implement the guidelines and report on progress by 2011. Non-member countries, like South Africa have also been invited to do the same.

Research laboratories and all other medical laboratories offering molecular genetic testing are encouraged to obtain additional information and electronic versions of the guidelines from the OECD website: www.oecd.org/sti/biotechnology/qualityassurance

Our next issue of Communiqué will have an in-depth article covering this issue.

Help Eliminate Non-Tariff Barriers within the SADC Region

By Dr Notende Mgudlwa

Manager: Special Projects

In an effort to reduce non-tariff barriers to trade (NTBs) in the region, SADC Ministers of Trade and Industry are urging traders to report such NTBs to the SADC Secretariat.

The process to be followed in South Africa is that traders in both the public and private sectors who experience NTBs within the SADC need to complete a notification form. Depending on which sector one belongs, the form needs to be forwarded to either the public sector focal point (the dti), or the private sector focal point Business Unity South Africa (BUSA). From there, the reports will be forwarded to the SADC national focal point, who will notify the country putting the barrier. The two countries will then engage in bilateral consultations that should lead to the removal of the barrier.

For government, the focal point at the Department of Trade and Industry is:

