



SAIW and SAIW Certification

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Having just returned from the 76th IIW Annual Assembly and Conference in Singapore, I am pleased to be able to report some very good news for the SAIW and for South Africans with IIW Welding Inspector qualifications.

For several years now, we have been negotiating with the IIW for the supply of South African-manufactured plastic weld replica samples for use in the IIW's International Welding Inspection Personnel (IWIP) programme. These harmonised replica samples, which are copies of real metal samples, are important in ensuring that consistent standards are upheld for training being delivered by IIW Authorised Training Bodies (ATBs), and examinations conducted by IIW Authorised National Bodies (ANBs).

We have already dispatched weld training samples to some 15 IIW ATBs delivering training around the world, and at this year's IIW Annual Assembly, it was agreed that the examinations for all IWIP qualifications will use the test samples exclusively, with SAIW being responsible for supplying examination sample sets to all ANBs.

The agreement between the IIW and the SAIW has now been signed for the supply of these samples and their use will become mandatory from January 2024. This is an ongoing long-term contract, so all the 41 current and any new ANBs that want to offer the IWIP will have to buy their examination samples from us. While bringing in some additional income, this is an important statement about the credibility of our IIW programmes and the contributions we have made over the years in developing courses and raising the global status of SAIW-trained Welding Inspectors and other personnel.

A path has also been identified and agreed for the introduction of a Certification Scheme for IIW Welding Inspectors. This has been an ongoing topic for many years and it will now happen through ISO 17024, the international standard for conformity assessment for bodies operating certification programmes for personnel.

The IIW will start the process through Accredia, the Italian accreditation body, which is the equivalent of SANAS, South Africa's system. The IIW, through the Italian Welding Institute (IIS), will establish the IIW Certified Inspector Programme and get the scheme accredited by Accredia. That opens the path for the scheme to be recognised by all national accreditation bodies, so in South Africa, SANAS will recognise the scheme and this will allow the SAIW to begin offering certification for appropriately competent welding inspectors.

Fabrication companies and individual welding inspectors have a lot to gain: companies because certified personnel are already vetted in terms of the skills they can offer; and for welding inspectors, IIW Certification will offer enhanced global credibility and a licence to work almost anywhere in the world.

In terms of upcoming events, I would like to draw your attention to the SAISI Steel Summit, with SAIW and Sassda as contributors. This will take place at Emperors Palace on Wednesday, August 30. Also, the next TWF Africa Conference is to be held in Lagos, Nigeria in March 2024. The call for papers has now been sent out and I urge our academics and researchers to submit and attend.

For the first time since 2019, we will again be hosting our Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony. It is a long time since we last recognised the key people, companies and students in the welding industry and we have missed it. We will be recognising the Best ISO 3834 Company, the Best Welding Coordinator, the Best Welding Inspection and NDT Students. We will be presenting our Gold Medal Award, along with Fellowships and Life Memberships for loyal service over the years from two outstanding people.

It will be most pleasing to meet, greet and reconnect with our welding colleagues, to celebrate our successes and share our hopes. I look forward to seeing you at the Indaba Hotel on October 19.

John Tarboton