



SAIW's rigorous and reinvigorated ISO 3834 offering

African Fusion talks to SAIW executive director, John Tarboton, and Herman Potgieter, the chief executive officer of SAIW Certification, about the Institute's ISO 3834 Welding Manufacturer Certification Scheme, and why the SAIW is the only service provider worth considering by companies seeking to participate responsibly and competitively in the African and South African welding industries.

As SAIW, we go to ISO 3834 companies with the aim of creating long-term partnerships, first to achieve the initial ISO 3834 certification, but then to maintain that certification while helping companies to achieve ever better weld quality and to become more competitive in the international arena," begins Tarboton.

"On issuing an ISO 3834 Certificate as part of the SAIW Welding Manufacturer Certification Scheme, we invite that company to enter into a partnership with the SAIW so that, together, we can raise welding quality, productivity and safety standards and steadily move our welding industry towards international benchmarks," he adds.

An investment in ISO 3834 by a welding manufacturer, believes Tarboton, is the same as an investment in the Institute by an SAIW Member, in that the Institute is accessible to any certified company or SAIW Member for support, advice and help so that its welding related endeavours can succeed.

"Compared to other service providers, the big advantage we have at SAIW is that we have people who have been steeped in the local welding industry. Our three audi-

tors, Herman Potgieter, Renier Mostert and Riaan Loots are all South Africa welding industry experts with more than 80 years cumulative experience in the fabrication industry. They are not simply trained auditors. They know how the industry works, what is possible and what is not. They are not going to ask to see the label from a pack of electrodes used six months ago to tick the 'traceability' box," Tarboton tells *African Fusion*.

Herman Potgieter continues: "ISO 3834 is a welding management system and welding is a competency. From the very start, everything has to be done properly with set checks and balances throughout the manufacturing process and this matters most on the shop floor," he says. "You have to be able to manage the detail of every weld at shop floor level to produce safety critical products such as pressure vessels with good quality welds. You cannot do it simply by checking documentation from the safety of an admin office," he advises.

"This is SAIW's key strength. Our auditors have the shop floor experience to understand what is important and how to best manage and control these things at this fundamental level," he says.

In addition, the SAIW is the only ISO 3834 service provider in South Africa that has a local industry representative body to approve ISO 3834 company certifications. "Other certification bodies have to use overseas representatives, who don't necessarily know much about the local welding environment. We strive to do right by South African industry as a whole and that means seeking general approval from industry at large," explains Tarboton.

Potgieter elaborates: "The ANBCC: (Authorised Nominated Body for Company Certifications) is appointed to oversee our work, so when we go out to audit a company, we can't simply issue a certificate. The ANBCC board has to approve every company certification based on our recommendations. And our board members are truly representative of South African industry, they are not overseas imports. They have local knowledge and can quickly assess a recommendation and validate it."

SAIW's ISO 3834 ANBCC board consists of twelve qualified people, each chosen for the knowledge and experience they can offer the process. "These people have first-hand experience of the South African fabrication industry and, should something go wrong at a certified company, they are able to assess the situation quickly and respond appropriately," Potgieter notes, adding that this makes the standards, oversight and quality assurance of every ISO 3834 certification much more robust.

In reinvigorating the Manufacturer Certification Scheme, Tarboton says that company certification now comes coupled with everything else the SAIW offers. "As soon as a company is certified according to our scheme, it becomes eligible for free SAIW Membership and all of the associated benefits and discounts: free seminars, access to our Laboratory, Technical, NDT and Training services and a lot more."

He adds that, to make it more affordable for fabricators to adopt the scheme, several payment options are being introduced: "Once audit and certification fees have been paid, we are now offering a subscription-based service, where companies pay a monthly fee to maintain their certifications and SAIW membership. This fee covers all future audits and it includes full SAIW Company Membership for certified fabricators.

As well as securing access to the SAIW, this payment options makes ISO 3834 an ongoing expense, which, according to Tarboton, is often preferred by small and

large companies because it makes their planning and cashflow easier to manage.

"We also offer the option to pay for initial and repeat audit and certification expenses over a three month period. No matter what payment option is adopted, however, SAIW involvement and support is available at any time," Tarboton assures.

SAIW is currently developing a one day hybrid seminar/webinar to encourage and enable interested fabricators to adopt ISO 3834 Certification and, if feasible, to give them the opportunity to see the SAIW's state-of-the-art facilities for themselves. "This will be offered free to those interested in the process of adopting ISO 3834 Certification.

"As a certification body, we cannot go into a company and 'fix' the problems they have. What we can do, however, is use our considerable experience to highlight areas of focus for preparing for certification. In our ISO 3834 webinar, we will run through some of the common implementation difficulties and give guidance on all 14 key elements of ISO 3834.

"Some companies just want certification to win a tender and deliver on a job, and that is the limit to the benefit they see. Our initial surveys of certified companies, however, have been exceptionally positive, with many reporting improved productivity and quality. This goes a long way beyond simply getting the next job," suggests Tarboton. "Among all of the certified companies we have spoken to, we have never heard anything negative about our ISO 3834 offering, and we now have over 300 certified companies," he adds.

"Instead of viewing ISO 3834 as a license to tender for work from the likes of Eskom and Sasol, we have to get to the point where our fabricators can rub shoulders with international competitors. This is particularly important for doing work across Africa, where competition is going to be fierce," Potgieter adds.

As well as offering independent verification of compliance to ISO 3834 by the world's leading authority on welding, through the SAIW/IIW Manufacturer Certification Scheme, SAIW is also accredited locally to SANAS 17021: Quality Systems for Company Certifications; and SANAS is a recognised member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). "This means that we have authorisation to certify welding fabricators from any country in Africa and these certifications are internationally recognised.

"So any fabricator certified by SAIW to ISO 3834 can tender for welding-related projects requiring company certification anywhere in the world. This is huge for African Industrialisation!" he exclaims.

In addition, the Pressure Equipment Regulation and SANS 347 specify ISO 3834 as a requirements for any vessel where welding is the dominant construction method used.

"At the heart of our offering is a commitment to helping the companies we certify to succeed. As the leading technical institution on the continent dedicated to furthering standards in welding-fabrication and related technologies, we are here to assist all of our partners, members and certified companies.

"The SAIW/IIW ISO 3834 Manufacturer Certification Scheme is already a huge



High integrity welding taking place at Necsa Nuclear Manufacturing: an SAIW Member; an ISO 3834-certified company under SAIW's Welding Company Certification Scheme; and the only ASME III nuclear-accredited facility in sub-Saharan Africa.

success, and we haven't yet started to spread it to the local mining industry or into the African countries North of our borders," Tarboton concludes. ■

Comments from certified companies

As a company, we have greatly benefitted from being an ISO 3834 accredited entity. The systems and procedures that are in place assist in ensuring that our day-to-day manufacturing operation is conducted in an almost flawless manner. This has also hugely improved our welding processes and the control thereof. We are fully supportive of ISO 3834 Certification.

ISO 3834 is all about the welding process, which is the core function of any fabrication, be it in a shop or in the field. It is a hands on control system that, if done correctly, will benefit any company. The system is not just procedures written into a file that is lying in someone's office. The important part is that it is run by people that know how welding works and are involved in the process of welding.

Mobicred payment options introduced for SAIW training

A student-centric, flexible approach is available for the payment of SAIW courses. The SAIW now offers long-term payment options via the online revolving credit service Mobicred.

Students will be first be required to register and apply for a particular course on the SAIW Student Management System on the SAIW website. This will be followed by an application checking procedure to confirm the acceptance requirements.

Students will then be emailed a quotation with a choice of payment options that include an immediate EFT or credit card payment; or a longer term Mobicred instalment plan.

The Mobicred plan means that, instead of having to save up R47 520, for example, to attend a Level 1 Inspectors Course, students can opt to do the first module, which costs R11 880, by splitting this payment into budget friendly instalments over a six month, one- or two-year period. The student will be registered to attend the first module as soon as the first instalment is paid.

Future modules or further courses can then be funded in the same way, keeping the training costs more easily manageable.

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In an initial survey by SAIW Certification of its ISO 3834 accredited companies, 75% of respondents rated their overall ISO 3834 satisfaction with SAIW as World Class, while a total of over 95% rated their satisfaction as exceeding expectations.