Testing/approval requirements for electrical products in South Africa – Quo vadis?

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Concerning EMC, it is understood that the following developments are now in process:

- SABS is not accepting applications for Certificate of Conformity (CoC) for EMC any longer.
- DTI is working on a new regulatory scheme to transfer SABS’ issuing of EMC CoC into either NRCS or ICASA, but it will take some time for a new scheme to be established in a new organization.
- Local EMC tests in South Africa are under discussion as part of the new scheme. It is, however, unlikely to go through due to present limited local capacity for such testing. It would be a major issue for the involved national/regional industry if one should decide that EMC testing by local labs is required.
- Until a new scheme is publicly announced by DTI, no South African body is issuing EMC CoCs. However, LoA (Letter of Approval) issued by NRCS for electrical safety and also for energy efficiency is still needed for most types of electrical/electronic products.
- In addition to verifying electrical safety compliance, EMC compliance must be confirmed before issuing an LoA by NRCS. The compliance may be documented by a test report from labs accredited by an ILAC member body, or by a CB Test Certificate/Report to the applicable EMC standards.
- The EMC requirements are specified in an ICASA General Notice 46-2010 (‘Regulations in Respect of Technical Standards for Electronic Communication Equipment’), which applies to electrical equipment in general, i.e. not only to electronic equipment with communication features as the title seems to indicate.

The lead time for obtaining LoAs is still experienced by exporters to be extremely long, but is according to NRCS being gradually improved.

In addition, some exporters of IT-equipment to South Africa have recently experienced that NRCS is now requiring testing to include the latest Amendment 2 to the standard IEC 60950-1, and which is highly unusual in other countries where Amendment 1 is still well accepted.

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