



## European Union supports a learning nation

During 2004, the European Union (EU) continued to be the main international donor partner for SAQA. The SAQA-European Union project remained integral to the delivery of the SAQA's key objectives – a national standards setting system, a national quality assurance system and an NQF information management system, the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD). Therefore, the infrastructure, systems, and personnel support provided under the project underpins the many achievements reflected in this report.

The SAQA-EU project, through which €14 million Euro has been channelled to the development and implementation of the NQF, has now completed its sixth year of operation. The period under review was somewhat marred by continued uncertainty in the external NQF environment and this situation has inevitably impacted on the project. What therefore could have been reasonably expected to be a year of consolidation in the project life cycle, with insights for future developments from the NQF Impact Study, was instead a year of hesitation. The achievements of the project were temporarily eclipsed by the ongoing political ambiguity and sometimes wavering support for the NQF as originally conceived. Despite the difficulties encountered, the project delivered on its results through careful and responsive management and retained its commitment to the NQF objectives.

The SAQA-EU Project Work plan for 2004 maintained financial support for project staffing, and outlined key activities for each of SAQA's six directorates. A number of project successes were noted and are listed below. Some of these were of national significance while others were of immediate benefit to the organisation and ultimately to the building of a learning nation through the NQF.

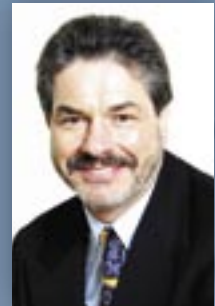
- Progress towards meeting the overall project objective of sustainability was marked by an increase in government budgetary support for SAQA operations;
- the release of the *NQF Impact Study Report Cycle 1* and the implementation of Cycle 2 of the Impact Study provide an objective research base to inform future NQF developments;
- the release of the NLRD publication *Trends in Public Higher Education in South Africa 1992 to 2001*, the first comprehensive publication on South African graduate trends;
- the successful implementation of an organisation-wide staff training programme which covered: fraud prevention, management of performance appraisal, organisational change and change management;
- provision of targeted support to small-, medium- and micro enterprise (SMME) providers to assist with understanding of accreditation requirements;
- implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system for the National Standards Bodies (NSBs);
- the upgrade of information technology infrastructure; and
- the external interim financial and compliance audit of the project covering the period from the project start-up to December 2003 was undertaken. This audit is of particular importance to the project and SAQA, as meeting specific donor requirements underlies all funding agreements. The final project audit is scheduled for later in 2005.

A number of other initiatives were commenced during the period of reporting, including the development of a stakeholder satisfaction index (SSI), branding of SAQA and the introduction of IT systems management software. It is expected that these projects will be completed during the next financial year prior to project closure on 30 June 2005.

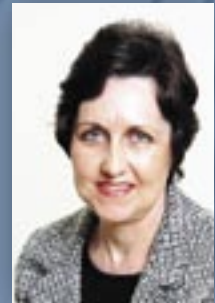
The NQF as an innovative education and training systems development initiative of national importance has significantly contributed to the building of a South African learning nation. The growing worldwide recognition of the value and need for qualifications frameworks is evidence that the SAQA-EU project continues to be a partnership at the forefront of education and training development. The project looks forward to a positive and productive final evaluation early in the new financial year.



*HE Mr M Lake -  
EU Ambassador to SA*



*Mr A Munday – Second  
Secretary: Development,  
EC Delegation to SA*



*Dr B Kramer – Education  
and Training,  
Project Manager,  
EC Delegation to SA*



*Ms H Williams –  
EU Project Manager*

## Activities funded by the EU from 2000-2005

Launch of the EU Project 15 May 2000



*M Nkomo (left), Minister Asmal, HE M Laidler and the Rector of Alexandra Technical College*

ETQA Accreditation Dinner 15 August 2001



*M Nkomo (left), D Hamilton, Minister Asmal and Minister Mdladlana*

NSB Certification Event Second Cycle 10 October 2001



*Back row: JE Jordaan, Manyaka, A Botha, C Swepu and guest  
Front row: D Mphuthing, M Matlawe, guest, Thamsanqa, B Gcabashe, J Madiba, S Steenekamp and M Mdukula*

Faranani 19 July 2002



*Standing: J Kevy (left), V Penxa, R Adaye, Y Shapiro, E Mashego  
Seated: R Heyns, B Mthethwa and P Khoza*

SAQA participated at the WSSD by exhibiting at the EU stand 27 August 2002



*S Isaacs and school children*

Chairperson's Lecture 9 April 2003



*J Lopez (left), J Reddy, C Pearce and B Maja*

Renovations to 1067 Arcadia Street, January – May 2003



NSB Committee Meeting 13 July 2004



*K Mockler (left), J Samuels, S Steenekamp, D Mphuthing (standing), A Oberholzer and A Heyns*

## Canadian International Development Agency supports a learning nation

In the third year of its current project (2002-2006) to support SAQA in overseeing the implementation of the NQF, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has continued to fund the development of SAQA's *NQF Support Link* initiative.

The *NQF Support Link* is a major product of the education and training portfolio of the co-operation agreement between the Governments of South Africa and Canada. The *NQF Support Link* consists of key NQF implementation leadership learning resources, for delivery through three mechanisms: print, CD-Rom and on-line.

The *NQF Support Link* initiative is geared towards making a significant contribution to the nature and quality of learning and teaching, the initial target audience being the governing, chief executive and senior programme leadership of the Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges and of other organisations with which these Colleges are required to work in fulfilling their respective mandates. It is aimed, in particular, at ensuring that the quality and responsiveness of the programmes offered by the FET Colleges meet the massive and rapid growth in intermediate skills needs as set out in the government's skills agenda, consistent with the requirements of the NQF.

### Achievements

Specifically, CIDA's funding support this year has ensured continuation of two principal phases of work that will lead to the launch of the *NQF Support Link* in June 2005. These phases were undertaken with South African and Canadian leadership and expertise, in a continuing CIDA-funded project partnership between SAQA and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (Canada). The two principal phases of work under this project during the year were:

- *Completion and testing of the initial package of core modules of the NQF Support Link and of the three learning resources delivery mechanisms mentioned above.* The content and the delivery application, through a Learning Management System, have been both well developed and field-tested, and six leadership learning modules are ready for delivery in the following areas:
  - Implementing the NQF
  - The NQF and Strategic Governance
  - The NQF and Learning Programmes
  - The NQF and Assessment
  - The NQF and Learnerships
  - The NQF, Information Systems and the National Learners' Records Database.

Six unit standards have also been developed and are registered on the NQF, to enable *NQF Support Link* participants to gain credits towards qualifications for their learning.

- *Initiation of a Strategic Action Plan and Marketing Framework for the period January to December 2005.* This process will enable SAQA to assume, in a phased approach, full overall leadership for implementation and further development of the *NQF Support Link* prior to the conclusion of the CIDA Support Project in March 2006.

A programme of capacity building and technical support is now well under way, with a view to ensuring that:

- the *NQF Support Link* is well embedded in the SAQA organisation and processes, particularly through capacity building of SAQA staff assigned to deliver and further develop the initiative; and
- the *NQF Support Link* can be offered on a cost-recovery basis to a diverse and large group of learners, as the basis for further efforts towards long-term sustainability of the initiative.

One of the most notable strengths of the *NQF Support Link* is that it is an open learning system, allowing flexibility for College leaders, including College CEOs, governing council members and other decision-making structures within Colleges, to access custom designed and field tested materials that support NQF implementation. This, in turn, ensures the development and implementation of programmes, mechanisms and capacity development for teaching personnel that are focused on quality, relevance of learning and on alignment of College programmes with the needs of industry (for example, learning programmes, assessment processes and learnerships).

This initiative, together with the NQF Forums that have been established by SAQA in all the main centres, will continue to promote and build a strong understanding of the NQF across South Africa. As SAQA looks forward to its further contributions to the development of a learning nation, it notes with pride that while the current set of *NQF Support Link* materials focuses on the needs of the leadership of FET Colleges and of other targeted organisations, most of the content is also geared for use in any education and training organisation or institution seeking to respond constructively to the requirements, opportunities and other benefits of the NQF. The *NQF Support Link* materials content has been designed and presented in such a way that it can, in due course, be adapted, re-sorted, re-purposed and re-packaged by SAQA for use by other sectors of the education and training system.



*C Lambert (left) T Douglas and J Arnesen: NQF Support Link Task Team*

*The NQF Support Link initiative is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).*



Agence canadienne de  
développement international

Canadian International  
Development Agency

## Danish International Development Agency supports a learning nation



The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) has been a stalwart in its support to education and training in South Africa for many years. The Support to Education and Skills Development (SESD) Programme sponsored by the Danish government has since 2002 enabled SAQA, through the regional office, to participate in a joint project with the FET colleges and the Western Cape Education Department. The regional office produced contextualised educator materials for the fundamentals (Language and Math Literacy) of NQF registered qualifications in Hairdressing, Hospitality, Early Childhood Development and Business Administration. During 2005 the materials were distributed to all the public FET colleges in the country, a Developing Learning Programmes manual was developed (now on the SAQA website), and induction workshops to the materials were held with college lecturers in the Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal and the North West Province. SAQA is deeply grateful for the generous support of DANIDA in assisting to build advocacy around the NQF and for ensuring that the outputs of the project were ably distributed and shared.

## The National Access Consortium Western Cape supports a learning nation

The National Access Consortium Western Cape (NACWC) Trust funded SAQA's regional office in the Western Cape for just over three years. The regional office provided client services on a walk-in and telephonic basis, capacity building workshops for NQF programmes and a networking forum for the many roleplayers in education and training in the province. In addition, regional office staff conducted training interventions and built NQF networks in the Eastern Cape. SAQA was thus able to be easily accessible to people on the ground who were struggling with implementation issues. The support of the NACWC Trust was conditional upon the intention that SAQA would sustain and rollout other regional offices after the initial period. Unfortunately, this could not be realised due to national priorities and budgetary constraints, and the regional office in the Western Cape therefore closed on 31 March 2005. SAQA held a closing function to thank the NACWC Trust, the staff, and all the stakeholders in the region who had participated in the activities of the regional office. It was clear from the gathering that the regional office had performed much needed functions and had assisted to build confidence and trust in the system. SAQA would like to express its appreciation for the support of the NACWC.



*Presenting: J Papier at a recent NQF forum*



*S Thomas conducting discussions around RPL implementation at an NQF forum held at Lovedale FET College in King William's Town*



*T McBride advocating SAQA to a client*



*S Thomas conducting a Learning Programme Development Workshop*