

The regional office provided services and assistance on NQF-related issues, thereby strengthening the regional foundation of building a learning nation. This promoted understanding of the NQF and elicited discussion around the implementation of the system. The Southern Regional Office also assisted walk-in clients who would otherwise have had to use the Pretoria Office.

The main objective in establishing the SAQA Southern Regional Office was the need for intervention and advocacy at regional level in the pursuit of building a learning nation. The office, through financial support from the National Access Consortium Western Cape Trust (NACWC), provided support systems for the development and implementation of the NQF in the southern part of the country. It gave SAQA a physical presence in the Western and Eastern Cape and provided support in capacity building on the NQF through several regional initiatives, such as building stakeholder relationships, and holding regional NQF forums and workshops.

### Regional NQF Forums

The NQF Forums held on a bi-monthly basis provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss topical NQF-related issues such as the following:

- the Further Education and Training Certificate;
- the fundamentals of NQF qualifications; and
- Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs).

They also presented opportunities for policy updates, discussion frameworks and networking, and allowed SAQA to support a wide range of participatory organisations.

### Eastern Cape Regional support

The Southern Regional Office provided a link with the Eastern Cape. In 2004-2005, monthly workshops were held for providers of education and training in East London, King William's Town, Port Elizabeth, Queenstown, and Umtata. The workshops were aimed at providing capacity building for those involved in the development of learning programmes. During the workshops, links were established with regional representatives of SETAs, DoL and training organisations. Monthly NQF Forums were held in East London and Port Elizabeth.

### Western Cape activities

In an effort to keep discussions around implementation of the NQF alive, the Southern Regional Office held monthly two-day workshops for providers of education and training. Client support was provided to community organisations and provincial government departments. The regional office also participated in various Western Cape forums, such as the FET Colleges' Curriculum Committee and the Learning Cape Festival.



The "Hub" of the regional Office, L Boonzaier



J Papier (left) receives her Certificate of Recognition from S Isaacs



M Mulcahy (left) receives his Certificate of Recognition from S Isaacs

## Regional Workshops

The Southern Regional Office conducted numerous workshops at its own offices as well as at the offices of various organisations. The workshops helped to consolidate the existing knowledge around the implementation of the NQF. The following topics were discussed:

- NQF policy overview;
- understanding accreditation;
- assessment and quality assurance;
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); and
- development of learning programmes based on registered unit standards and qualifications.

## Learning Cape Festival

SAQA was a partner in the Learning Cape Festival, an initiative that aims to promote economic development through learning organised by the Office of the Premier of the Western Cape. The festival involves a large number of stakeholders in education and training across the Western Cape.

## The Support for Education and Skills Development Programme

The objective of the Support for Education and Skills Development (SESD) Programme, funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), was to offer additional support to the FET College sector. Under this programme, the Southern Regional Office co-ordinated the materials development process which produced 16 resource manuals on Mathematical Literacy and Language for Educators. These materials were developed for the learning areas of Hairdressing, Hospitality, Generic Business Administration, and Early Childhood Development. The Southern Regional Office also produced a publication on the development and design of learning programmes. These materials will assist FET Colleges in their implementation of new qualifications within an outcomes-based environment. DANIDA has extended the project period to allow the Southern Regional Office to distribute the materials nationally and to run induction workshops in three provinces during 2005. The SESD programme has increased support for the NQF and contributed greatly to building a learning nation.

## Closure of Southern Regional Office

The Southern Regional Office was closed at the end of March 2005 in line with Ministerial direction. To continue capacity building on the NQF, the *NQF Support Link* will be rolled out in 2005. It will assist in promoting the NQF throughout the country to learners and relevant stakeholders in the education and training sector. This together with ongoing support for the regional NQF forums, will ensure that the vital links which were established during the existence of the Southern Regional Office are not lost to the NQF community.

building a  
learning nation