WELCOME

The CROSQ Standard newsletter aims to:
• Raise awareness about the necessity for Standards, Metrology and Accreditation;
• Inform the Standards Bureaux in the region and the CARICOM Member States about the activities of CROSQ. 

Published four times a year, the newsletter is distributed to every Member State of CARICOM. All are encouraged to send articles, photos and updates on their activities, relating to international trade, metrology, accreditation, and the development of standards.

Feedback, comments and submissions are welcome and should be sent to newsletter@crosq.org.

The newsletter is compiled, formatted and pre-edited by the Information Systems Officer, with contributions from the CROSQ team and other partner organizations.

NEW CHAIR, VICE CHAIR OF CROSQ

CROSQ held its Fifteenth Council Meeting in Barbados on 29 September 2009 which included, amongst other things, the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council of CROSQ for the period 2009-2011.

Mrs. Diane Lalla-Rodrigues, Director of the Antigua and Barbuda Bureau of Standards, representing Antigua and Barbuda, took over as the Chair of the Council from Trinidad and Tobago which was represented by Mr. Deryck Omar, Executive Director of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards. The elected Vice Chair is St. Vincent and the Grenadines, represented by Mr. Ezra Ledger, Director of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Bureau of Standards, (replacing Antigua and Barbuda as Vice Chair).

Also on the agenda was the nomination of the new Members to sit on the Finance and Human Resources Committees. Mrs. Anthea Ishmael, Acting Director of the Barbados National Standards Institute, representing Barbados and Mr. Jose Trejo, Director of the Belize Bureau of Standards, representing Belize, were elected Chairman of the Human Resource and the Finance Committees, respectively. An Assessment Committee was also established to replace the previously established Executive Committee, comprising of the Chairs of the various Committees of CROSQ.

The Fifteenth Council meeting also approved the recommendation by the Technical Management Committee for the presentation to the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), 20 standards for adoption by Member States. The Twenty-Ninth COTED meeting is scheduled for 4-9 February 2010.

CROSQ Mission to Haiti

A Four-Member Team from the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) undertook a Mission to Haiti from 30 November to 3 December 2009. This was the first of a two-part awareness-raising and technical support activity, in response to a request made to the CARICOM Representation Office Haiti (CROH) by the Ministère du Commerce et de l’Industrie (MCI) of Haiti through the Bureau de Coordination et Suivi (BCS) de la CARICOM, de l’OMC et de la ZLEA.

The Team comprised of Mrs. Dianne Lalla-Rodrigues (Chairman), Dr Vyjayanthi Lopez (CEO), Dr Michael Seepersaud (Project Manager, CROSQ-IDB Projects) and Mr Fulgence St Prix (Technical Officer-Standards). The visit was funded jointly by the CROH, BCS and MCI. Participation of Dr Seepersaud and Mr. St Prix was facilitated by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) under the project "Promoting SME Competitiveness Through Technical Standards (ATN/MT-8991-RG)".

Two working sessions were held, the first (30 November) with staff of MCI and the second (3 December) with a wider stakeholder group comprising mainly of public sector organisations, including the Ministry of Agriculture and the Customs division. The working sessions focused on the process of standards development at the national and regional levels, with emphasis on the need for using internationally acceptable best
ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT

Gina-Lee Parris, a national of Barbados, holds an Associate Degree in Accounting, Mathematics and French for Business for Tourism from the Barbados Community College and a BSc in Actuarial Science (with Honours) from the University of the West Indies Mona Campus, Jamaica. She has extensive experience in the field of accounting within the last 5 years, including several internships at leading local organizations. She also has experience in office administration and plans to pursue her ACCA in June 2010.

As Accounts Assistant, Ms. Parris will work closely with the Finance and Operations Manager, providing support in managing the fiscal aspects of the various projects being implemented under CROSQ, including specifically the CROSQ/EDF-CISP project, to ensure accurate accounting records in keeping with established guidelines and budgets.

As a member of the CROSQ team, Ms Parris plans to utilise her academic and professional experience to assist in ensuring an efficient and accurate accounting system within the organization.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANT

Mr. Dwayne Clarke joined CROSQ in the capacity of Information Technology (IT) Assistant, providing support to the Information Systems Officer in carrying out the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) functions and needs of CROSQ.

Holding a BSc in Computer Science from the University of the West Indies Cave Hill (with Honours), Mr. Clarke is aptly suited to his role at CROSQ by providing technical support in the establishment and management of a Regional Information Network and other IT-related initiatives, assisting in training staff in the functionalities of the system, and providing solutions to computer network-related problems. Mr. Clarke also has a City and Guilds Diploma in Microcomputer Technology, providing him with experience in the areas of computer architecture, PC repair, basic networking, programming, and web development.

Mr. Clarke is an Electronic Commerce enthusiast and proponent of the further development of technology in the Caribbean.

NINTH EDITORIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS) hosted the Ninth Meeting of the CROSQ Editorial Committee (EC) on 7-10 December 2009 at the SLBS conference room. On the agenda were eight draft standards developed under the CROSQ/IDBMIF project for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs):

- Specification for: short term rentals of vehicles; packaged natural coconut water; packaged water; and indigenous furniture; and
- Codes of practice for: packaged water; fish and fishery products; natural coconut water; and tour guides.

At the end of the 4-day meeting, seven standards were completed in its entirety, with the eighth (Code of practice for fish and fishery products) approximately 50% complete. A special EC meeting will be held from 14-15 January 2010 in Barbados to complete the editing of this standard.

The next EC Meeting is scheduled for March 2010 in Barbados.

RE-LAUNCH OF BID PROPOSALS

The tender for the establishment of a virtual/physical library and audio-visual conferencing facilities in CROSQ Member States and within the Secretariat was re-launched on 18 December 2009. Firms have been given until 12 February 2010 in which to submit proposals meeting the requirements outlined in the tender dossier for this activity.

The Needs Assessment makes up one of the components of the project being funded by the 9th EDF (European Development Fund) to increase the operational efficiency of CROSQ.

CROSQ COUNCIL MEMBER ELECTED AS CHAIR OF CARIBBEAN EXPORT

Ambassador Rosalyn Hazelle, representative of St Kitts and Nevis for the Council of CROSQ, was elected as Chairperson of the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export). The election took place on 17 December 2009 during a Board of Directors meeting held in Barbados. CROSQ congratulates Ambassador Hazelle and wishes her all the very best in her new role.

Haiti Mission (cont.)

(continued from page 1)

practices, followed by a summary of the Standards being developed under the IDB-SME Project.

Two Stakeholder Awareness-Raising Workshops were also held, the first in Port-au-Prince on 1 December and the second in Cap Haitien the following day. The workshops covered a wide range of topics including Metrology and Standards development process at the national and regional levels. The Standards being developed under the SME project were also discussed.

A Mission Report is currently under preparation. The second part of the Mission will be undertaken in January 2010.
Guyana Launches Subcommittee for Regional Building Standards

In an effort to enforce greater adherence to building codes in Guyana, a National Technical Sub-Committee (NTSC) on Regional Building Standards was launched at the Cara Lodge Hotel on 18 November 2009.

The NTSC, which is headed by Mr. Melvyn Sankies, Chairman of the National Building Code Committee, consists of various members from the engineering, construction and architectural community as well as representatives from the insurance sectors, Ministry of Housing and the Guyana Fire Service, among others.

The formation of the NTSC is part of a regional initiative of the Regional Building Standards (RBS) project being implemented by the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) and funded by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) at the cost of almost US $2 million. The initiative aims to have practitioners in the construction industry adhere to a regional building code which mirrors international building requirements, but takes into consideration regional peculiarities.

As explained by the Project Coordinator for the RBS project, Mr. Michael Wood, the role of the NTSC is to sensitize practitioners within the local construction industry of the project. The committee is expected to encourage the participation of architects, engineers, contractors, firemen, electricians, builders and other stakeholders.

According to Mr. Wood, the project plan is to establish these NTSCs in all CARICOM countries. Each committee is tasked with helping to determine the issues that are peculiar to that particular country in the development of Caribbean Application Documents (CADs). These discussions will help to contribute to the CADs being developed in each Member Country. He said that the point of such discussions is that by the time the CADs are finally enacted in various countries, there is buy-in from the practitioners who would have participated in the development of the CADs.

Mr. Wood further explained that under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, all CARICOM countries are legally required to implement the RBS in the country within a specific time. He also said that the establishment of a Building Code Authority is another requirement. The role of this Authority will be to receive building plans, to vet them, to do inspections, to do approvals and to issue certificates.

The Project Coordinator added that the entire process may not come on-stream before the next two years, while noting that some territories were more advanced than others. He pointed out that some countries would need more time to develop infrastructure and to train personnel.

Mr. Wood noted that the project also involved flood and seismic hazard mapping and that consultants would have to travel to each territory to conduct these tests.

During his presentation, Mr. Sankies underscored the importance of building codes to the country. According to him, if Guyana is to make strides in its current development phase, especially in light of threats posed by global warming, standards relating to design and construction needed to be given special emphasis. He identified the quality of building materials and components as other critical issues.

Mr. Sankies also emphasized the importance of all sectors working together if there was to be the successful development and implementation of the codes.

- Adapted from Stabroek News, 19 November 2009

Update on the Development of the Regional Building Standard

Plans are continuing with six regional professionals identified as Standards Development Consultants and Technical Consultants to Member States under the CROSQ/CDB Regional Building Standards project. It is anticipated that the consultants will be engaged by March 2010.

Discussions are continuing with consultants HR Wallingford UK Ltd. on the status of the project, satisfying certain deliverables and bringing the consultancy to closure. Technology transfer and final activities are also being planned. The consultancy has been extended to the end of March 2010, as CROSQ recognised that the Consultants experienced a number of challenges in accessing the base data and information from some regional bodies.

The project will be hosting 3 one-day workshops to be held in Barbados on 9-11 March 2010, aimed at providing participants with an opportunity to use and apply modern Flood Hazard Mapping and Rainfall Intensity-Duration-Frequency Curves technologies. The workshops are targeted at the Regional Technical Committee for the project, architects, engineers, planning authorities and disaster planners/managers.

Circumstances beyond the control of the project resulted in delays in engaging a firm for the development of Seismic Hazard maps. However, Requests for Proposals for this consultancy will be advertised in March 2010 in order to engage consultants by May 2010.

Ten National Technical Subcommittees (NTSCs) have been officially launched to date, with Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, and Suriname outstanding. All NTSCs are expected to be launched by the middle of 2010.
CROSQ held the first of a two-part series of two-day stakeholder dialogues on 'Strengthening Caribbean Co-operation towards Standards and Quality' at the Accra Beach Resort in Barbados on 26-27 November 2009.

These workshops are part of a project aimed at improving the regional co-operation in the field of standards and quality and according to the Chairman of CROSQ, Mrs. Dianne Lalla-Rodrigues, the dialogue is in keeping with CROSQ’s mission to harmonise and implement standards and to facilitate international competitiveness for the enhancement of the social and economic development of the region.

“Since the establishment of CROSQ in 2002, the Secretariat as well as the number of projects undertaken, has grown significantly. The region is embroiled in several trade agreements which can provide new opportunities for the production and export of goods and services, provided we embrace the shift in the focus from tariff based measures to quality competitiveness and market access,” stated the Chairman.

CROSQ’s strategic themes focus on Harmonisation of Standards, Metrology Capability, Conformity Assessment Capability, Accreditation Co-operation, Regional Quality Infrastructure, Financial Sustainability and Organisational Efficiency.

The Chairman said National Standards Bodies in the region face severe challenges in getting the financial human and physical resources required to operationalise these themes. “The CROSQ Secretariat is by no means exempt from these challenges because the Secretariat depends to a large extent on member states for the resources it needs to realise these themes effectively and efficiently,” Mrs. Lalla-Rodrigues noted.

Mrs. Lalla-Rodrigues further added that the region must make every effort to ensure that each member state has the capacity to participate effectively in all aspects of the regional system, either by building national capacity where feasible or ensuring access to that capacity at the regional level when national capacity is not feasible.

“This activity will provide the opportunity for NSBs and Private Sector Intermediary organisations to examine challenges perceived by market actors to jointly identify shared capacity building needs and to identify how best to move forward in developing action based capacity-building programmes,” the CROSQ official added.

The project is being funded as a Technical Assistance by the Pro€Invest Programme and is aimed at identifying how to best move forward and to develop and draft an action-based capacity building programme for the medium term. The second part of the series of workshops is scheduled for February 2010.

- Adapted from The Barbados Advocate, 27 November 2009

The National Certification Body of Jamaica (NCBJ), an independent unit of the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ), received accreditation to ISO 17021:2006 from the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) on 17 November 2009. As a result, NCBJ is now internationally recognized to provide certification to ISO 9001:2008 and will be expanding its scope to offer ISO 14001:2004 by March 2010 and ISO 22000:2005 by March 2011.

At current, NCBJ is authorized to issue ANAB ISO 9001 accredited certificates within the following scopes of organization’s products, processes and services:
- Agriculture, Hunting Fishing, Forestry and Fishing
- Food products, Beverages and Tobacco
- Chemicals, Chemical Products and Fibres
- Manufacture of paints, varnishes and similar coatings, printing inks and mastics
- Manufacture of soap and detergents, cleaning and polishing preparations, perfumes and toilet preparations
- Rubber and Plastic Products
- Concrete, Cement, Lime, Plaster, etc
- Hotels and Restaurants
- Financial Intermediation, Real Estate, Renting
- Information Technology
- Hardware consultancy
- Data processing
- Database activity
- Maintenance and repair of office, accounting and computing machinery
- Other computer related activities
- Engineering Services
- Research and experimental development on natural sciences and engineering
- Research and experimental development on natural sciences and humanities
- Other Services
- Public Administration
- Education
- Other Social Services

NCBJ plans to continue working with CROSQ and within CARICOM to make internationally recognized certification available in the region.
From 22-25 February 2010, the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) in collaboration with CROSQ, will deliver a workshop at its PQSL Auditorium and Mass Laboratory entitled "Calibration of Weighing Machines EURAMET According to the SIM Guide, SIM WGW7/cg-01v.00".

This workshop aims to assist calibration reference laboratories personnel and metrologists (and by extension support Member States) with the expansion of their services for the calibration of weighing machines and having their metrological quality confirmed by calibration. The workshop will be facilitated by Mr. Luis Omar Becerra and Mr. Jorge Nava, both of the Centro Nacional de Metrología (CENAM) Mexico, and funding is provided through the support of Trade.Com and Physikalisch-Technische Bundestalt (PTB, the national metrology institute of Germany).

According to the CROSQ Technical Officer for Metrology, Gina Teemul-Tash, the objective of the workshop is to introduce participants to the SIM guide. “The idea is to provide the participants with the necessary tools and knowledge to go back to their laboratories and implement a calibration service for weighing machines.” The Inter-american Metrology System (SIM) resulted from a broad agreement among national metrology organizations from all 34 member nations of the Organization of American States (OAS) and has adopted the guide, SIM WGW7/cg-01v.00, which will be used as a base document for the development of a calibration procedure for weighing machines, specific to the region.

At the end of the training, participants will be able to perform calibration of weighing machines according to SIM MWG7/cg-01 v.00, calculate measurement results, determine the uncertainty of measurement for weighing machines, establish a calibration procedure for weighing machine, and design and put into operation, a data entry form and a calibration certificate for weighing machine calibration.


The workshop was aimed at provided participants with an opportunity to learn about CROSQ’s 3-year Strategic Plan, the benefits to the region of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU), ISO’s action plan to assist developing countries.

Presentations were given by Mr. Deryck Omar, Executive Director of TTBS, Mr Anthony Chan Tak, Chairman of TTBS, Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez, Chief Executive Officer of CROSQ, and Mr. Martin Chesire, Project Manager in Development and Training Services of ISO. The Minister of Trade and Industry, the Honourable Mariano Browne, provided the feature address.

During his address, Minister Browne spoke on the EPA, mentioning that it gave regional manufacturers and service providers access to 27 EU markets and in turn exposed their products to competition from the EU, but in a phased manner. Minister Browne indicated that the EPA implementation involved a series of interactive sessions with trade facilitation agencies such as TTBS, Customs, Plant Quarantine, and Food and Drugs, to examine specific provisions of the agreement. He also spoke of the Single Electronic Window (SEW), an IT-based trade facilitation tool which allowed parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents at a single entry point towards fulfillment of all import, export and transit-related regulatory requirements. The concept behind the SEW is to increase the speed of the trade facilitation process and sharpen the competitive edge of the companies and industries, thus strengthening global competitiveness. Minister Browne urged participants to utilise the opportunity presented by the workshop to develop effective platforms for the application and implementation of standards for the Caribbean.

Mr. Chesire stated that the workshop was being held in the framework of the ISO Action Plan for Developing Countries 2005-10, with specific regard to Objective 3: Increasing Regional Cooperation, and Sharing Experiences, Resources and Training. Mr. Chesire also added that ISO has developed new training on the emerging subject “The Role of Standards in Economic Development and Trade”.

The workshop comprised of interactive presentations complemented with group activities and discussions throughout the three days, providing participants with opportunities to learn about the various challenges and difficulties faced within the various National Standards Body of CARICOM, as well as CROSQ’s approach to regional standards development and harmonisation in comparison to national methodologies. Participants were also afforded the opportunity to learn about the necessity for standards to support economic development and trade.
Caribbean Presence at ILAC 13th Annual General Assembly

Dr Vyjayanthi Lopez (CEO, CROSQ) and Ms Giselle Guevara (Project Coordinator, CROSQ/EDF-CLS Project) attended the 13th Annual General Assembly of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and associated meetings held in Vancouver, Canada from 10-20 October 2009. Also in attendance were Ms. Marguerite Domville, CEO of Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) and Ms. Ellison Floyd of Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS-TTLABS). The participation of Ms. Guevara and Ms. Floyd was facilitated from CROSQ’s allocation under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF).

Both JANAAC and TTBS are Affiliate members of ILAC. At the Assembly, CROSQ’s request for Stakeholder membership was granted (ILAC Resolution GA 13.06). At the invitation of the Laboratory Committee, the CEO made the presentation on CROSQ and its activities on 17 October. The presentation was very well-received and the Group was keenly interested in bringing Caribbean laboratory associations into their fold.

The ILAC membership (total 139 bodies) now covers a total of 87 different economies worldwide and approximately 33,000 laboratories, and over 6,000 inspection bodies are accredited by the 89 ILAC Full Members and Associates.

Work on the future development of ILAC and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) has continued since the 13th Joint General Assembly, with a Task Force established to provide guidance on the issue. IAF/ILAC A5:04/2009 Multi-Lateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements: Application of ISO/IEC 17011:2004 has been published on the ILAC and IAF websites. The document came into effect as of the date of publication on each website, and is important to the operation of all Accreditation Bodies (ABs). The ILAC-MRA Mark registration process continues and, as at 7 September 2009, 47 ILAC Full Members had signed Licensing Agreements with ILAC, for the use of the Combined MRA Mark (the Combined MRA Mark is the ILAC-MRA Mark used in combination with the accreditation body’s own mark). ILAC and IAF have been invited to provide input into the revision of the ISO Strategic Plan, and a Joint Task Group has been formed to review the input received and to prepare the ILAC/IAF response.

New Regulation on accreditation and market surveillance has now been published in the Official Journal of the European Union. This Regulation came into force 20 days after publication in the Official Journal and it will apply from 1 January 2010. As a European Regulation this is effectively a law and it is directly applicable on the Member States and to national accreditation bodies nominated by the Member States. Work is also underway within the Executive to prepare a series of answers to ‘frequently asked questions’ on the impact of the new Regulation.

The ILAC 14TH General Assembly will be held in Shanghai, China in October 2010.

Workshop for Medical Labs Hosted in the Dominican Republic

The CROSQ/EDF Caribbean Laboratory Accreditation Service (CLAS) Project, working in coordination with the Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) and the Direcccion General de Normas y Sistema (DIGENOR), hosted a seminar/workshop on Laboratory Quality Management Systems (LQMS) for Clinical Labs according to the requirements of ISO 15189 on 11-13 November 2009 in Dominican Republic.

Funding for participants and workshop logistics was shared between the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) through CROSQ and the Organisation of American States (OAS) through IAAC. In total, there were 52 participants from 24 different countries of the Caribbean and Latin America, consisting of a mix of professionals from the public and private sector working in Clinical Laboratories, Hospitals, Accreditation Bodies and Bureaux of Standards, and as Consultants. Presentation materials were provided in both Spanish and English, and simultaneous translation was available for the duration of the event.

This was the first time that the majority of participants were introduced to ISO 15189 and the principles of Quality Management. The seminar consisted of presentations, group exercises, scenarios and class discussion across a mix of topics ranging from the basic concepts of Quality, requirements of the ISO 15189 Standard, Safety in Medical Labs and Strategic planning for Accreditation. A representative of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr. Kojima, presented the WHO’s training toolkit and provided electronic copies for all participants.

The seminar evaluation showed that over 80% of the participants agreed that the objectives had been met at the end of the activity. In terms of impact of the workshop, it allowed DIGENOR to reach out to its stakeholders and raise awareness about the benefits of Accreditation in Clinical Labs. As such the local participants agreed to form an LQMS group which will meet monthly to support each other with Quality improvements and Documentation.

The seminar also allowed participants from a wide variety of organisations and countries to network and share experiences and solutions in Quality Management. This was also the first bilingual activity which CROSQ held in conjunction with the Dominican Republic, and with Latin America. It provided a unique opportunity to raise the profile of CROSQ and to communicate its mission and objectives in the region and with respect to a promoting a harmonised Regional Accreditation system.
Photo Gallery Of Events

Attendees of the SIM Metrology School held in Brazil

Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure

CEO of CROSQ, Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez, speaking at the CROSQ/TTBS/ISO Workshop

CROSQ at IAAC 14th General Assembly

Attendees of the 9th Editorial Committee Meeting in St. Lucia

Sonia Morgan (JANAAC), Giselle Guevara (CROSQ), Claudette Brown (JANAAC) and Manfred Kindler (Consultant) at the 20 Milestones Workshop in Jamaica

Attendees of the CROSQ/TTBS/ISO Workshop in Trinidad and Tobago, holding up awarded certificates

CEO of CROSQ, Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez, speaking at the CROSQ/TTBS/ISO Workshop
CROSQ’S MISSION

The promotion and development of standards and standards related activities to facilitate international competitiveness and the sustainable production of goods and services within the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) for the enhancement of social and economic development.

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Email: crosq.caricom@crosq.org

Please visit our website: www.crosq.org

2010 Calendar of Events (January – April)

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