CROSQ signs Agreement for Third RQI Project

On 8 December 2010, the Implementation Agreement for the project “Development of a demand-oriented and regionally harmonised Quality Infrastructure (QI) in the Caribbean (RQI 3)” was signed between the Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) and the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) in Barbados.

The project (commonly referred to as RQI 3) aims to continue the work done to enhance the ability of regional and national institutions in the Caribbean to develop an internationally recognized, demand-based Quality Infrastructure (QI) to support a regionally harmonised approach to the development and implementation of Technical Standards.

Farewell to CEO

At the Seventeenth Council Meeting in October 2010 in Jamaica, Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CROSQ, announced her resignation from the post. Having joined on 19 February 2008, the resignation signaled an end to almost 3 years of her support to the successful development of the organization. With a Ph.D. from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Dr. Lopez came to CROSQ with more than 26 years of International experience, which she ably applied to the tasks and duties required of her.

During her tenure at CROSQ, Dr. Lopez was instrumental in facilitating and implementing several key tasks and initiatives in support of CROSQ’s mandate and its institutional strengthening. One of her first tasks on joining the organization was to engage CROSQ stakeholders in its work and activities. In this regard, conscious efforts were made to make the meetings of the Council more efficient and effective, with regular scheduling and timely circulation of agendas and supporting documents to ensure input by Members.

CARICOM REGIONAL STANDARDS APPROVED BY THIRTY-FIRST COTED FOR VOLUNTARY MEMBER STATE ADOPTION

- CRS 5 – Specification for Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods
- CRS 20 – Specification for Wooden Furniture
- CRS 21 – Specification for Indigenous Furniture (Bamboo, Rattan, Wicker, Nibbi)
- CRS 22 – Specification for Amchar and Kuchela
- CRS 35 – Specification for Spices and Sauces
- CRCP 3 – Code of Practice for Tour Guides
- Work Item Proposals for Standards on the CROSQ Work Plan
  - Specification for Ketchup
  - Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality
  - Specifications for Red Kidney Beans
  - Specifications for Rice (revision)
  - Specifications for Liquid Chlorine Bleach
  - Specifications for Electrical Cable (6 Parts)
  - Code of Practice for Organically Produced Foods
  - Labelling of Pre-packaged Goods
  - Labelling of Pre-packaged Goods - General Principles

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“If there is one aspect of CSME that works... it's that we've managed as a region to formulate one CARICOM regional standard... for the obvious reason of facilitating trade between member states.”
Farewell to CEO… (continued)

She ensured that project activities were extended into as many countries as possible to allow Member States the opportunity to raise awareness of the work of the National Standards Bodies, especially in the areas of standards, metrology and accreditation. This multi-pronged approach resulted in significant buy-in from Member States for CROSQ’s work and activities and by the end of the financial year, nearly all Member States had made good on their contributions. Additionally, she supported the development of process maps for standards development and for harmonization and related procedures, so as to streamline the work of the Technical Management Committee and the development of CARICOM Regional Standards.

One of the most critical initiatives that was implemented during Dr. Lopez’s tenure, was the development of a three-year Strategic Plan (2009-2012) for CROSQ. The framework for the Plan was set up by consultants with inputs from Council Members, and technical personnel at the CROSQ Secretariat assisted with fleshing-out the various elements. The first draft of the Plan was presented to the CROSQ Council for approval at its Thirteenth Meeting held in Trinidad & Tobago on 17-19 September 2009 and was later endorsed by the Council for presentation at the Twenty-sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in Guyana from 24-25 November 2009 where it was approved. This Strategic Plan has underpinned many subsequent initiatives and activities undertaken by CROSQ, including the Year-3 Work Plan that would enable the organisation to access funds allocated to CROSQ under the CSME component of the Caribbean Integrated Support Programme (CISP), funded by the 9th EDF.

She was also responsible for facilitating the management of five projects which CROSQ was implementing, each of which had its own unique challenges. She was critical in ensuring that buy-in was obtained from stakeholders of CROSQ so that they would participate in the all of the activities of the projects. Further, through much planning and oversight to the projects, she ensured that duplication of efforts was avoided in order to maximize resources, and that collaboration and coordination in activities was strengthened between the various projects. Additionally, Dr. Lopez was pivotal in CROSQ receiving additional donor funding to finance two more projects in support of the development of quality infrastructure in the region and in the development of several other project proposals being considered for funding.

In June 2008, she coordinated a visit with CROSQ’s technical partners, the Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB – the German National Metrology Institute) for key representatives from CROSQ to visit Germany. During the visit, a high-level meeting was held with officials of the Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ - Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development) in order to seek complementary funding for CROSQ’s activities in Metrology. As a direct result of the meeting and following the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the CARICOM countries and the European Union in October 2008, the BMZ approved funding to the tune of €1 million in November for a 3-year project under the Aid-for-Trade umbrella of funds.

CROSQ/PTB RQI 3 began in November 2009 and will finish in October 2015. The project will be divided into two phases. The first phase will be from November 2009 to October 2012 and the second phase is planned from November 2012 to October 2015.
NEW METROLOGY OFFICER JOINS THE TEAM

CROSQ extends a warm welcome to its newest member of staff, Mr. David Tomlinson, a national of Jamaica. Mr. Tomlinson joined CROSQ on 3 January 2011 as the new Technical Officer – Metrology, replacing Mrs. Gina Teemul-Tash whose tenure ended in September 2010. The appointment is for 15 months in the first instance, with the possibility of an extension (subject to funds becoming available).

With a B.Eng in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Technology, Jamaica, Mr. Tomlinson has been employed at the Bureau of Standards Jamaica since 2006 as an Engineer/Metrologist where he has gained metrology experience in force and pressure, and flow and volume metrology units. He also has experience in conformity assessment in the areas of product testing and metallurgy units. In addition to being a member of the Procurement Committee of BSJ since 2006, Mr. Tomlinson was also Lead Auditor for the OHSMS/BS OSHAS 18001:2007 (Occupational Health Safety Management System/ British Standard).

In his new role at CROSQ, Mr. Tomlinson will be primarily responsible for coordinating metrology activities within the region on behalf of CROSQ. He will also be responsible for assisting in the development and coordination of scientific, legal and industrial metrology, and the associated training.

Mr. Tomlinson brings the necessary capacity to continue the work of CROSQ in the development of metrology in the region. We wish him a very happy and productive stay in Barbados.

SAYING GOODBYE TO IT ASSISTANT

On December 16, CROSQ also said goodbye to Mr. Dwayne Clarke who served as Information Technology (IT) Assistant at CROSQ for the past year.

As IT Assistant, he was instrumental in providing support to the Information Systems Officer in carrying out the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) functions and needs of CROSQ.

Mr. Clarke provided excellent technical support to the Regional Information Network Committee, provided valuable input in other IT-related initiatives, assisted in training staff in the functionalities of the system, and provided solutions to computer network-related problems. He also ably undertook the general duties of the Information Systems Officer during her leaves of absence.

We take this opportunity to thank Mr. Clarke for his valuable inputs and contributions to CROSQ, and wish him well in his future endeavours.

CLAS COORDINATOR BIDS FAREWELL

With the completion of the CROSQ/EDF Caribbean Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (CLAS) project, Ms. Giselle Guevara, Project Coordinator, bid her farewells to CROSQ in December 2010, having joined the organization in June 2008.

In her role as Project Coordinator, Ms. Guevara was responsible for coordinating activities within Member States to strengthen laboratories in the region and assist them in their goal towards accreditation.

We wish Ms. Guevara all success in her future endeavours and wish to thank her for her valuable contributions to the development of accreditation in the region.

ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT MOVES ON

Ms. Gina-Lee Parris, Accounts Assistant hired under the 9th EDF, departed from CROSQ in December 2010, having joined the organization in the last quarter of 2009.

Ms. Parris worked with the Finance and Operations Manager at the CROSQ Secretariat, providing support in managing the fiscal aspects of the various projects being implemented under CROSQ, to ensure accurate accounting records in keeping with established guidelines and budgets.

We thank Ms. Parris for her assistance during her tenure at CROSQ and wish her success for the future.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR STAFF

Staff at the CROSQ Secretariat received training in Project Management from 16-20 August 2010. The main objective of the training was to allow attendees to understand the philosophy of project management from a strategic and technical perspective, specifically:

- understand the fundamental principles of Project Management;
- understand the dynamics in managing the project cycle; and
- appropriately apply project management tools and techniques to project activities.

The training was held at the CROSQ Secretariat in Barbados and was facilitated by Mr. Joseph Khan of Premier Quality Services Limited (PQSL), the training and consultancy subsidiary of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS).
The TradeCom Facility, an ACP Group Programme financed by the 9th European Development Fund (EDF), hired BKP Development Research & Consulting to implement the project “Feasibility Study for a Regional Training Programme at the CROSQ Secretariat”, which covered CROSQ and its Member States. The project was allocated a total of €153,596 and ran for the period August to December 2010.

The main objective of the project was to provide technical assistance to CROSQ and Member States of CARICOM to help build capacity essential to the development of a quality infrastructure at the national and regional level through the establishment of a regional training programme. This regional training programme would have the primary objective of building sustainable technical capacity within the region in all areas of the quality infrastructure (standardisation, metrology, testing, certification and accreditation).

In effect, the project was aimed at assisting CROSQ in identifying training needs of the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and national stakeholders and to develop relevant training modules for the Secretariat.

The project had three main phases:
- The initial or Inception Phase;
- Phase I – Analysis: benchmarking and gap assessment; and
- Phase II – development of an Implementation Plan.

During the Inception Phase, five main activities were undertaken:
- A briefing at TradeCom between the consultants and the TradeCom Project Monitoring Unit in August where the consultant presented their interpretation of the project requirements and arising issues were addressed;
- The establishment of a Steering Committee with oversight for the implementation of the project;
- The establishment of contact between the consultants and key stakeholders;
- The preliminary review of documents focusing on detailed training issues that needed to be addressed; and
- The finalisation of the Inception Report based on the findings of the Inception Phase.

Phase I had three main activities: desk research, field mission to the beneficiary countries, and a gap analysis. Prior to undertaking the field mission, a questionnaire was developed and circulated to Member States to collect relevant information on the current training being offered and the deficit areas. This information was augmented during the field mission and the results were collated into a Training Needs Identification Report.

Under Phase II, the implementation plan was developed and executed with 3 main activities: the formulation of the training programme, development of strategies for implementing the proposed training programme and delivery of a validation workshop.

The validation workshop was held in December 2010 and was attended by representatives from the various NSBs and the CROSQ Secretariat, as well as from BSOs within each Member State.

Efforts to create development opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and the organisations which support them, continue in March 2011 when the Barbados National Standards Institution (BNSI) and the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) host a Standards and Conformity Assessment Training Workshop.

The two-day workshop, which was originally slated for October last year, will be held on March 7-8 at the Savannah Hotel. It will cater to SME business support organisations involved in banking and finance, teaching and training, management consultancy, business advisory and technical assistance services. The training session will seek to improve the skills set of the participants and illustrate how standards can assist SMEs in increasing their competitiveness and market access.

Issues to be addressed include the standardisation of SMEs, the use of standards in a recession, the need for a Quality Management Plan and how standards and conformity assessment can help competitiveness.

This workshop is one of the activities targeted by BNSI for this year in support of SME development. Another such activity was a National Awareness Seminar on Good Management Practices held at Pelican Village on 21 February 2011. The workshop was a collaborative effort between BNSI, CROSQ and the Barbados Small Business Association in an attempt to introduce SMEs to CRS 14 - Requirements for Good Management Practices and it is envisaged that by conforming to the requirements of the standard, SMEs would be more efficient and competitive in regional and international markets.

Further information on SME developmental activities can be obtained from the BNSI or from the CROSQ Secretariat.
Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure

How competitive are our local manufacturers? Can our goods and services effectively compete in the global marketplace?

A key determinant in manufacturing and trade competitiveness is the establishment of a globally-accepted technical, regulatory and institutional framework that would provide objective evidence of a country’s ability to assure consistent quality and reliability in its traded goods and services. This framework is usually referred to as the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI).

As we try to enter new markets, competition based on quality is a critical success factor. Competing with industrializing giants such as China, India and Brazil can be a daunting task for manufacturers in small, developing territories in the region.

It is therefore crucial that these countries take decisive and urgent action to modernize and strengthen their existing NQI if they are to overcome the hurdles to achieve global competitiveness and maximize trade opportunities arising from free trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the European Union and CARIFORUM.

NQI can be defined as a highly integrated network of people, systems and organisations involved in the research, definition, development and promotion of quality goods, services and processes using the core disciplines of the MSQA framework. This MSQA framework comprises the four pillars of the NQI: Metrology (M); Standards Development (S); Quality or Conformity Assessment Systems (Q), involving testing, inspection and certification; and Accreditation (A). Together, these pillars can build and support an economy that produces high quality goods and services.

An efficient NQI architecture supports and strengthens a country’s ability to establish and continually improve the quality of goods and services produced or acquired nationally. The resulting benefits will include increased competitiveness, innovation, and technology transfer, thereby enhancing the capability of national firms to effectively trade locally, regionally and internationally.

With this in mind, TTBS will be launching a series of new initiatives this year that will be geared towards promoting the development and use of these quality related tools by the manufacturing sector.

During 2011, the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) will facilitate open enrollment and in-company training programmes geared to improving the demand for Conformity Assessment services in all sectors of the economy including agriculture, health care, transportation, construction, tourism and manufacturing.

TTBS will also seek to engage the national community in discussions on the NQI, as well as in the formulation of an overarching policy that would fully involve the NQI in the sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2010, TTBS and the University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine campus, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to increase awareness and appreciation of the NQI. One product of this collaboration with UWI will be the introduction of a NQI Course in the Faculty of Engineering that will highlight the importance of standards and quality management in all aspects of work and international trade.

Manufacturers can look forward to a new project aimed at enhancing Trinidad and Tobago's competitiveness through the establishment of a National Co-ordination Mechanism to deal comprehensively with matters relating to Technical Barriers to Trade. This project, entitled “Building capability for sustaining export-led growth in Trinidad and Tobago by strengthening the trade institutional infrastructure for Technical Barriers to Trade”, will address deficiencies in the national institutional infrastructure related to standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment mechanisms and is being funded by the Government via the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

A key component of the NQI is creating the necessary inter-linkages with business support and trade promotion organisations, to bring the tenets of the NQI into the practical reach of medium and large enterprises. In this regard, TTBS is collaborating with the Business Development Company Ltd to develop a series of competitiveness oriented projects. Some of these potential projects include:

- Training and coaching medium-sized enterprises with respect to complying with international Quality and Environmental Management System standards;
- Participation in the international, regional and national standards development process to ensure that manufacturers and importers are abreast of innovations occurring in their industry, and have an effective voice in shaping these standards so that they are more relevant to our local industrial needs;
- Provision of testing, metrology and inspection services locally which are internationally recognised and affordably priced;
- Guidance on accreditation services to ensure that manufacturers can access these services in an affordably and timely manner; and
- Expansion of the TTBS Export Alert! service in order to provide information to local manufacturers on draft technical regulations being developed by other countries.

Another exciting project is the development of a National Quality Award which is intended to help motivate local companies to strive for quality and excellence.

Creating a culture of quality is essential in strengthening the NQI. Therefore, TTBS will be undertaking awareness raising programmes to heighten quality consciousness at the level of the consumers so that they are empowered to make better choices and demand better value for money which, in turn, would force businesses to become more competitive and quality conscious.

-- Adapted from the Trinidad and Tobago’s Newsday, 6 January 2011
Planning Meetings Held for CROSQ Projects

The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), in collaboration with the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB), hosted an operational planning meeting at the CROSQ Secretariat in Barbados from 10-13 January 2011.

The planning workshop was facilitated by Dr. Keith Nurse, Director of the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services of the University of the West Indies, and focused on the operationalisation of a unified regional accreditation system known as the Caribbean Cooperation for Accreditation (CCA), the CROSQ/PTB RQI 3 project and the development of a Work Plan for CROSQ for the 10th European Development Fund (EDF).

In attendance at the meeting were the Chair and CEO of CROSQ, the CARIMET Coordinator, and representatives from the Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC), the Trinidad and Tobago Laboratory Accreditation Service (TTLABS), the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS), the Premier Quality Services Limited (PQSL), the PTB and the CROSQ Secretariat.

CARIBBEAN COOPERATION FOR ACCREDITATION

After intense discussions on the definition and objectives of the CCA, a three (3) year work plan for 2011-13 and one (1) year work plan for 2011 were developed to guide the operation of the CCA. The main activities for the three (3) year period were identified as:

▪ the identification of the primary stakeholders and the prioritisation of their needs;
▪ the definition and implementation scheme of the CCA in the context of the stakeholders’ needs;
▪ the development of a communication and marketing plan for the CCA; and
▪ the institutional strengthening and harmonization of the National Accreditation Bodies (NABs) and the National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs).

The objectives and outputs identified under the CCA were then used as inputs in the development of the work plans for the CROSQ/PTB RQI 3 project.

CROSQ/PTB RQI 3

The CROSQ/PTB RQI 3 project bears as its mission, the “Development of a demand-oriented and regionally harmonised quality infrastructure in the Caribbean.” By directing the outputs of the CCA workshop and input from key metrologists and standards officers in one common direction, the work plans for the RQI 3 project were developed.

In addition to the activities highlighted under the CCA, some of the key activities that were identified are:

▪ A demand and supply gap analysis;
▪ the development of a regional metrology database;
▪ the implementation of Caribbean Reference Laboratories (CARLS);
▪ the development of regional technical capability in metrology;
▪ the development of Quality Management Systems in the Member States (ISO 17025) and CROSQ (ISO 9000);
▪ the development of CROSQ cooperation strategy;
▪ awareness raising; and
▪ knowledge management.

10TH EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

Mr. Joseph Khan, CEO of Premier Quality Services Limited (PQSL), a subsidiary of TTBS, presented the work done to date on the development of the draft work programme proposal and logical framework matrix for the 10th European Development Fund (EDF). This programme will support the overall objective of CROSQ to develop a harmonised regional quality infrastructure.

The draft work programme proposal was dissected into key components and the persons present with specific knowledge in each area gave their input on refining and developing both the work programme and the logical framework matrix. It is expected that once these documents are submitted and approved, the execution of this programme will begin in 2012 with the commencement of the 10th EDF.

Flood Hazard Maps Developed for the Region

In March 2009, HR Wallingford (a consulting firm from the UK) was engaged to develop Rainfall-Intensity-Duration Curves and Flood (RIDF) Hazard Maps under the Caribbean Building Standards project, funded by the Caribbean Development Bank and implemented by CROSQ.

These maps were to be developed in order to enhance understanding of the hazard and to inform the development of the Caribbean Application Documents (CAD) and focused the development of RIDF Curves for the following countries: the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, the coastal zone of Guyana, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. The consultancy ended in September 2010.

Going forward, the recommendation is that RIDF curves be developed for all sixteen participating states of the project and that this activity be undertaken separately with relevant partners (CIMH, CDEMA, CCEO, and ACSAC) outside of the current project.
Participants in discussion at the Validation Workshop for the Training Facility project

Members of the CROSQ Technical Management Committee at the Seventeenth Meeting in Barbados

Mr. Hermon Edmondson and Mr. Jose Trejo in discussions at the Opening Reception of the Seventeenth Council Meeting in Jamaica

Participants in discussion at the Validation Workshop for the Training Facility project

Members of the CROSQ Technical Management Committee at the Seventeenth Meeting in Barbados

Project Management Training Workshop held for Members of Staff of CROSQ Secretariat

Mr. Fabian Scott giving opening remarks at BNSI National Awareness Seminar on Good Management Practices for SMEs

Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure
### 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.

### 2011 Calendar of Events (January – May)

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<td>January 10-13</td>
<td>CROSQ Planning Meetings</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<td>January 21</td>
<td>Meeting of Officials of the Inter-Sessional Committee of the Council for Trade and Economic Development</td>
<td>Video Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>CROSQ Workshop on Good Management Practices for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>February 28</td>
<td>CROSQ Coaching Workshops on Implementation of Standards for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</td>
<td>Belize</td>
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<td>March 3</td>
<td>CROSQ Standards and Conformity Assessment Train-the-Trainers Workshop</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
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<td>March 3-4</td>
<td>Eighteenth Meeting of the CROSQ Technical Management Committee</td>
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<td>March 7-8</td>
<td>CROSQ Workshop on Introduction to Metrology and Calibration</td>
<td>St. Kitts and Nevis</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7-8</td>
<td>CROSQ Standards and Conformity Assessment Train-the-Trainers Workshop</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<td>March 12-31</td>
<td>Pro€Invest/PTB/EURAMET CARIMET Attachments</td>
<td>Various European National Metrology Institutes</td>
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<td>April 4-7</td>
<td>Meeting of the CARIMET Committee of CROSQ</td>
<td>St. Kitts and Nevis</td>
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<td>April 5-8</td>
<td>CROSQ Coaching Workshops on Implementation of Standards for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</td>
<td>Suriname</td>
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<td>April 11-15</td>
<td>Eighteenth Meeting of the Council of CROSQ</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
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<td>April 20</td>
<td>CROSQ Conference on Standardisation for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>May 9-11</td>
<td>SIM Chemical Metrology Working Group</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<td>May 17-20</td>
<td>SIM/CARIMET Legal Metrology Working Group</td>
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<td>May 18-20</td>
<td>Eighth Metrology Symposium</td>
<td>Havana, Cuba</td>
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<td>May 18-20</td>
<td>CROSQ Workshop on Good Regulatory Practices</td>
<td>Suriname</td>
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<td>May 20</td>
<td>World Metrology Day</td>
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<td>May 25-26</td>
<td>CROSQ Workshop on Good Regulatory Practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30-June 3</td>
<td>Third Meeting of the Regional Information Network Committee of CROSQ</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
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