WELCOME

The CROSQ Standard newsletter aims to:

- Raise awareness about the necessity for Standards
- Inform the Standards Bureaux and the Member States about the activities of CROSQ projects

The CROSQ Standard is published four times a year, and is distributed to National Standards Bodies throughout the region. All are encouraged to send articles, photos and updates on their activities, relating to the SME project’s implementation and the development of standards.

If you wish to join the distribution list or to submit articles, please send your request and submission to newsletter@crosq.org.

Editions of The CROSQ Standard can be viewed on the CROSQ website: http://www.crosq.org

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Many people in the Caribbean struggle to keep up with the increasingly large number of acronyms used to represent regional agencies and institutions which have been established to support the many facets of regional integration. CROSQ is one of the more recent with a mandate that does not readily resonate with the public. Yet, the fulfillment of this mandate has far reaching implications for the region’s public and private sectors and can have a significant impact on the lives of our citizens. CROSQ has been given the mandate of promoting the establishment of the Regional Quality Infrastructure. This is based on coordination and harmonization of activities in the four pillars of the standardization system - metrology, standards, testing (conformity assessment) and quality (certification, accreditation, etc.), which is designated as the MSTQ system.

CROSQ is entering a very exciting phase of its relatively short existence. A number of donor-funded projects are being implemented to enable the organization to build the institutional capacity it requires to fulfill its mandate as well as to respond to specific needs identified by the private sector and by other sister regional organizations. These include: IDB-MIF Project on enhancing SME competitiveness through standardization; IDB-MIF Project on developing the Regional Quality Infrastructure; CDB Project on the development of a Regional Building Code; EDF Project to support the establishment of CLAS (medical laboratories accreditation scheme); and CIDA Project to promote the implementation of a quality management system and a “progressive excellence” program within CROSQ.

In addition to this, it is collaborating with the CTO (Caribbean Tourism Organization) in piloting a quality management program (Hospitality Assurance) in the Regional Tourism Industry and with CDERA on a Regional Public Goods project.

Most people familiar with the work of National Standards Bodies consider the principal activity of CROSQ to be the elaboration of regional standards. Indeed this legacy was inherited from CROSQ’s precursor, the CCMS. Increasingly, it is being recognized within the region that most of the new standards development work being done is taking place at the international level and that it is now more important for the region to be participating effectively within international standards-setting bodies rather than focusing on regional standards. There is already a substantial inventory of international standards available and it is more prudent to adopt these, with appropriate amendments where necessary, and avoid duplication of effort and/or the risk of producing standards which do not harmonize with international norms. It is reasonable to conclude that CROSQ will need to assign a higher priority in the future to assisting regional regulatory bodies and the private sector in activities relating to the implementation and effective use of standards and to ensuring harmonization of regional positions for, and coordination of regional participation in, International standards-setting bodies.

The project activities described earlier provide a clear indication that CROSQ is already being asked to become actively involved across the entire spectrum of its mandate. It is important for stakeholders to understand that the character of the organization will continue to evolve from the anonymity of producing seemingly obscure standards documents, to one intimately involved in the production and regulation of the goods and services which are used by all consumers. It is to be expected that both the size and status of the organization will need to be enhanced to support this development. These are indeed exciting times for CROSQ and the Secretariat looks forward with eager anticipation to successful execution of these activities.
SME Project Updates

REGIONAL CONFERENCE
Planning is well under way for the upcoming Regional Conference entitled ‘Enhancing Trade Competitiveness through Standardisation and Conformity Assessment’.

The conference is being held on July 17-18, 2007 at the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards Auditorium and caters for a maximum of 120 persons from a cross section of the Small and Medium sized Enterprise Sector within the CARICOM region. This will include persons from the cottage, food, agriculture, services and tourism sectors.

This regional conference is designed to provide a forum for national and regional SMEs to discuss trade issues and potential technical barriers to trade.

The conference will be very informative, especially for those SMEs seeking to gain access to regional and international markets. It will also target private and public sector agencies that provide an enabling environment to support SME export competitiveness.

Some sponsorship has already been secured through the Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation. These funds will be used to sponsor the attendance of one SME within the tourism and hospitality sector in each CARIFORUM country.

REGIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
We have finally reached the end of the hiatus in the procurement of a consulting firm to develop a Regional Information System. This system is being developed to facilitate greater participation by all Member States.

The objective is the design, enhancement, set-up and maintenance of an information system to aid in the process of standardisation in each of the member states of CARICOM, and to strengthen the regional system at the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ). This is aimed at helping supply information that facilitates market access to entrepreneurs and coordinating activities within the national standardisation system in each country, and amongst countries of the region.

Expandability is an important criterion of the regional information system as the system will be eventually rolled out to each country of the member states taking into account the particular characteristics of each.

Users would include the National Standards Bureaus, national and regional stakeholders involved in standards development, SMEs, entrepreneurs in general, public agencies, trade associations, technological centers, the academic sector, international organisations in standardisation, conformity assessment and trade matters, and others interested in the information.

MERGING OF PEU
The two projects – ‘Promoting SME Competitiveness In the Caribbean Through Technical Standards’ and ‘Harmonised Regional Quality Infrastructure For Improving Market Access and Competitiveness’ will both be managed and administered through one execution unit, commencing July 01, 2007. It is anticipated that the new Project Manager and Accounts Clerk/Administrative Assistant will both be on board by that time.

Both projects are managed in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and are funded through the Technical Cooperation Facility of the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF). These funds are used to finance the contracting of consulting services and the procurement of goods necessary for the execution of the projects.

We take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Deborah Nurse, who has managed the project ‘Promoting SME Competitiveness In the Caribbean Through Technical Standards’, from its inception, for all her hard work and dedication. Her commitment to excellence will ensure success in all her future endeavours.

Mrs. Deborah Nurse

The National Coordinators for the SME Project

- **BARBADOS**: Ms. Anthea Ishmael, Acting Director, Barbados National Standards Institute
- **JAMAICA**: Ms. Paulette Terrelonge
- **GUYANA**: Ms. Shuné Vickerie, Head, Standardisation, Guyana National Bureau of Standards
- **TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**: Ms. Beverly Monroe, Standards Officer II, Standardization Division, Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards
Regional Conference on Standardization and Conformity Assessment

CROSQ, in conjunction with the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), will be hosting a conference entitled “Enhancing Trade Competitiveness of SMEs through Standardization and Conformity Assessment” on 17th and 18th July 2007 at the auditorium of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards, Macoya, Trinidad.

The target audience includes local and regional Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) involved in the service, cottage, food, tourism and agriculture industries, as well as stakeholders in the public and private sector who are involved in the standardization process.

SMEs are globally perceived as the economic drivers of any nation and as such must be able to provide high quality products and services to access regional and international markets. The use of regional technical standards positively affects product and service quality and consequently improves profit margins leading to financial sustainability.

The aim of the conference is to promote the development and application of regional technical standards with the objective of enhancing the trade potential of SMEs. This regional conference is also designed to provide a forum for national and regional SMEs to discuss trade issues and potential technical barriers to trade.

Presentations will be made to address the above issues, by key personnel from the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Trinidad), an international speaker with substantial experience in the areas of standardization and conformity assessment, and various regional speakers involved in trade and other related issues.

The conference is an initiative of an SME project which is being funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and executed by CROSQ in collaboration with the Bureaux of Standards in Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad. The Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation has also agreed to co-sponsor the conference by funding SME participants from the region involved in the tourism sector.

The aforementioned organizations are providing resources at an international and regional level to ensure that the conference is well patronized and benefits accrue to regional SMEs to enhance trade capacity.

A Look At TTBS’s National Coordinator

Ms. Beverly Monroe has been acting in the capacity of National Coordinator for Trinidad and Tobago for the SME Project. She has been employed with the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) for the past ten years and is currently involved in the development and revision of standards in the area of Garments and Textiles in the Standardization Division.

Ms. Beverly Monroe, National Coordinator, TTBS

She started working on the project entitled “Promoting SME competitiveness through regional technical standards” in February 2006 as an assistant to the National Coordinator - Mr Prem Nandall - and since then she has organized one national conference in September 2006 and is currently preparing for a regional conference in July 2007.

As she states, “I am convinced that the project is designed to benefit all stakeholders including local and regional Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), national standards bodies and by extension, the economies of participating CARICOM member states. SMEs emerge as the major beneficiaries since they are the target audience for conferences, workshops and training sessions designed to promote the use and benefits of standards for regional and global integration. Product and service standards have been prioritised for development in key areas to address TBT issues to facilitate regional and extra-regional trade.”

Ms. Munroe identifies the following direct benefits accruing to SMEs to include:

- The training of technical staff in the requirements of relevant standards to encourage their implementation and the possible certification of related products and services. The aim is to have one standard that is recognized by all countries in the region to facilitate the free movement of goods.
- The sharing of information amongst SMEs via the use of a regional information database so that traders, trade requirements and potential export markets become easily accessible.
- The improvement of the quality of products and services through the implementation of standards to increase marketability and sustain a competitive advantage.

Ms. Munroe adds that the project has provided an opportunity to enable TTBS to execute its role of a national standards body in the following areas:

- Sensitisation of the public and private sector (via conferences and workshops) to the process of standardization and the importance of stakeholder involvement in the development of standards.
- Development of regional technical standards in the areas of tourism, food and agriculture to enhance the trade potential of local enterprises.
- Creation of an SME interface to provide SMEs and other businesses with trade information, technical data and specified training to address their needs.

“SMEs are the economic drivers of a country and as such will enhance the economic growth of Trinidad and Tobago through the production and exportation of high quality goods and services. The major objective of the project is to provide a competitive edge to SMEs to increase market share, promote branding and penetrate foreign markets. I am committed to working with the PEU to ensure that this project objective is achieved.”

Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure
BOOST TO BSOS

The capacity of regional Business Support Organisations (BSOs) to offer enhanced services to the region’s Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will be greatly boosted, when the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) unfurls a series of training workshops designed to strengthen the institutional capacity of BSOs.

A total of 16 workshops dealing with Proposal Writing, Strategic Planning, E-commerce, Advocacy and Lobbying will be delivered in some 10 countries throughout the month of June. According to Leonardo Castro-Puig, Caribbean Export’s Technical Assistant, Sectors and Sub-Sectors, “Regional BSOs identified the specific as their priority training needs last July during a meeting in Barbados, which also saw in the formation of the Caribbean Network (CARIBISNET)

The workshops are being coordinated by Caribbean Export under the 9th Economic Development Fund (EDF) Caribbean Regional Trade and Private Sector Programme (CRTPSDP) of the European Commission.

For further information on the seminars, contact: Leonardo Castro-Puig, Tel: (809) 531-6565, Fax: (809) 473-7532, E-mail: leo.castro@verizon.net.do.

CARIBBEAN PAVILION AT SUMMER FANCY FOOD

The Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) will be coordinating regional specialty food exporters’ participation to the 53rd National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASIFT) Summer Fancy Food Show, when the Caribbean Pavilion makes its 14th appearance at Jacob K. Javits Center, New York from July 8-10, 2007. The flavour, taste and aroma of Caribbean food and culture will be on display throughout the three days in the pavilion.

According to Sam Kruiner, Caribbean Export’s Technical Advisor, Business Support Organisations, “Caribbean food manufacturers and exporters will have the opportunity to showcase their products at the largest food exhibition in North America. Nine (9) companies from Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago will display condiments, conserves, jams, seasonings, etc. For further information on the Caribbean Pavilion, contact Sam Kruiner, Tel: (246) 436-0578, Fax: (246) 436-9999, E-mail: skruiner@carib-export.com

AGREEMENT SIGNED

In Mid-May, the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) and the Trade Facilitation Office Canada (TFOC) signed a Letter of Agreement signalling the start of a strategic alliance between the two organisations. In welcoming the signing of the Letter of Agreement, Taiana Mora-Ramis, Caribbean Export’s Executive Director stated, “The Agreement is based on discussions held in Ottawa in late April with TFOC officials and provides a framework for enhancing the export capacity of the region’s Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and will also augment the trade support capabilities of Business Support Organisations (BSOs) in the region.”

The core elements of the programme to be executed over the period June 2007 – October, 2008 are:

• Training interventions for services providers and SMEs in the craft and gift sectors
• Training on investment promotion for regional BSOs
• A regional services trade mission to Canada
• Regional participation in Canada’s major handicap craft trade show
• Technical assistance to the development of Caribbean Export’s online Business Information Centre.

ABOUT CARIBBEAN EXPORT

Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) is a regional organisation of the Forum of Caribbean States (CARIFORUM) which became operational on January 1, 1996. Caribbean Export’s membership base currently consists of the fifteen (15) Member States of CARIFORUM. Discussions are presently in progress to expand the membership to include Cuba, the French DOMs and the Dutch OTCs. The Agency is governed by a Board of Directors which in turn reports to the Council of Ministers. The Board Members are selected from the public and private sector, as appointed by the governments of the Member States.

Caribbean Export’s vision is to be the premier organisation for trade development in the Caribbean. Its mission is to provide quality trade development and trade promotion services to increase the competitiveness of Caribbean companies through effective programme execution and strategic partnerships. More information about Caribbean Export can be found at www.carib-export.com.
Caribbean Gift and Show A Unique Experience

Endorsed by the Government of Curàçao, the Caribbean Gift and Craft Show (CGCS) 2007 will be held for the first time in Curàçao, September 27-30 at the World Trade Center. The CGCS which is managed by the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) is a showcase of authentic gift, craft, fashion, art and decorative accessories made by Caribbean artisans using a arrange of indigenous materials.

Handelskade, Curàçao

At the official launch of the show in Curàçao earlier this year the Lieutenant Governor of Curàçao, Mrs. Lisa Richards-Dindial expressed the hope that Curàçao would help the show to achieve its objectives by “adding new products to the selection and serving as a new market with close connections to complementary regional and international markets.”

The Caribbean Gift and Craft Show, now in its fourteenth year, attracts over 200 exhibitors from across the English, French, Dutch and Spanish speaking Caribbean. In an effort to attract 400 trade buyers from both regional and international markets, Caribbean Export is placing greater emphasis on product innovation and an awareness of international trends. The show is also expanding its marketing efforts in Europe, North America, South America and in regional markets to attract a larger buying audience.

The theme for this year’s show is “Celebrating Caribbean Creativity and Cultural Diversity” and included in the show’s special events are Business Seminars, Caribbean Fashion Rhythms, Best of Show Awards, Art Auctions, and Match-Making Meetings with Curàçao trade buyers. Special hotel and flight packages are also available for all CGCS participants.

For further details on the show contact Veona Maloney, CGCS Show Manager at vmaloney@carib-export.com or visit www.caribbeangiftandcraft.com

Design by 2006 Award Winner, Rykii de Jude

Design by 2006 Award Winner, Luna
Designs Gold & Vegetable Ivory

2006 Award Winner, Island Booths
HARMONISED REGIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE
The project entitled “Harmonized Regional Quality Infrastructure for Improving Market Access and Competitiveness”, which is funded by the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), will commence on 1 July 2007. The management of the project will be undertaken by a Project Manager, an Administrative Officer and an Accounts Clerk/Administrative Assistant, who will comprise the Project Execution Unit (PEU).

CROSQ has also hired the Regional Technical Support Coordinator (RTSC) for this project, whose chief responsibility will be to supervise the general technical progress of the Regional Quality Infrastructure Project Work Programme at the regional and national levels and to coordinate the development of Programme components in each country as defined in the work-plan established by the Project Advisory Committee. The RTSC will begin working on 1 July 2007.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL BUILDING CODES
CROSQ has established the Regional Technical Committee (RTC) and the National Technical Subcommittees (NTSCs) for the project to develop Regional Building Standards in the Caribbean, funded by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). CROSQ is currently in the process of hiring the Project Coordinator to manage the project. The Project Execution Unit (PEU) is expected to be operational by 1 August 2007.

CARIBBEAN LABORATORY ACCREDITATION SERVICES
CROSQ has received a Grant through the Ninth EDF financing programme to support the co-ordination of the regional development of accreditation of laboratories, through the establishment of a CLAS project. The objectives of this project are to:

- Participate in the ongoing consultations and cooperation arrangements among national accreditation bodies (or focal points) on the development and implementation of standards and certification to such standards;
- Maintain contacts with similar national and regional accreditation bodies around the world;
- Maintain information systems and documentation pertinent to the improvement in laboratory techniques and to the accreditation, stage by stage, of laboratories and professionals;
- Develop and implement training materials and programmes for both professional development and process development; and
- Conduct reviews and testing of laboratories leading to full accreditation of both laboratories and associated professionals.

In seeking to achieve these objectives, CLAS will work in collaboration with national accreditation bodies such as those that currently exist in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, rather than compete with them. Thus CLAS would only be directly responsible for the conduct of assessments in those territories where no accreditation bodies exist.

REGIONAL DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
CROSQ is collaborating with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) in support of the Regional Disaster Risk Management for Sustainable Tourism in the Caribbean project. The project is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as a Regional Public Goods project, and is expected to develop and adopt a Regional Public Good that is a regional risk management framework for the tourism sector in the Caribbean.

The project entails the development of a regional disaster risk management strategy for sustainable tourism, including the formulation of standards for vulnerability assessments and risk mapping applied to the tourism sector; and institutional strengthening of the CDERA, CTO and other stakeholders in disaster risk management for sustainable tourism.

The project will be executed by CDERA, in conjunction with CTO, CROSQ and the University of the West Indies (UWI), with CDERA serving as the project’s executing agency. To facilitate its coordination, CDERA has established an Executing Unit consisting of a Project Coordinator, and a Technical Officer. The Executing Unit specifically, and the execution of the Project as a whole, will be guided by a Project Advisory Committee which is to be established with the participation of CDERA, CTO, and CROSQ, and representatives from five countries.

The first meeting of the Project Advisory Committee was held on 18-19 June 2007, with attendance by representatives from CDERA, CTO, CROSQ, Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Turks and Caicos.

HOSPITALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMME
CROSQ is partnering with the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) in developing a quality management program (Hospitality Assurance) in the Regional Tourism Industry.

A Regional Technical Committee (RTC-6) has been established, which will develop and harmonize regional standards and technical regulations that are applicable and able to be implemented within the tourism and hospitality sector to enhance global competitiveness.

The RTC-6 has the following objectives:

- Importance/potential effect of standards or technical regulations for the tourism and hospitality sector;
- Relevance and technical validity of the standards or technical regulations;
- Effectiveness of applied standards or technical regulations under its jurisdiction;
- Interpretations of published standards or technical regulations under its jurisdiction to interested parties; and
- Participation of interested parties in the development or revision of standards or technical regulations.

The Second Meeting of the RTC-6 was held on 18 May 2007 in St. Lucia.
The Impact of the CSME on Laboratories

The CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) is designed to facilitate the free movement of goods and services across the CARICOM Region. In order for this arrangement to be implemented, consensus on standards used for goods and services is vital. Goods and services will be required to meet the required standards before they can be traded or accepted on the CARICOM Market. Failure to provide evidence that goods and services are meeting required standards will lead to limited access to international and regional markets, which will affect National economies since we will not be able to sell our goods and services.

Laboratories provide a service and are not exempted from CSME. In fact, laboratories are key services that determine the quality of products manufactured, our health status and whether tested or calibrated items are accurate.

The Way Forward

The time has come for the Management of laboratories (testing and calibrating) to recognize that they are the key players to ensure that laboratories are conforming to the required standards. This is the only way that the quality of testing and calibration services can be verified. Top management must be familiar with the requirements of the laboratory standard, specific to the scope of the laboratory, to ensure that the required resources are available for the operation of the laboratory.

Essential resources for the effective operation of any laboratory include: facilities, equipment, personnel and test methods.

Facilities

Based on the type of laboratory, the facilities which include the laboratory environment must be suitable for the type of laboratory operations, whether testing or calibration, to ensure that the quality of reagents and standards are preserved. In addition, there needs to be the optimum performance and preservation of equipment used in the facility.

Equipment

The laboratory must have equipment that is calibrated, standardised and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers’ instructions. Records of these activities must be available at the laboratory as evidence that the equipment is functioning to provide accurate and reliable results.

Personnel

Laboratory personnel must be competent to perform their assigned duties. This will facilitate conformance to procedures, trouble shooting and accurate results. The laboratory management must periodically evaluate the laboratory personnel and provide the training necessary for their improvement. Staff competency is very essential in the accuracy of the results produced by the laboratory.

Test Methods

The laboratory must use methods (calibration or testing) that are standard or recognised to carry out activities. If non-standard methods or standard methods are used out of their scope, they should be validated before use. Test methods used must be approved and clearly documented.

How to Become CSME Ready

Laboratories must become accredited to the international standard that governs the operation of the laboratory. An accredited laboratory is recognized for its technical competence; i.e. its ability to perform testing or calibration activities within its scope competently. In fact if the results are accurate and reliable, they will be accepted globally and will not be questionable.

Laboratories are accredited by Accreditation Bodies that recognized the competency of the laboratory through assessment audits. Once accreditation is granted, the laboratory will be listed among the international list of accredited laboratories.

This is an investment that will boost staff morale, promote the laboratory’s competence and most importantly increase the customer population for the laboratory. The quality products tested by an accredited laboratory will not be questioned, leading to increase market value, customer satisfaction and increased demand.

Standards Available for Accreditation

- Testing and Calibration Laboratory, 180/IEC 1205 standard, “General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories”.
- Medical laboratories, ISO 15189 standard, Medical Laboratories – Particular requirements for competence.

Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening of CROSQ

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is working with CROSQ on a capacity building and institutional strengthening project through the implementation of a quality management system and a “progressive excellence” program within CROSQ. The project is being implemented through TDV Global and the Wren Group.

Through initial meetings with representatives from TDV Global and the Wren Group, a base-line assessment to Member State PEP Level I was performed, as well as PEP Level 2 assessment to identify improvement initiatives.

Additionally, the CROSQ Quality Manual and related procedures was consolidated into a functional quality management system that could be implemented by the Secretariat in an effective manner.

The CIDA project aims to also implement a documented process for adequate control and archiving of Regional standards to ensure that the National Standards Bureaux have the most recent Standard available at any given time.

Phase II of the project will look at conducting an ISO9000 auditor course for the Region.
Harmonised Regional Quality Infrastructure

CARICOM, through its Committee on Trade and Development (COTED) has recognized the importance of quality infrastructure development for trade facilitation, and has acknowledged the need for regional coordination in this area within the region. With CARICOM now focused on deepening the CSME among member states, the harmonization of conformity assessment systems has become of central importance.

This project entitled ‘Harmonized Regional Quality Infrastructure For Improving Market Access and Competitiveness’, is in line with two of the Inter-American Bank’s (IDB) major focus areas, namely competitiveness and regional integration, and is designed to improve market access and strengthen the regional integration process.

In Caribbean countries, the implementation of a regional Measurement, Standards Testing and Quality Infrastructure (MSTQ) is paramount, because it is essential for the competitiveness of the productive sector, the elimination of technical barriers to trade, and the further improvement of political objectives such as environment, health and consumer protection.

The primary objective of this project, which is funded through the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), is to contribute to the economic competitiveness and regional development by facilitating market access through the use of harmonized and traceable legal metrology service. The purpose is to strengthen the existing CARICOM regional metrology infrastructure while regionalizing the Measurement Standards Testing and Quality infrastructure (MSTQ) towards international recognition.

The purpose will be achieved through five components:

- Assuring traceability in metrology through regional cooperation;
- Development of regional calibration, testing and verification;
- Development of regional accreditation structure;
- Implementation of standards and technical regulations;
- Coordination of regional infrastructure

Project sustainability will be achieved in two ways:

- the proposed regional coordination and consolidation of metrology facilities and services will set a precedent that can subsequently continue to work using a blend of public and private funding; and
- the project and information and awareness-raising activities and tangible outcomes from selected countries where the infrastructure is stronger, to support the broader quality infrastructure of the region, could create an interest on the part of other private-sector organizations and/or governmental bodies in promoting efficient procedures for the development of standards, the elimination of trade barriers and regional integration.

A sustainability workshop between the Bank and the Executing Agency, will take place one year prior to project completion in order to examine prospects for project continuity and the measures required.

The expected outcomes of the project will include:

- the strengthening of the Regional Quality Infrastructure (ROI) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in order to facilitate the international recognition of the conformity assurance mechanisms of the region;
- improved competitiveness, market access, environmental and consumer protection as a result of applying standards and conformity assessment practices and overcoming technical barriers to trade;
- increase in trade as a result of applying standards and conformity assessment practices;
- increase in the number and traceability of the measurement of basic physical quantities in the area of metrology;
- the accreditation of laboratories important to critical economic sectors that will help to strengthen the technical capabilities of the laboratories in the region;
- harmonization of regional practices with international norms, via the application of the CROSQ standards development model, in order to achieve international recognition;
- reinforcement of the institutional framework for conformity assessment at the regional level while at the same time, strengthening the CROSQ secretariat to serve as the system administrator; and
- by virtue of their membership to CROSQ, all fifteen CARICOM member states will benefit from the project through awareness and information sharing activities.

The project will be executed over a period of 48 months and will become effective on July 01, 2007.

A Bit More About CROSQ

CROSQ was established in a CARICOM Community treaty as an Intergovernmental Organisation and the regional centre for promoting efficiency and competitive production in trade and services, through the process of standardisation and the verification of quality.

Located in Bridgetown, Barbados, CROSQ is the successor to the Caribbean Common Market Standards Council (CCMSC), and supports the CARICOM mandate in the expansion of intra-regional and extra-regional export of goods and services. CROSQ is mandated to represent the interest of the region in international and hemispheric standards work, to promote the harmonisation of metrology systems and standards, and to increase the pace of standards development in the region, as it facilitates the resolution of CARICOM trade disputes where standards are involved.

In the execution of its mandate, CROSQ would serve as the Regional Accreditation Body, and as an enquiry, notification and information point for World Trade Organisation (WTO) related matters on behalf of Member States, and would provide international representation for Member States on Standards related matters.
Building An Infrastructure For Sustainable Development

Metrology, Standardisation and Conformity Assessment are used by the Business and Government sectors to optimize production, health, consumer protection, environment, security, and quality. Their effective implementation supports sustainable development and social welfare and facilitates trade.

With the increasing globalization of markets, metrology, standardisation and conformity assessment have become critical to the trading process, ensuring a level playing field for exports and ensuring imports meet internationally recognized levels of performance and safety.

The Metrology Pillar
Metrology is the science of measurement and plays a key role in the areas of science, research, production, testing and certification. Metrology forms an “umbrella” for areas such as measurement theory, measurement standards and “measurement equipment.” It also plays a pivotal role in standardisation, manufacturing, quality assurance and the testing and certification of goods, products and services.

The Standardisation Pillar
Standardisation contributes not only to international trade but also to the basic infrastructure that underpins society, including health and environment, while promoting sustainability and acceptable regulatory practice.

International Standards, or the national or regional adoption of international standards, help domestic markets to operate effectively, increase competitiveness and provide an excellent source of technology transfer to developing countries like those in the Caribbean. They play an integral role in the protection of consumers and the environment.

The role of standardisation is appreciated in the effects it has on helping to make products safe, reliable and compatible. From sport to food, from clothing to scientific instruments, from equipment to management or manufacturing practices, standards ensure compatibility between products or systems and assist in the spread of new technology.

The Conformity Assessment Pillar
Conformity Assessment plays a critical role in building confidence for sustainable development and trade. Conformity Assessment procedures such as testing, inspection and certification, offer assurance that products fulfill the requirements specified in regulations and standards.

Establishing accreditation systems based on international standards and guides can provide assurance to trading partners that suppliers of tests and certificates are competent.

At the same time it helps in overcoming technical trade barriers and in complying with the requirements of the WTO/TBT Agreement.

Having confidence in products, services and people is important to everyone’s well being. It is also essential for economic efficiency and for the reduction of technical barriers to trade in the context of relevant WTO agreements. ISO contributes to this well being and efficiency by producing international standards and guides that harmonise and record internationally accepted practices for assessing the conformity of products, services, processes, systems, personnel and organisations to predefined requirements.

Application of these conformity assessment practices contributes to economic efficiency, sustainable development and fair trade.

Building Capacity
The three pillars described above are interdependent. Metrology and physical standards provide the basis for accurate measurements, the accepted performance of which can be written international standards, which in turn can be used as the basis for conformity assessment.

It is important to ensure that societies and industries in developing countries in the region have access to a technical infrastructure which reflects specific needs and will enable sustainable development and trade. Capacity-building efforts should be based on:
- Thorough needs assessment for all sectors of the economy;
- Understanding that there is no ready-made model for technical infrastructure;
- Careful consideration of the assessed needs, based on the type and appropriate sequencing of assistance, to ensure the technical infrastructure is built in a sustainable and planned manner;
- Clear articulation of the resources and finance that will be required to sustain the necessary technical infrastructure; and
- Development of a national technical infrastructure should not preclude consideration of bilateral or regional service delivery options that may achieve better economies of scale.

The three pillars (Metrology, Standardisation & Conformity Assessment) are vital for all stakeholders and the provision for assistance aimed at strengthening the technical infrastructures in the region is necessary for sustainable development and to enable us to effectively participate in global trading.

Conformity Assessment gives assurance that products, services, materials, processes, systems and personnel measure up to state-of-the-art requirements such as those provided by ISO and IEC international standards which are essential for efficient functioning economies, international trade and sustainable use of the world’s resources.

Adapted from article for Guyana
The CROSQ Technical Management Committee

STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
The CROSQ Technical Management Committee (TMC) held its Seventh Meeting in January 2007 in Trinidad and Tobago. Thanks are due to the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) for the efficient hosting of this two-day meeting. Unfortunately a quorum was not achieved at this meeting but this did not deter the members who attended from making significant contributions to the progress of the technical work of CROSQ.

At the upcoming Eighth TMC meeting scheduled for 9-10 July 2007 in Barbados, decisions from the Seventh TMC will be ratified. At this meeting too, the TMC will welcome its newest member, Dominica, and hold elections for the following posts: Chair; Vice Chair; SME Standards Project Coordinator; as well as any other position deemed necessary to efficiently execute the technical work of CROSQ, as enshrined in the TMC’s mandate and Terms of Reference.

TOPICAL STANDARDS — RELATED MATTERS
The world is presently entering a new era in regulation, particularly in the area of food, where the underlying objective is not only to keep food safe, but also to contribute to improved public health.

To enable this, standards bodies are concentrating more and more on nutrition and public health matters, while at the same time maintaining the protection of food safety through compositional, labelling and food safety (hygiene) standards. New areas in response to industry or government commitment to whole-of-chain approaches to food safety, through the development of primary production and processing standards are also in the fore.

The work involved in developing these types of standards is considerable, with the various primary sectors and relevant stakeholders, in fact, keen on seeing paddock-to-plate (farm to fork) approaches to food safety.

Globally, there is focus on entire sectors of the food supply chain, rather than simply approving individual food products as was popular in the past. This is a much more complex and resource-intensive exercise.

The expanded work programme requires extensive public debate and consultation with affected stakeholders. An unprecedented proportion of resources has now been established as being intrinsic to this task if it is to be successfully executed.

Because public health-related standards and primary production standards have far-reaching consequences for the whole population and international trade, it is not recommended to short-circuit the consultation process.

One of the challenges of CROSQ is to prevent our resources being stretched to the point that difficulty arises in approving routine applications within specified timeframes. Slowing of the approval processes could lead to the food industry (and other industries) struggling to remain competitive, and innovation being stifled.

The science behind functional and fortified foods is incredibly complex, yet these foods proliferate in the marketplace and require scrutiny. This means that there is the need to substantially enhance regional capacity and evidence – base, in the social sciences, medical research, nutrition, testing and calibration laboratories’ capabilities and economics if the issues associated with these new foods are to be addressed. CROSQ has received specific queries on GMOs, Fruit “Drinks”, “Power and High-Energy” Drinks, Packaged (particularly bottled) Water, Packaged Coconut Water, Coconut Oil, Brown Sugar, Rice, Red Beans and nutritional specifications for “Canned Sausages”.

Food regulators the world over are grappling with similar issues – they are not unique to this region. With the assistance of our regional regulatory partners, who are placed to implement standards approved by COTED and enforce regulations, we will continue to play our part in the protection of the health of consumers through safe food.

Also, by providing shoppers with the information necessary to make wise and informed purchasing decisions by our ongoing development of Labelling Standards for selected products - Foods, Prepackaged Goods, Paints, Aerosol Insecticides, Garments, Textiles, Footwear, Electrical Appliances, Gold Articles and Retail Packages of Cigarettes, among others - the needs of Consumers are being met. These Labelling Standards are currently all on the TMC Workplan, at various stages of development.

Further information can be obtained from the Technical Officer at CROSQ.
# 2007 REGIONAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

## DAY 1

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<td>Address by Chairman of CROSQ</td>
<td>Mr. Prem Nandlal</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSME and Trade – Regional Outlook</td>
<td>Mr. Norris Herbert, Ministry of Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature Address - Quality and Trade</td>
<td>Hon. Ken Valley, Minister of Trade &amp; Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits of Standardization</td>
<td>Mr. Pedro Vilaseca, International Consultant</td>
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<td>Regional Standards—Work of CROSQ</td>
<td>Mr. Kenneth Mullin, CROSQ</td>
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<td>Question and Answer — moderated by Chairperson</td>
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<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
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<td>CSME Working for the Private Sector</td>
<td>Leela Ramoutar, CSME Unit, CARICOM Secretariat</td>
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<td>Challenges Faced by SMEs</td>
<td>Ms. Lynette Holder, CASME</td>
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<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>10 Steps to Exporting</td>
<td>FEDEX</td>
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<td>Question and Answer — moderated by Chairperson</td>
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## DAY 2

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<tr>
<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overview of Conformity Assessment Principles</td>
<td>Mr. Pedro Vilaseca, International Consultant</td>
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<td>Product Certification—ECO Labels</td>
<td>Mr. Ian Salter, CRSTDP</td>
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<td>Q &amp; EMS Certification for SMEs</td>
<td>Mr. Terrance Awai, TTBS</td>
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<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>Hospitality Assured Certification – Relevance for Caribbean Tourism</td>
<td>Ms. Bonita Morgan, CTO</td>
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<td>Standards for Cottage Industries</td>
<td>Mr. Sam Kruiner, CEDA</td>
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<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
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<td>Laboratory Accreditation - Regional Benefits</td>
<td>Ms. Giselle Guevara, TTBS</td>
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<td>Food Safety Standards: HACCP</td>
<td>Mr. Pedro Vilaseca, International Consultant</td>
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<td>Agricultural Standards: Plant and Animal Health</td>
<td>Margaret Kallo, CARICOM Secretariat</td>
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<td>Government Initiatives for SMEs</td>
<td>Ms. Annelle Joachim, BDC</td>
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<td>Panel Discussion - New Business Opportunities for SMEs</td>
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## 2007 EVENTS

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<tr>
<td>July 11-12</td>
<td>Eleventh Meeting of the Council of CROSQ</td>
<td>Warrens Complex, Barbados</td>
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<td>July 17-18</td>
<td>Regional Conference on ‘Enhancing Trade Competitiveness through Standardisation and Conformity Assessment’</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards’ Auditorium, Tunapuna, Trinidad</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 14-17</td>
<td>Caribbean Gift and Craft Show 2007</td>
<td>St. Kitts Marriott Resort and Royal Beach Casino, St. Kitts and Nevis</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 19-31</td>
<td>ILAC/IAG Joint General Assembly; Theme: “A Tradition of Accreditation”</td>
<td>Amora Hotel Jamison, Sydney, Australia</td>
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## 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.

For further information, please contact:
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Email: crosq.caricom@crosq.org

Please visit our website: www.crosq.org