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

The Agreement that established CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) was signed on 4 February 2002. Following a short gestation period, the organization became functional in 2003 with the establishment of the CROSQ office at ‘The Heritage’, 35 Pine Road, Belleville, St. Michael, Barbados. In five short years, the organization has grown steadily as the vision for CROSQ is translated into activities. Indeed, staff and project numbers have more than doubled over the past two years!

CROSQ Secretariat coordinates and facilitates regional standards development activities, guided by a Technical Management Committee, in close partnership with National Standards Bureaux. There are currently over 50 standards in various stages of development, covering a wide range of areas. Since these standards provide benefits to consumers and industry alike, public and private sector involvement is critical to this process. Two regional standards have been recently approved at the 24th Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in November 2007 and two other standards are in the final process for presentation to the 26th COTED in May 2008.

CROSQ is currently executing two projects funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), aimed at improving competitiveness and market access to small and medium business enterprises. A third project on Regional Building Standards, funded by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), is to be launched on 7 April 2008. This will produce updated and comprehensive regional building standards, facilitating a safer and more efficient design of buildings. In addition, CROSQ is responsible for the Caribbean Laboratory Accreditation Services (CLAS) project, expected to go on-stream shortly. Funded by the European Union under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF), this project will coordinate regional development of accreditation of laboratories, leveraging regional capacity and harmonizing processes and procedures.

CROSQ is also collaborating with a number of regional organizations. A project with Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the University of the West Indies (UWI) is aimed at developing a disaster risk management strategy and a plan of action for the tourism sector. CROSQ is tasked to manage the assessment process under CTO’s Hospitality Assured Certificate Program, and CROSQ is in discussion with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) to develop a climate change adaptation standard.

TDV Global Inc., a Canadian Strategic Management company, is working through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to assist CROSQ in a range of activities, in particular mapping of various processes and a quality management system.

CROSQ could not have done all of this in such a short space of time without the strong support of the National Standard Bureaux and other national/regional partners as well as the hard work of the Secretariat staff. I take the opportunity to thank all of these stakeholders and look forward to their support as we continue to forge ahead together with the task of living up to CROSQ’s mission statement: “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.”
IDB Projects Update

REGIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
The consultancy to develop the Regional Information System was awarded to P. A. Services Conseils Inc on 5 February 2008. The consultants commenced work on 1 March 2008 and the Inception Report is expected at the end of March.

HARMONISED REGIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE (RQI) PROJECT
The RQI Project is proceeding as planned with the assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB). The Regional Metrology Baseline Survey has been completed and the Accreditation Baseline Survey has begun. Data from these surveys will identify areas that must be initially addressed in the development of a Regional Quality Infrastructure.

To plan the way forward, a joint meeting of the Project Advisory Committee and the Project Steering Committee is being organised in April 2008. This meeting will be held in Barbados and will be attended by representatives of the CROSQ Secretariat and the Project Execution Unit (PEU), PTB, CARMET and Member States with expertise in different aspects of quality infrastructure. A major output from this meeting is a comprehensive plan addressing the implementation of the project activities.

DEVELOPMENT OF 25 NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS
Of the twenty-five normative documents identified for development at the meeting held in July 2007, the first fourteen standards (Groups 1 and 2) are currently with the Regional Technical Committees.

Once again, it must be reiterated that feedback is critical on all of the normative documents circulated. Comments, questions and suggestions are needed to assist in the production of standards that are beneficial to all Member States.

Arising from the Tenth Meeting of the CROSQ Technical Management Committee (TMC), and in discussion with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), it is proposed that individual consultants be hired to develop the remaining standards for which there are no base documents.

SME WORKSHOPS
Beverly Monroe is to be commended on the successful staging of the first SME workshop held in Trinidad & Tobago on 6 and 7 March 2008 at the conference facilities of Premier Quality Services Limited. The workshop was entitled “Standards in the Food Industry” and comprised of two half-day sessions.

The aim of the workshop, which catered to eighteen participants, was to familiarize SMEs with the standards development process and their associated role in that process.

The first Barbados workshop is scheduled for 23 April 2008, while Guyana has plans for the week of 12 - 16 May 2008. Trinidad has already started preparations for their second workshop, which is scheduled for 28 and 29 May 2008.

Workshops are to be hosted by the four sub-executing agencies under the SME Project. Both Trinidad and Jamaica will host five workshops each per year, while Barbados and Guyana will host two workshops each per year.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL EXPERT
On 14 March 2008, we said goodbye to Ms. Alice Walters who served as Regional Technical Expert (RTE) on the SME Project for the last eight months. Based on discussions at the Tenth TMC Meeting, and with other stakeholders, the decision was taken that the position of the RTE be made redundant.

We wish Ms. Walters all success in her future endeavours.

NEW NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR GUYANA
Guyana appointed a new National Coordinator, Mr. Elton Patram, to act as contact point for the SME project. Mr. Patram began in this role in March 2008 and has already started organizing an upcoming SME workshop to be held in May 2008.

RESTRUCTURING THE PROJECT TEAM
As of 1 April 2008, Ms. Andrea Applewhaite will no longer be working on the CROSQ/IDB-MIF Projects as Administrative Assistant but will be joining the CROSQ/CDB Regional Building Standards project.

Ms. Shernelle Worrell has accepted the additional duties of Administrative Assistant and as a result, the new project team will comprise of: Dr. Michael Seepersaud (Project Manager), Mr. Deenish Maharaj (Regional Technical Support Coordinator (RTSC)) and Ms. Shernelle Worrell (Administrative Assistant/Accountant).

CROSQ/IDB-MIF Projects Team: Michael Seepersaud, Deenish Maharaj and Shernelle Worrell

Ms. Alice Walters
Welcome to CROSQ’s New Executive Secretary

Dr Vyjayanthi (Vyju) Lopez, a national of Trinidad and Tobago, holds a Ph.D. from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. She brings to CROSQ more than 26 years of International experience - 10 years as Research Associate at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), India and 16 years at the CABI Caribbean and Latin America (CABI-CLA), Trinidad & Tobago, initially as Laboratory/ Project Manager and later as Regional Coordinator.

While at CABI-CLA, Dr Lopez designed and implemented a range of innovative research and development projects in the Caribbean and Central America, many of which routinely involved the application of International Standards for Phyto sanitary Measures (ISPMs). Dr Lopez was also part of a global team that executed a two-year International Development Research Centre (IDRC) -funded project, which analyzed stakeholder participation in the knowledge systems associated with development and implementation of ISPMs, and highlighted the need for harmonization at national and regional levels vis-à-vis requirements under the World Trade Organization - Sanitary and Phytosanitary (WTO-SPS) Agreement.

Dr Lopez has served as a resource person at several conferences/workshops and as a member of national and regional committees on plant health management. She has provided consultancy services to regional projects sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and European Union (EU), and has developed proposals for funding by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Several of the projects that Dr Lopez implemented, involved: institutional strengthening and capacity building; facilitation of small group communications; liaison with national, regional and global agencies; use of participatory approaches for stakeholder involvement; and networking of information and knowledge.

As the Executive Secretary of CROSQ, Dr Lopez plans to use her experience in carrying out CROSQ’s mandate: to harmonise and implement standards, to facilitate international competitiveness, and to increase regional and international trade; for the sustainable production of goods and services in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and the enhancement of social and economic development.

Dr. Lopez began her tenure with CROSQ in February 2008. The CROSQ Council, National Standards Bureaus and Secretariat staff look forward to working with Dr. Lopez for the next three years.

Thanks Shuné!

In 2006, a decision was taken by CROSQ that National Coordinators would be selected from each of the four Member States that were direct beneficiaries of the CROSQ/IDB-MIF SME project - Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago - to coordinate the activities of the project within the respective countries.

Having been employed at the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) for the past seven years, Ms. Shuné Vickerie, Head, Standardisation Department, was assigned to the position of National Coordinator for Guyana by the Executive Director of GNBS.

As National Coordinator, Ms. Vickerie was responsible for coordinating the various project activities, sitting in on the advisory and planning meetings for these activities, and being “point person” for project inquiries for Guyana.

In October 2006, she successfully organized an awareness building exercise in the form of a National Conference entitled “Competing in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) through Standardisation.”.

She also played a pivotal role in the identification of priority technical standards in sectors critical for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) during the planning meeting held in Trinidad in July 2007 to determine the 25 normative documents for the revised project output. Ms. Vickerie was critical to providing the Standards and Conformity Assessment Guidelines that were of priority for development in Guyana, so that a complete picture of the need for the region could be determined.

In March 2008, Shuné handed over her role as National Coordinator for the CROSQ/IDB-MIF SME Project to Mr. Elton Patram.

We wish to thank Ms. Vickerie for her excellent work for the valuable contributions she has made to the success of the project and we look forward to continued collaboration in her capacity as the Head of the Standardization Department of GNBS.
Regional Disaster Risk Management for Sustainable Tourism in the Caribbean

In mid-January 2008, a CROSQ representative was part of a Technical Evaluation Committee that evaluated consultant proposals received in response to a request for proposals in connection with the development of Regional Standards for Hazard Mapping, Vulnerability and Risk Assessments. The consultancy is being funded by the IDB financed Regional Disaster Risk Management for Sustainable Tourism in the Caribbean project, which is being implemented by a Project Execution Unit at the CDERA Coordination Unit. The project began in January 2007 and is expected to be completed by end December 2009.

In addition to their review process for the development of the Regional Standards, CROSQ will also participate in national consensus building workshops for the Standards that will take place during April and May 2008 hosted by Barbados, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and the Turks and Caicos Islands. A regional consensus building workshop on the Standards development is tentatively scheduled for early September 2008 in Trinidad & Tobago.

Caribbean Laboratory Accreditation Scheme

Interviews for the position on Project Coordinator of the Caribbean Accreditation Laboratory Scheme (CLAS) project, funded by the 9th EDF, were held in February 2008. Negotiations for the selection of the candidate are currently being held and it is expected that the Coordinator will begin duties by May 2008.

Quality Management System

Mr. Ron Higgins of Wren Group/TDV Global has been retained as the Quality Manager for CROSQ, with oversight for the implementation of the Quality Management System and Manual Policy of CROSQ. Mr. Higgins will be responsible for ensuring that CROSQ successfully implements the Quality Policy Manual that was developed based on the ISO 9001, and he also has responsibility for training the relevant staff in the use of the manual and ensuring accurate execution of its quality requirements.

TTBS Workshop - Standards in the Food Industry

This workshop was an initiative of an IDB-sponsored project, being executed in conjunction with the CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), with the aim of enhancing the competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) through regional standards.

The objective of the workshop was to sensitise SMEs to the use and benefits of standards in accessing regional and international markets and to apprise them of regional export requirements and requisite documentation. A consultant – Margaret West-Weston – was also contracted to introduce the topic of food safety and give a brief overview of the ISO 22000 standard – Food Safety Management System.

Eighteen SMEs in the food industry including caterers, agro-processors, fish processors and small businesses involved in the exportation of food products attended the workshop and received certificates of participation. The agenda was specifically tailored to meet the needs of SMEs operating in the above industries and included speakers from the Chemistry Food and Drugs Division - Ministry of Health, the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, the Barbados National Standards Institution (BSNI), The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP), the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company (NAMDEVCO), the Business Development Company Limited (BDC) and CROSQ.

Participants at the workshop

Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure
The Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS) was established as a statutory body under the Standards Act (#14) of 1990. The affairs of SLBS are governed by a broad based Standards Council, which sets the policy direction of the institution. This Council is accountable to the Minister of Commerce, Trade, Industry and Consumer Affairs. The Director of SLBS is the Chief Executive Officer.

The Standards Act provides for the preparation and promotion of standards in relation to goods, services, processes and practices used and produced locally. The Act gives SLBS the responsibility to develop and promote standards for products and services for the protection of the health and safety of consumers and the environment, as well as for industrial development, in order to promote the enhancement of the economy of Saint Lucia.

SLBS also administers the Metrology Act No. 17 of 2000. This legislation gives the organization the responsibility to regulate all weights and measures activities on the island to ensure fair trading practices. This Act also makes provision for the metrification of Saint Lucia.

SLBS executes its mandate through a number of programmes:

- **Standards Development** - National standards development and the formulation of national positions in respect of regional and international standardization initiatives
- **Certification** - Product and process certification

- **Compliance** - Compulsory standards compliance
- **Metrology** - Verification and calibration of measuring devices
- **Information Services** – Provision of technical information

SLBS offers technical assistance to the business community by way of training, development of standards and related activities.

SLBS serves as the National Enquiry Point for the World Trade Organization’s Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the contact point for the joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission which is responsible for developing international food standards.

Further, the institution has full membership with the following:

- International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
- CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ)
- Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT)
- Inter-American Metrology System (SIM)

SLBS has also forged partnerships and alliances with other regional and international standards bodies such as the:

- International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)
- American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM)
- British Standards Institute (BSI).
Strengthening of Medical Laboratories in the Caribbean

CLAS - THE WAY FORWARD
The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) has been engaged with the Project “Strengthening of Medical Laboratory Services in the Caribbean” (the Project) – a CARIFORUM Project funded by the European Union and implemented by CAREC - in the development of a regional mechanism for the accreditation of medical laboratory services within the region. The Caribbean Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (CLAS) has been agreed by the CROSQ Council and will soon be established at CROSQ headquarters in Barbados. While CLAS will initially focus on medical laboratories, it is envisaged that its services will be extended to include other kinds of laboratories.

Regional governments, healthcare providers, laboratory staff, standards organisations, the general public and other stakeholders share a common vision of medical laboratory services as critical to supporting tourism and other income-generating sectors, the control and prevention of diseases, economic vibrancy, policy formulation, and the public well being. There is agreement that supportive regional and national environments must include:

- Laboratory operations in accordance with regional and international standards
- National registration and licensing schemes responsible for monitoring laboratories
- Accreditation of laboratories to international standards
- Skilled and committed laboratory personnel trained to output high quality services
- Sustained training for laboratory and quality managers
- Access to creative and operational continuing education
- Strong networks of laboratory staff and key laboratory stakeholders
- Operational national and regional laboratory network and referral systems supported by efficient laboratory information management systems
- Strong and continuing policy level support for laboratory sector development

The Project led the region in striving to create this supportive environment, with significant success, including:

- Agreement on the ISO 15189 Standard as the benchmark for medical laboratories within the Caribbean.
- Establishment of the Caribbean Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (CLAS) – a regional system for accreditation of laboratories.
- Training and development of core human resource to support the operations of CLAS.
- Model legislation for licensing of medical laboratories and laboratory personnel.
- A harmonized curriculum for medical laboratory technology training agreed and being implemented (with positive impact on regional CSME objectives).
- Laboratory management & operational capacity increased through training of over 600 laboratory and quality managers and staff in quality systems and standards implementation.
- Distance education materials developed and partnerships for piloting of programmes created.

All funded Project activities ended in June 2007.

SUSTAINABILITY
If the regional vision is to be realised, several initiatives begun under the Project's umbrella will need to be continued. These include regional and national responsibilities. At the national level, it is critical that countries continue to support laboratory strengthening through:

- Adoption and enforcement of legislation for licensing of medical laboratories and personnel
- Continued functioning of National Laboratory Advisory Committees and implementation of national laboratory strategic plans
- Provision of resources to public laboratories for implementation of standards.

At the regional and institutional level, the role of CLAS will be key to sustaining this initiative. CLAS will be a collaboration of National Accreditation Focal Points (already established and trained by the Project) and National Accreditation Bodies (Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica). CROSQ has already obtained funds from the 9th European Development Fund for strengthening of CARICOM institutions, for hiring a Coordinator and conducting core activities of CLAS for the next three years.

Other key regional sustainability initiatives include: Distance education and continuing education to be provided by institutions providing Medical Lab Technology (MLT) training, University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC) and Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN). CKLN has agreed to funding and supporting the implementation of a joint pilot programme in 2007, using material developed by the Project.

- Curriculum changes will be made within institutions providing MLT training in the implementation of the four year BSc curriculum. A project to support this is currently being negotiated.
- Microbiology follow up, expanded proficiency testing support and information technology infrastructure and systems improvements will be undertaken by CAREC.
- Co-ordination of Medical Laboratory Strengthening will be continued through a self-financing mechanism – the “Caribbean Med Labs Foundation” which will undertake the functions of:
  - Advocacy, marketing and promotion for continued laboratory strengthening
  - Resource mobilization to support laboratory strengthening initiatives
  - Monitoring and co-ordination of the various inputs – countries, labs, accreditation bodies and scheme (CLAS), training schools, etc.

- Submitted by Valerie Wilson, CAREC
CDB Project Update

UPCOMING PROJECT LAUNCH
Arrangements are well under way for the launch of the CROSQ/CDB Regional Building Standards Project, which will be held on 7 April 2008 at the Warrens Office Complex in St Michael, Barbados.

The Feature Address will be given by the Minister of Commerce, the Honourable George Hutson, with addresses given by: the newly appointed Executive Secretary of CROSQ, Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez; the Chair of the CROSQ Council, Mr. Deryck Omar; a representative from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); and the Senior Vice President of Business and Product Development of the International Code Council (ICC), Mr. Mark Johnson. The Project Manager of the Project Execution Unit (PEU), Mr. Jonathan Platt, will also provide an Address.

At the launch we can look forward to the presentations on the role CROSQ has to play in the development of the Regional Building Standards, CDB support, ICC as a key component and the positive effect of the RBS in the Region.

Attendees have been invited nationally and regionally, as the aim is to ensure that stakeholders from all Member States are involved from inception of the project, as their participation is critical to the successful outcome of the project.

SELECTION OF FIRMS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TWO HAZARD MAPS
No Objections have been received from CDB for the shortlist of firms for the two consultancies: (i) the development of Seismic Hazard Maps; and (ii) the development of Rainfall, Intensity, Duration Curves and Flood Hazard Maps. The second phase for the selection of firms continues and is expected to be completed by the end of April 2008.

MEET THE TEAM
As of 1 April 2008, the Administrative Assistant/Accountant will officially assume duties for the project. Ms. Andrea Applewhaita has accepted the position and will work with the Project Manager in carrying out the activities under the various components of the project. With almost two years experience specifically related to donor-funded projects in a standards environment, Ms. Applewhaita brings to the project a wealth of knowledge which will assist in ensuring its success and accomplishments.

With the hiring of Mr. Jonathan Platt as Project Coordinator in October 2007 and Ms. Applewhaita in April 2008, the PEU is now fully established and will be forging ahead in ensuring the timely completion of the project, and success in its various outputs and activities.

On Site Caribbean - Interior Show’s Design Presentation

On Site Caribbean, the initial exposition of the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) and Trade Facilitation Office Canada (TFO Canada) handicraft project, unveiled at the Interior Design Show in Toronto, Canada from 21 - 24 February 2008 was a great success, reports TFO Canada’s Craft Associate, Patty Johnson.

According to Ms. Johnson, “On Site Caribbean was a successful presentation in terms of audience interest and enquiries, traffic was excellent and there was a high degree of interest in the project and products.” She noted, “The Interior Design Show is not a direct to sales show – participants exhibit there to build profile and develop networks for sales”.

The On Site Caribbean Project draws together the artisans’ skills and contemporary design to create product collections that reveal how local and regional efforts can bring balance to the often lopsided free flows of globalisation.

Eight companies: Luna Design and Navazoe from Barbados; Big Daddy Craft and Nanny of the Maroons from Jamaica; Femmes’ en Democratie from Haiti; and Kalinago Project, the Caribe Community and Caribbean Creative from Dominica are involved in the project to design new craft product collections.

On Site Caribbean plans to build on this initial interest by hosting an event and exhibition at the Design Exchange (www.dx.org) concurrent with The Canadian Gift and Tableware Association Show in Toronto in August 2008.

For further details on this project contact Caribbean Export Manager, Core Services, Veona Maloney at vmaloney@carib-export.com.
Caribbean Pavilion at Summer Fancy Food

The flavour, taste and aroma of Caribbean food and culture will be on display at the 54th edition of the Summer International Fancy Food and Confection Show. According to Sam Kruijer, Caribbean Export Development Agency’s (Caribbean Export), Show Coordinator, “The Caribbean Pavilion provides exhibitors (exporters and potential exporters) with the opportunity to exhibit and promote their products in addition to attracting buyers from across North America.” Mr. Kruijer also stated that, “Buyers often seek out the Caribbean Pavilion to discover what is new, to track companies and to meet existing and new suppliers. The Pavilion is also a ‘must see’ for the trade press who provides the exhibitors additional publicity in the media and specialty publications.”

The Show to be held from June 29 – July 1 at the Jacob Javits Centre in New York, is the largest and the single most important forum for exporters to meet trade buyers in the mainstream New York market and take advantage of this window of opportunity to promote their products. Total Food Store and C-Store sales for the market were estimated to be US$55 billion dollars in 2006. In addition, there is a large ethnic (Caribbean) community in the New York area with a structured importer/distributor network reaching many of the small and medium size retailers and supermarkets in this area. This all justifies participation at the 54th edition of the Show which will be held from June 29 – July 1, this year at the Jacob Javits Centre in New York.

The most successful specialty food exporters in the Caribbean have established a foothold in this market by participating in this Show over the last 14 years that Caribbean Export has been coordinating participation. The companies continue to support the need for a Caribbean Pavilion and agree that exhibiting as a regional group allows maximum exposure and promotional benefits.

Companies interested in participating at the 15th Caribbean Pavilion at the Confection Show should contact Sam Kruijer, via telephone at 246-436-0578, fax at 246-436-9999 or e-mail at skruijer@carib-export.com.

Health & Wealth Tourism - Planning for the Future

The Honourable Richard Sealy, Minister of Tourism and Dr. the Honourable David Estwick, Minister of Health, National Insurance and Social Security will be the featured speakers at an Exporting Services to Canada Seminar and Health and Wellness Tourism Strategy Session on March 31st and April 1st respectively. The event, jointly organized by the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) and Trade Facilitation Office Canada (TFO Canada), will take place at the Accra Beach Hotel and Resort in Barbados.

Health tourism is thriving in Europe, Asia and the Pacific Region. Canada and the United States are also now focusing on the advantages of including health tourism options in their health services offerings. The Caribbean is ideally suited to service the North American market given its geographic proximity, direct flights, common language and its sun, sand and sea which all contribute to the region’s attractiveness as a primary destination for health tourism.

The challenge is: can the region provide world-class health tourism operations that offer consistent quality care and service and also compete with medical tourism destinations such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thail?d?

This question and many others will be discussed during the three-day event, by medical tourism experts from Canada and Malaysia and representatives from eleven (11) CARICOM countries, the Dominican Republic and Cuba who will all provide their perspectives on successful building of the health and wellness tourism industry, the forging of collaborative partnerships and the strategic development of the sector.

For further information on the seminar contact: Veona Maloney at e-mail: vmaloney@carib-export.com

Canadian organisations will visit two or three countries in the region during May, to meet with services providers and future business partners. According to Caribbean Export’s Executive Director Philip Williams “The timing of this series of events is propitious since the region and Canada are strengthening ties and the governments are discussing the establishment of a free trade agreement.” He noted “Now is the time for service firms to explore concrete business opportunities and for Business Support Organisations (BSOs) to develop service sector strategies to facilitate two-way trade between Canada and the region.”

In May 2007, Caribbean Export and TFO Canada signed a Cooperation Agreement to strengthen economic ties between the Caribbean Region and Canada. The programme, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency is focused on four key areas: trade in services, investment attraction, gift and crafts sector, and the development of a web-based trade information system.

About Caribbean Export

Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) is a regional organisation of the Forum of Caribbean States (CARIFORUM) which currently includes fourteen (14) Member States of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic. Caribbean Export’s mission is to provide quality trade development and trade promotion services to increase the competitiveness of Caribbean companies.

As a follow up to this event, it is proposed that a delegation of
CEF & ReCARIBE Are Here Again!

CEF is here again! The Fourth Caribbean Environmental Forum and Exhibition (CEF 4) and the Fourteenth Annual Wider Caribbean Waste Management Conference (ReCaribe) promises to be an enriching experience for all.

The event, hosted by the Government of Grenada, will be held on the beautiful spice island of Grenada at the Grenada Trade Centre located in the stunning Grand Anse area, from 23 to 27 June 2008.

This year’s theme “Climate Change, Water and Sanitation: A Shared Responsibility”, seeks to highlight the important interlink among climate change, water and sanitation within the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Organised by the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI); the Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority; the Global Environment Facility-funded Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management (GEF-IWCAM) Project, co-implemented by UNDP and UNEP, co-executed by CEHI and UNEP CAR-RCU; the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and Clean Islands International, the event is expected to provide a week of stimulating discussion, field trips, workshops, training opportunities and networking. An exhibition of new and relevant environmental products, services and technology would also be included.

CEF 4 is geared towards bringing together key Caribbean and international stakeholders in the public and private sectors, civil society groups, the media, academics, researchers, experts, donor and development agencies, technical agencies and institutions (among others), in order to discuss issues and share experiences as they relate to environment and development.

CEF 4 will provide an opportunity for networking and partnership arrangements among a wide and diverse group of persons and institutions concerned with or involved in environment and development, and will focus on key sustainable development and environmental concerns of the region and internationally.

Individuals and organizations are invited to be involved as sponsors, participants, presenters, session coordinators and exhibitors.

More information can be obtained by contacting the CEF 4 Secretariat at the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), P.O. Box 1111, Castries, Saint Lucia. Queries can be made via telephone at 758-452-2501, fax at 758-453-2721, or by emailing cef4@cehi.org.lc. Further details can also be obtained by visiting the website: www.cehi.org.lc.

CEF 4 - Call for Abstracts and Papers

The Planning Committee is inviting abstracts for paper presentations for the Fourth Caribbean Environmental Forum and Exhibition (CEF 4) in collaboration with the 14th Annual Wider Caribbean Waste Management Conference (ReCaribe 2008). The event is scheduled for 23 - 27 June 2008 at the Grenada Trade Centre in Grand Anse, Grenada.

This year’s theme “Climate Change, Water and Sanitation: A Shared Responsibility”, seeks to highlight the important interlink among climate change, water and sanitation within the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The conference and exhibition will focus mainly on the areas of:

- Disaster management and its impacts on human health and sanitation;
- Environmental imperatives, trade and globalization;
- Food safety and food security in a changing climate;
- Sustainable land management;
- The role of business in environmental management and sustainable development in the Caribbean including corporate environmental responsibility; and
- Tourism and the changing climate - implications for Caribbean states.

Persons are invited to submit paper presentations on the above topics for acceptance for the conference. Presentations focusing on applied research, experiences and lessons learned are especially welcomed.

Abstracts are to be submitted electronically by 15 April 2008 to cefpapers@cehi.org.lc, with the final submission for accepted papers by 16 May 2008 to allow for final review and acceptance.

Authors are expected to give a 20-minute oral presentation, followed by a 10-minute question and answer period, on their accepted paper. Copies of the presentation must be submitted electronically to the Conference Secretariat by 15 June 2008.

Further details on the layout, format and other such requirements for the abstracts and paper presentations may be obtained by contacting the CEF-4 Technical Committee at cefpapers@cehi.org.lc.
The CROSQ Technical Management Committee (TMC)

The TMC held two meetings within the last six months in Barbados. The Ninth Meeting was held from 16-18 October 2007 at the Warrens Office Complex, St Michael and the Tenth from February 12-14 at the Accra Beach Hotel, Christ Church. Both meetings focused on the technical aspects of CROSQ’s standards development work and other relevant issues, such as technical cooperation with other Regional Organizations. At the Tenth TMC, a presentation was made by the Caribbean Community Centre for Climate Change (CCCCC) in association with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) with respect to a draft proposal entitled “Climate Change Adaptation Standards: Building Capacity in the Caribbean Community”.

The TMC deliberated on a number of standards in progress, including the twenty-five normative documents required for the CROSQ/IDB SME Project, as well as Labelling of Retail Packages of Cigarettes, Labelling of Aerosol Insecticides and a harmonized regional standard for Cement.

The TMC was apprised of the two standards that were tabled and approved at the 24th COTED Meeting, held in Guyana in January 2008 - “the regional standard for Rum”; and the “Amendment to the Brewery Products Specification Standard”.

In addition, two Poultry-related Standards, “Poultry and Poultry Products” and “Poultry Feed & Feed Ingredients” are being prepared for submission to the 26th COTED, scheduled to be held in May 2008. These two standards have been circulated to all Member States for comments, with a deadline of 28 March 2008 for the receipt of all comments at the CROSQ Secretariat.

Arising out of the Eighth TMC, the proposal outlined below is being developed in response to the need for the standardization of Circulation Procedures for Committee Drafts (CDs) and Draft CARICOM Standards (DCSS) for comments by stakeholders in the Member States.

THE STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

ISO defines standards as “documented agreements containing technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics, to ensure that materials, products, procedures, and services are fit for their purpose.” Further, “standards contribute to making life simpler, and to increasing the reliability and effectiveness of goods and services”.

One important aspect of regional standards development work is adherence to the principles of transparency and opportunity for stakeholder inputs through a consensus-building process. With this in mind the following DRAFT Proposal is being circulated for Members inputs, to ensure mutually agreeable and acceptable procedures are consistently followed by all CARICOM Members - Draft Proposal for Circulation of Regional (CROSQ-developed) Standards for Comments in/by Member States.

Generally, standards follow a five stage development and approval process to ensure that they are created in an open and consensus-driven manner, with the widest possible participation by relevant stakeholders as well as the wider community.

- At the Proposal Stage there is review and approval of proposals submitted by any organization to adopt or adapt an existing standard, or create a new standard.
- During the Project Stage a development work group is formed and the development methodology and schedule are established.
- During the Draft Stage, a working draft and then a CD for public review are produced. At this stage, input is required from as many affected parties as possible.
- The Review Stage comprises a series of reviews of the standard by the appointed Committees. The standard then undergoes revisions based on these reviews and the document is prepared for final approval.
- In the Final Stage, the Committee charged with the responsibility of advising Council, formally endorses the standard for “Recommendation for Approval by the CROSQ Council”.

Consensus implies “general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.” Note that Consensus need not imply unanimity.

The stage at which the various comments from Member States and their national stakeholders are taken into consideration, with a view to reaching consensus, particularly on the technical content, is of paramount importance. CDs are circulated by the CROSQ Secretariat with a formal request for comments and a clear indication of the latest date for submission of responses.

It is the responsibility of the Member State representative on the CROSQ Council (and his/her assignees/designates) to ensure that committee drafts are properly circulated/disseminated within the individual Member States and carefully reviewed by the appropriate national stakeholders. They must also ensure that all pertinent comments are compiled and submitted to the CROSQ Secretariat by the stated closing date.

The various Member States may opt to employ, inter alia:

- Print (daily newspapers, newsletters) and electronic (television, website) media
- Stakeholder meetings/group discussions
- Direct outreach/contact (e-mails, telephone calls)
- Printing & distribution of proposed Drafts (mail outs etc.)
- Any other means or method deemed suitable by and to the Member States.

The Member States provide to the Secretariat a summary report of the activities and outcomes of the comments period for each “Draft Circulated for Comments” in their respective territories.

For the first committee draft, it is proposed that a period of two months be made available for Member States to make their comments.
Photo Gallery Of Events

Acting Director of BNSI presenting at the first TTBS workshop

Ron Higgins, Wren Group and Nadia Corbin, CROSQ in discussions over CROSQ QMS

Signing of Headquarters Agreement

First Meeting of the Project Advisory Committee of the CDERA Disaster Risk Management Project

First Meeting of the Project Steering Committee of the CROSQ/IDB-MIF RQI Project
CROSQ/CDB REGIONAL BUILDING STANDARDS
PROJECT LAUNCH AGENDA
Warrens Office Complex, St. Michael, Barbados
7 April 2008

9:00 am  Welcome by Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez  Executive Secretary, CROSQ
9:15 am  Address by Mr. Deryck Omar  Chairman, CROSQ Council
9:30 am  Feature Address by the Hon. George Hutson  Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce, Barbados
9:50 am  Address by CDB representative  Caribbean Development Bank
10:10 am  Address by Mark Johnson  Senior Vice President of Business and Product Development, International Code Council
10:40 am  Introduction of RBS Project by Mr. Jonathan Platt  Project Manager, CROSQ Project Execution Unit
10:55 am  Vote of Thanks by Dr. Lopez  Executive Secretary, CROSQ
11:00 am  BREAK

2008 EVENTS

DATE        EVENT                                                                 LOCATION

April 9-10   Twelfth Meeting of the Council of CROSQ                              Barbados
April 11     Fourth Annual General Meeting of CROSQ                              Barbados
April 19     BNSI Workshop                                                      Barbados
April 24     Barbados Coalition of Service Industries Workshop on Small Firm Sustainability Barbados
April 28 - May 1  Tenth Annual Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development (STC-10) - Keeping the Right Balance: Sustaining the Caribbean Coastal Product Turks and Caicos Islands
May 9-12     BMEX 2008 - “It’s Our Business”                                   Barbados
May 21-23    Fourth Annual Human Resource Tourism Conference                    British Virgin Islands
May 28-29    Second TTBS workshop on Tourism Standards                         Trinidad and Tobago
June 23-27   Fourth Caribbean Environmental Forum and Exhibition (CEF 4) & Fourteenth Annual Wider Caribbean Waste Management Conference (ReCaribe) Grenada
June 29 - July 1  Fifty-fourth Edition of the Summer International Fancy Food and Confection Show New York
August 22-31  CARIFESTA X                                                      Guyana

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: CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality “The Heritage”, 35 Pine Road, Belleville, St. Michael, Barbados BB11113 Tel: 246.437.8146  Fax: 246.437.4569 Email: crosq.caricom@crosq.org

Please visit our website: www.crosq.org