



European Union supports a learning nation

During 2004, the European Union (EU) continued to be the main international donor partner for SAQA. The SAQA-European Union project remained integral to the delivery of the SAQA's key objectives – a national standards setting system, a national quality assurance system and an NQF information management system, the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD). Therefore, the infrastructure, systems, and personnel support provided under the project underpins the many achievements reflected in this report.

The SAQA-EU project, through which €14 million Euro has been channelled to the development and implementation of the NQF, has now completed its sixth year of operation. The period under review was somewhat marred by continued uncertainty in the external NQF environment and this situation has inevitably impacted on the project. What therefore could have been reasonably expected to be a year of consolidation in the project life cycle, with insights for future developments from the NQF Impact Study, was instead a year of hesitation. The achievements of the project were temporarily eclipsed by the ongoing political ambiguity and sometimes wavering support for the NQF as originally conceived. Despite the difficulties encountered, the project delivered on its results through careful and responsive management and retained its commitment to the NQF objectives.

The SAQA-EU Project Work plan for 2004 maintained financial support for project staffing, and outlined key activities for each of SAQA's six directorates. A number of project successes were noted and are listed below. Some of these were of national significance while others were of immediate benefit to the organisation and ultimately to the building of a learning nation through the NQF.

- Progress towards meeting the overall project objective of sustainability was marked by an increase in government budgetary support for SAQA operations;
- the release of the *NQF Impact Study Report Cycle 1* and the implementation of Cycle 2 of the Impact Study provide an objective research base to inform future NQF developments;
- the release of the NLRD publication *Trends in Public Higher Education in South Africa 1992 to 2001*, the first comprehensive publication on South African graduate trends;
- the successful implementation of an organisation-wide staff training programme which covered: fraud prevention, management of performance appraisal, organisational change and change management;
- provision of targeted support to small-, medium- and micro enterprise (SMME) providers to assist with understanding of accreditation requirements;
- implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system for the National Standards Bodies (NSBs);
- the upgrade of information technology infrastructure; and
- the external interim financial and compliance audit of the project covering the period from the project start-up to December 2003 was undertaken. This audit is of particular importance to the project and SAQA, as meeting specific donor requirements underlies all funding agreements. The final project audit is scheduled for later in 2005.

A number of other initiatives were commenced during the period of reporting, including the development of a stakeholder satisfaction index (SSI), branding of SAQA and the introduction of IT systems management software. It is expected that these projects will be completed during the next financial year prior to project closure on 30 June 2005.

The NQF as an innovative education and training systems development initiative of national importance has significantly contributed to the building of a South African learning nation. The growing worldwide recognition of the value and need for qualifications frameworks is evidence that the SAQA-EU project continues to be a partnership at the forefront of education and training development. The project looks forward to a positive and productive final evaluation early in the new financial year.



*HE Mr M Lake -
EU Ambassador to SA*



*Mr A Munday – Second
Secretary: Development,
EC Delegation to SA*



*Dr B Kramer – Education
and Training,
Project Manager
EC Delegation to SA*



*Ms H Williams –
EU Project Manager*

Activities funded by the EU from 2000-2005

Launch of the EU Project 15 May 2000



M Nkomo (left), Minister Asmal, HE M Laidler and the Rector of Alexandra Technical College

ETQA Accreditation Dinner 15 August 2001



M Nkomo (left), D Hamilton, Minister Asmal and Minister Mdladlana

NSB Certification Event Second Cycle 10 October 2001



*Back row: JE Jordaan, Manyaka, A Botha, C Swepu and guest
Front row: D Mphuthing, M Matlawa, guest, Thamsanqa, B Gcabashe, J Madiba, S Steenekamp and M Mdukula*

Faranani 19 July 2002



*Standing: J Kevy (left), V Penxa, R Adaye, Y Shapiro, E Mashego
Seated: R Heyns, B Mthethwa and P Khoza*

SAQA participated at the WSSD by exhibiting at the EU stand 27 August 2002



S Isaacs and school children

Chairperson's Lecture 9 April 2003



J Lopez (left), J Reddy, C Pearce and B Maja

Renovations to 1067 Arcadia Street, January – May 2003



NSB Committee Meeting 13 July 2004



K Mockler (left), J Samuels, S Steenekamp, D Mphuthing (standing), A Oberholzer and A Heyns