



Stephen Sadie  
(Director Strategic Support)

## Conducting research to enhance the quality of education and training

SAQA's Research Unit is committed to enhancing the quality of education and training through evidence-based research. This was a highly productive year for the unit with its activities ranging from a large-scale longitudinal study to determine the impact of the NQF on the quality of education and training in South Africa, to hosting the first annual NQF colloquium to encourage debate and develop an NQF discourse. The NQF colloquium culminated in a Research Agenda, which captures the most significant studies to be undertaken. These studies aim to facilitate a deep understanding of the NQF and the education and training sector, and to enhance the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in South Africa.

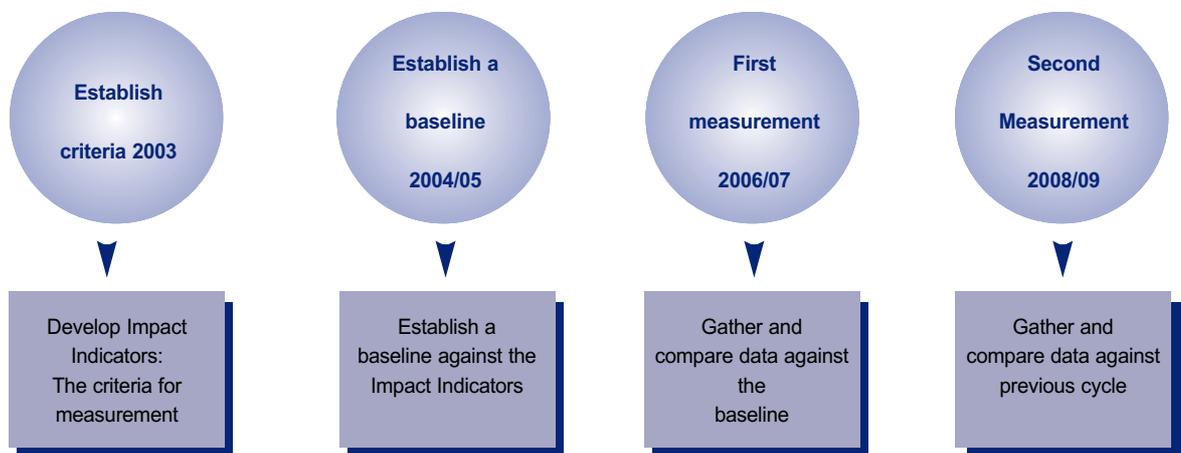
In addition, the Research Unit contributed to the emerging international discourse on NQF development and implementation, both in the SADC region, as well as further afield, and concluded a number of other studies that will help the system to understand the road ahead, including a report on Credit Accumulation and Transfer.

The quality of education and training in South Africa is non-negotiable. SAQA's research aims to support this key objective of the NQF through critical engagement and intellectual scrutiny of all aspects that may influence a quality experience for those we serve: the learners of South Africa.

### NQF Impact Study – Cycle 2

SAQA concluded the second cycle of the NQF Impact Study in 2005. Cycle 2 of the NQF Impact Study report was launched at the NQF Colloquium on 13 June 2005. Ms Penny Vinjevold of the DoE delivered the keynote address and Prof. Wally Morrow presented an overview of the findings. The NQF Impact Study is a longitudinal, comparative study to measure the impact of the implementation of the NQF on the transformation of education and training in South Africa. Many consider the study a world first, as no other country that has implemented an NQF has yet attempted to measure its progress in such a comprehensive manner. The study utilised an indicator-based methodology premised on the five NQF objectives and is made up of three key components: contextualisation, which places the study within the context of current implementation; data gathering, through interviews and a national survey; and analyses and recommendations.

Two reports have been published, mirroring the first two phases of the longitudinal study. The first cycle of the study was concerned with establishing criteria against which the progress of the NQF in relation to the transformation of education and training will be measured. The second cycle established a baseline against which the data from the third cycle will be compared. The overall design of the study is as follows:



The titles of the two reports are as follows:

- *National Qualifications Framework Impact Study. Report 1. Establishing the criteria against which to measure progress of the NQF (SAQA, 2004)*
- *National Qualifications Framework Impact Study. Report 2. Establishing a baseline against which to measure progress of the NQF (SAQA, 2005)*

SAQA has set a standard for similar initiatives worldwide and has also provided South African policy-makers with a rich source of information that can be used to inform future NQF developments. The research findings highlight the fact that the NQF has had a positive impact on the following areas:

- The nature of learning programmes
- Organisational, economic and societal benefits
- Contribution to other national strategies.

Other areas of positive impact included the implementation of an outcomes-based approach, learner motivation that is increased by certification and a greater emphasis on knowledge and skills.

The research findings also indicate that workplace qualifications were accepted as relevant. As one of SAQA's objectives is to contribute to the national Human Resource Development strategy (HRDS), these findings underpin the importance of on-the-job training and the certification thereof. The skills and training that workers acquire in the workplace allows them access and progression to the education, training and career paths.

These two reports promise to be a key reference for studies dealing with NQF development in South Africa and beyond.

#### **First Annual National Qualifications Framework Colloquium**

SAQA hosted the first annual NQF Colloquium at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Convention Centre on 13 and 14 June 2005. The Colloquium was well attended, with more than 150 key NQF stakeholders and partners participating. All papers were published in Volume 8 Number 1 of the SAQA Bulletin.

The themes of the Colloquium were:

- NQFs and FET/HE articulation
- NQFs as integrated frameworks
- NQFs as Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) systems

The purpose of the NQF Colloquium was to establish a joint forward-looking research agenda between SAQA and NQF stakeholders by encouraging debate on, and intellectual scrutiny of, topical NQF-related matters.

Able to chair the sessions were Saleem Badat (CHE), Jayce Pillay (University of Johannesburg), and Vusi Mabena (Chamber of Mines), while papers were presented by Peliwe Lolwana (Umalusi), Hanlie Griesel (HESA), David Raffe (University of Edinburgh), Ronel Blom (SAQA), John Hart (International NQF expert) and Joe Samuels (SAQA).

Each of the sessions included ample time for group discussion on the various issues raised by the speakers. In the final session, Prof. Shirley Walters provided an overview of the three emerging focus areas:

- Communities of trust
- Social purposes of the NQF
- Prescriptiveness of the NQF

A forward-looking research agenda emanated from the discussions held at the NQF Colloquium.

#### **Research Agenda**

The key purpose of research undertaken by SAQA is to advise the Ministers and inform policy-makers on all matters relating to the NQF, through conducting, commissioning, publishing and presenting research on national imperatives, NQF impact, NQF policy development and NQF implementation.

The SAQA Research Agenda was therefore established to:

- Enable a deep and critical understanding of the NQF
- Make recommendations on remedial and development work
- Facilitate and enhance NQF implementation

Five broad focus areas for the period 2005 to 2008 were identified:

1. Inculcation of an understanding of the NQF as a social construct
2. Simplification of quality assurance
3. Simplification of standards setting
4. Enhancing and facilitating the implementation of the NQF
5. Longitudinal studies



The Research Agenda will be published and made available in the public domain. Researchers, research organisations and education policy development units will be invited to interrogate the issues and encourage upcoming researchers to take on topics from this Agenda for their Master's and PhD studies.

#### Other research conducted in 2005

- Position paper on South African Government Involvement and Regulation of Higher Education, Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom
- Preliminary work on the uptake and achievement of NQF registered qualifications
- Credit accumulation and transfer system (CATs)
- Professional qualifications and their place on the NQF
- Relevant value coefficients (RVQs) and NQF stakeholders
- A Stakeholder Satisfaction Index
- NQF-registered Occupational Further Education and Training Certificates (FETCs): An analysis
- 'Policy Breadth': The alignment between the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)

#### Contributions to the International NQF discourse

The South African NQF is seen to be both a contributor to and a beneficiary of international NQF developments. Increasingly, SAQA is requested to contribute to an emerging NQF discourse. The Research Unit contributed to the following:

- **Victorian Qualifications Authority – Australia**  
*Recent trends and issues in qualifications and pathways from school to tertiary education and work*
- **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**  
*An Introductory Guide to the Recognition of Prior Learning*  
*An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks: Conceptual and Practical Issues for Policy Makers*
- **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**  
*Towards a Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework: Concept Paper and Implementation Plan*
- **Association for the Development of Education in Africa**  
*Case studies on the role of National Qualifications Frameworks in the Southern African Development Community: South Africa*

#### Papers and Presentations

Blom R. (2006). *Critical/scarce skills in South Africa – a macro perspective*. Presentation at BANKSETA Breakfast Seminar, Randburg, 10 March 2006.

Blom R. (2005a). *NQF Impact Study: Cycle 2 – Establishing a baseline against which to measure progress*. Paper presented at the Education Deans' Forum, Johannesburg International Airport, 19 May 2005.

Blom R. (2005b). *Integration, portability and articulation: policy symbolism or policy practice? Lessons from the NQF Impact Study – Cycle 2*. Paper presented at the Learning Cape Festival, Cape Town, 2 August 2005.

Blom R. (2005c). *Moderation for quality assurance*. Paper presented at the Moderators' Forum, Gallagher Estate, Midrand, 24 October 2005.

Blom R & Keevy JA. (2005). *The impact of the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework on education and training in South Africa*. Paper presented at the Kenton Conference on Education, hosted by Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare at Mpekweni, 27–30 October 2005.

Blom R, Shapiro Y & Coetzee N. (2005). *Living the NQF: The implementation of learnerships at the South African Qualifications Authority*. Paper presented at the Kenton Conference on Education hosted by Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare, at Mpekweni, 27–30 October 2005.

Brown E. (2006). *The Place and Role of SAQA in Transforming FET in South Africa*. Paper presented at the FET Conference, Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg, 2 March 2006.

Brown E. (2005). *The FET: Vocational*. Paper presented at the Q-Africa Conference, Gallagher Estate, Midrand, 16–17 November 2005.

Coetzee N & Shapiro Y. (2005). *The implementation of Learnerships at the South African Qualifications Authority: Lessons Learnt*. Paper presented at the Kenton Conference on Education hosted by Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare, at Mpekweni, 27–30 October 2005.

Gumbe N. (2005a). *Advancing systems change in education and training through the NQF Support Link*. Presentation at Q-Africa Conference, Gallagher Estate, Midrand, 16–17 November 2005.



Gumbe N. (2005b). *Utilising the NQF Support Link to capacitate your organisation for better skills and human resource development. Presentation at two conferences: HR Law Update Conference, Sandton, 16 August, and at the 2nd Annual Designing Effective Training Programme and Learnerships, Johannesburg, 26 September 2005.*

Isaacs SBA. (2005a). *A SAQA update on the NQF and Artisan Training.* Paper presented at the Artisans Training, Development and Leadership conference, Johannesburg, 10 August 2005.

Isaacs SBA. (2005b). *Teacher Qualifications and Teacher Migration.* Paper presented at the 50th ICET World Assembly, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, 13 July 2005.

Isaacs SBA. (2005c). *A South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) update.* Presentation at the ACAP Certification Ceremony, Bloemfontein, 20 May 2005.

Isaacs SBA. (2005d). *A South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) update on our National Qualifications Authority (NQF).* Presentation at the NOSHCON Conference, Sun City, 7 April 2005.

Keevy JA. (2006). *Institutes of Sectoral Excellence: Building communities of trust for the sustained and improved implementation of the South African National Qualifications Framework.* Paper presented at the Institutes of Sectoral Excellence Colloquium, Durban, 30 January 2006; Johannesburg, 3 February 2006; Cape Town, 6 February 2006.

Keevy JA. (2005). *The impact of the National Qualifications Framework on the South African education and training system: Looking forward after ten years.* Paper prepared for the Education Management Association of South Africa (EMASA) 8th International Conference held at the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance in Vrededorp, Johannesburg, 11–13 March 2005.

Kotze D & Blom R. (2005). *Memoranda of understanding: Building zones of mutual trust or symptoms of lack of trust?* Paper presented at the Q-Africa Conference, at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, 16–17 November 2005.

Samuels J. (2006a). *Quality qualifications to meet the skills shortage.* Paper presented at the Quality Learning Forum, Birchwood Hotel, Boksburg, 24 March 2006.

Samuels J. (2006b). *Higher Education: Transforming through interfacing with the Skills Development Strategy of South Africa – Administering programme and infrastructural collaboration.* Paper presented at Transforming Higher Education in Africa, Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg, 23 March 2006.

Samuels J. (2006c). *Environmental, Health and Safety and our National Qualifications Framework.* Paper presented at the International Safety, Health and Environmental Risk Management 2006 Conference and Exhibition, Emperors Palace, Kempton Park, 8 March 2006.

Samuels J. (2005a). *Improving adult education through the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework.* Paper presented at the Colloquium on Adult Education – Beyond ABET Conference, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, 1 September 2005.

Samuels J. (2005b). *The NQF and Teachers: Approach towards teaching and learning.* Paper presented at the Provincial Independent Schools Forum Conference, Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, 20 August 2005.

Samuels J. (2005c). *Building the Malawian NQF: Lessons from other SADC Countries.* Paper presented at the Malawian Technical Vocational Qualifications Framework Launch, Malawi, 18 July 2005.

Samuels J. (2005d). *Credit Accumulation and Transfer.* Paper presented at the 1st Annual NQF Colloquium held at the CSIR, Pretoria, 14–16 June 2005.

Samuels J. (2005e). *Perspectives on articulation between FET and HET within the NQF.* Paper presented at the APPETD National Conference, Johannesburg, 31 May 2005.

Samuels J & Dicker L. (2006). *Changing the way things are done around here: A reflection on the transformation of a School Governing Body.* Paper presented at the Education Management Association of Southern Africa 9th International Conference, Bela Bela, 11 March 2006.

Samuels J & Keevy JA. (2005). *The Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework: What we can learn from an international comparison of the development and implementation of national qualification frameworks.* Paper presented at the 5th African Regional IVETA Conference, Kasane, Botswana, 8–11 May 2005.

Shapiro Y. (2005). *The National Learners' Records Database – from dream to reality.* Paper presented at the Q-Africa Conference, Gallagher Estate, Midrand, 16–17 November 2005.





Sharon Du Plessis, Sharon Farrell and Mathilda Make

## Communicating the NQF in support of the quality of education and training

### Internal communication

Farananis are held every second month and hosted by different directorates with different themes. The purpose of the Faranani is for the host to highlight and brief all other directorates on current projects, achievements and challenges. The Faranani is also an opportunity for the Executive Office to brief staff on issues relating to SAQA.

### Publications

During the year under review, the following documents were published:

- SAQA Update – two issues
- SAQA Bulletin Volume 8 Number 1 and Volume 9 Number 1
- Criteria and Guidelines for the Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications
- Guidelines for Integrated Assessment
- NQF Impact Report Cycle 2

### New brand

SAQA reviewed the NQF and SAQA brands to develop an overall brand architecture. The SAQA Annual Report 2004–2005 was used to launch the new logo.

### SAQA NQF Helpdesk

The Helpdesk received 9045 telephonic queries during the year under review. They are broken down as follows: CEEQ (5936), Helpdesk (2679), DSSD (455), QAD (345), NLRD (201), FAD/HR/IT (15). Other callers were referred to the DoE (375), CHE (319), SETAs (302), DoL (218) and Umalusi (56). The enquiries were mostly about qualifications and standards registered by SAQA and the procedure for submitting foreign qualifications for evaluation.

### SAQA events

The new FETC (Vocational) qualification was published for public comment. The DoE and SAQA convened a colloquium in order to ensure a deep understanding of the vision and purpose of this qualification. The discussions would also enrich and improve the qualification to enable it to achieve its purpose as effectively and efficiently as possible. The FETC (Vocational) Colloquium was held on 2 November 2005 in Pretoria.

### Q-Africa 2005

At the sixth Q-Africa Conference in Midrand on 16 and 17 November 2005, convened jointly by SAQA and Q Federation from Germany, local and international delegates met to find new strategies and partnerships to enhance the functional and intellectual capacity of the education and training community. The theme of the conference was Building communities of trust and, according to Samuel Isaacs, Executive Officer of SAQA, "it has become evident that the development of qualifications, particularly those located within national qualification frameworks, are critically dependent on communities of trust – also called zones of mutual trust or even communities of practice." Debate at the conference, therefore, centred around what exactly the term communities of trust meant, and on how new communities of trust could be developed.

### Chairperson's Lecture

The 4th Chairperson's Lecture was held on 15 March 2006 at the Midrand Protea Hotel. The keynote speaker was Professor Thomas Schuller, Director of the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) based in Paris. Addressing a distinguished audience of invited guests, Prof. Schuller spoke about Recognising learning and its outcomes, and explored the relationships between qualifications as the formal recognition of what has been learnt, and the broader social and economic outcomes or benefits. Prof. Schuller challenged SAQA to broaden its focus to include the promotion of all kinds of learning, not only the acquisition of formal qualifications.

# Providing customised learning resources in support of the delivery of quality education and training



*Ntsiki Gumbe*

The SAQA Resource and Information Centre supports the delivery of quality education and training by providing custom-designed learning resources and the NQF Support Link that facilitates the implementation of the NQF which, in turn, ensures the development and implementation of learning programmes that focus on quality and relevance of learning. The Centre also disseminates up-to-date and relevant information, through the SAQA website and the NQF Gateway, to create a deep understanding of the NQF and SAQA.

## **NQF Support Link**

The NQF Support Link is a project that refers to the entire range of NQF leadership implementation resources to support the development and implementation of the NQF. These consist of resources that are available online (via the NQF Gateway), on CD Rom format and in print.

The objective of the project is to equip learners, initially in the FET sector, with comprehensive learning resources that will enable them to understand and implement the NQF in their own organisations and institutions of learning. SAQA has envisioned the NQF Support Link as an instrument for facilitating NQF related transformational and systemic change in the education and training sector with the prime focus on the FET and public sector.

The NQF Support Link is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and managed by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in Canada in co-operation with SAQA.

The project had as a priority deliverable a financial / business model that would enable SAQA to sustain the initiative without further external funding once the development phase of the initiative came to an end in March 2006.

The highlights of the project include:

- The successful launch of the project in June 2005 by the Minister of Education, Ms GMN Pandor.
- The development and launch of the NQF Gateway in June 2005.
- The SAQA extension of accreditation to the ETDP ETQA to accredit providers to deliver learning according to the registered standards in line with the NQF Support Link learning programmes.
- The revision and approval of the learning material and assessment instruments to support the first six modules by the ETDP ETQA.
- A process of making the content more generic in order that secondary target markets, beyond the primary FET target market, can be reached.
- The initial intake intervention to fast track the deployment of the six modules to 500 learners serving the FET sector and the successful completion by the first group of learners in March 2006.

## **NQF Gateway**

The NQF Gateway is a portal that provides an online entry point to a comprehensive array of information and services on all aspects of the NQF in South Africa. It has a knowledge base that includes policy documents, legislation, and reports related to the NQF. It also enables users to find and share news and events relevant to education and training issues. The Gateway also has information about the NQF Support Link, including the modules, the modes of delivery and an application form to register for the modules. To date, there are 1 085 registered users of the NQF Gateway. These users are mainly from the education and training sector including skills development facilitators, assessors and officials from government departments and SETAs.

## **SAQA website**

SAQA has successfully used its website to disseminate information to stakeholders and the public. The e-mail alert service, which is run for subscribers, has proven to be useful for the speedy dissemination of information, and to keep subscribers up-to-date with SAQA and NQF related matters. The number of people who subscribe to the e-mail alert has increased from 6 462 in April 2005 to 8 018 in March 2006. This is an average of 129 new subscribers per month. About 32% of these subscribers are in the private sector, 22% are in the private education and training sector, while 10% are in the public education and training sector. The rest of the subscribers are in government departments, SETAs and statutory bodies.



### **SAQA Community Gateway**

SAQA has an internal portal, the SAQA Community Gateway. The dynamic and user-friendly nature of this portal has allowed for useful functionalities that enable SAQA staff to access a knowledge resource, interact with each other, and to learn online. The SAQA Community Gateway is available to all SAQA staff, even when they are away from the office, and identified stakeholder groups where necessary. One of the most useful features of this portal is the Calendar, which has details of all the important dates such as all the meeting dates of the Authority and its Committees and SAQA events. The Gateway also has a Learning Management System that enables SAQA to offer capacity building interventions to staff by means of e-learning.

### **Resource Centre**

The SAQA Resource Centre has grown significantly since it was established six years ago to become a primary source of information regarding the NQF and SAQA. The information it collects, manages and disseminates includes SAQA publications, unpublished documents and information that goes on to the SAQA website and the NQF Gateway.

Over the six-year period it has been supporting the research and information needs of staff and members of the Authority and its sub-structures to enable them to carry out their mandate to develop and implement the NQF. Stakeholders and members of the public, such as researchers, learners and government departments, also use the Centre as a reference library.

During the reporting period, the Centre's priority has been to market its services and resources to staff, relevant organisations and government departments. These marketing activities included promoting the use of its collection and SAQA publications to universities, government departments and research institutes that can use it to do further research on education and training in general and more specifically on the NQF and outcomes-based education.



*Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor at the NQF support link launch*



*James Keevy and Shandukani Manyaka discussing research*



# Human Resource Management



*Carin Stoltz,  
Christo Basson  
and Madoda  
Mbatha (Director,  
Human Resources*

The HR Directorate continues to provide leadership and guidance on matters relating to the management and stewardship of people within SAQA. By developing staff and keeping them happy, they are more effective in their jobs. A number of HR issues faced the organisation, and these were handled successfully.

During the period under review, the HR Directorate had the following objectives:

- To ensure that adequately and appropriately organised training and development workshops are available to all staff, so they acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes
- To drive a performance and recognition culture
- To ensure the recruitment and retention of adequately qualified staff in line with the Employment Equity Strategy
- To provide an effective and efficient support and administration function
- To counsel and advise staff and management on the promotion of employer-employee relations.

## Training and development

SAQA spent R1.1 million on training for staff. The amount of R800 000.00 was budgeted for. Levies amounting to R145 000.00 were also paid. More than ninety percent of staff members who requested training received this. Training courses ranged from project management, computer skills and total quality management, to team building and the NQF Support Link programme, which all SAQA staff enrolled for. The NQF Support Link programme is meant to provide staff with an advanced knowledge of the NQF, so they are equipped with the necessary skills to interact and assist stakeholders, and those who interface with the NQF in a meaningful way.

A Return on Investment In Training exercise was conducted to determine whether the training met organisational and/or staff goals. The exercise found that, as a result of the training interventions, there was a transfer of learning to the workplace and effective learning by SAQA staff, and there was an overall improvement in staff performance, partly attributable to training. Group interventions like the team-building exercise attended by all SAQA staff resulted in a consolidation of organisational development.

## Performance and recognition

SAQA has a performance development management system that encourages ongoing coaching and feedback, and ensures that the performance of all employees is evaluated on an annual basis. Each line manager conducts formal quarterly reviews, which allows for the employee's goals and accomplishments outlined in their performance contracts to be updated.

SAQA recognises staff members who excel in their jobs through the broad banding system. The thrust of broad banding is to reward excellent performance, facilitate upward mobility and promote staff development. Broad banding was implemented towards the end of 2002 for Deputy Directors and Directors. The policy and procedure guidelines were subsequently reviewed, and, as a result, new policies, procedures and guidelines were developed. Broad banding is now being introduced to staff at the Assistant Director level and below.

SAQA is an Investors in People (IIP) organisation. The IIP is an international best practice standard that recognises organisations that enhance their performance through increasing the skills base of their employees, and the quality of management needed to get the best out of them. SAQA underwent an IIP audit in December 2005. The standard was retained, but an action plan has been developed, which has been approved by IIP United Kingdom, to address areas of development.

The team-building exercise for staff at Deputy Director level and above took place in May 2005. The exercise was then rolled out to the rest of the organisation during the month of February 2006, when all staff from all directorates took part. Team building focused on the principles of synergy, and enhanced and fostered teamwork.

## Employment Equity

In line with the Authority's employment equity strategy, the purpose of our employment equity strategy is, among other things, to ensure equitable demographic representation across all occupational level and categories, ensure equal



opportunity and fair treatment in employment policies, procedures and practices; and eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination.

The SAQA gender profile indicates that, as at 1 January 2006, we had 35% males and 65% females. This profile is not dissimilar to those of organisations whose jobs are predominantly of an administrative nature within an office environment. SAQA falls within this category. The race profile, as at the same period, indicates that we had 58% Africans, 4% each for Coloureds and Indians respectively, and 34% Whites. Female staff members, when compared to male staff members, are well represented at the Professional and or Clerical/Administrative levels. We are working towards increasing the representation of our female staff component at Senior Official and Manager levels.

**Effective and efficient support administration**

A personnel information records system is in place, which has been useful in providing critical information. Through the system, the directorate has been able to analyse among other things, staff turnover and absenteeism rate. As a result, measures have been put in place to effectively deal with these issues.

A number of HR Policies and Procedures have been developed in line with HR best practice, and current labour legislation. A range of other HR polices were developed and approved by the Authority.

**Advising staff and management on employer–employee relations**

An HR Consultative Forum has been established. This forum is a result of a merger between the previous Training Committee and Employment Equity Committee. The HR Consultative Forum plays an important role in the development and monitoring of the Authority's Workplace Skills Plan and Implementation Report, as well as its Employment Equity Plan. The HR Directorate has been instrumental in building a healthy climate between management and the two staff unions, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and the SAQA Staff Association.



*Ernest Mashego and Corina Bezuidenhout*



*Maire Kelly and Ernest Mashego at SAQA team building*



# Information Technology



*Christopher Lambert (Director IT) holding up a wheel*

The Information Technology directorate has developed a sound infrastructure so that SAQA can service its clients effectively. The Information Technology directorate ensures the development and maintenance of a sustainable, secure and flexible IT environment. The following policies were developed:

- E-communications policy
- Security guidelines
- E-evidence policy

SAQA's Internal Auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted a Computer Controls Audit. A Peer Review was also conducted.

The drafting of the architecture and strategy framework is in progress, and will be called an Integrated Technology Plan (ITP). The Strategic Support Unit is compiling a user survey to assess the usage of the IT systems and competency of users. This will assist in the development of a strategy to improve the effectiveness of the IT Systems and its alignment to the Authority's business.

The customer relationship management software was upgraded to serve the directorate's clients more effectively Together with the new call centre software that was commissioned with the new PABX; this provides the functionality required to support the SAQA Frontline Strategy.

The Business Impact Analysis and Risk Analysis for the Disaster Recovery Plan were completed. This will protect SAQA against unforeseen circumstances and enable it to recover speedily.

The IT infrastructure was completely upgraded during the period under review. Planning and implementation of a Storage Area Network were also completed. In addition, most of the servers were upgraded to dual processes to improve the capacity and stability of the services.

The first version of the Community Gateway was formally launched at the Faranani on 27 January 2006. Investigations into the open source architecture for the CEEQ support system were completed, and workshops started in January 2006 to initiate the analysis of the business processes. Functional and technical specifications are expected by the end of January for the initial development of the CEEQ system. An upgrade to the NQF Gateway commenced in February 2006.



*Abram Makoti and Noxolo Nozewu*

