

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EAST AFRICAN TESTING TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 2008/2009

1.0 ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN/PLANNED

During the period from April 2008 to April 2009 two technical sub-committee meetings have been held and the following activities have been undertaken:

1.1 Training Undertaken

A total of 35 participants from the EAC countries attended basic statistics workshop held during the evaluation workshop of the 3rd EAC PT round, Arusha, Tanzania in February 2009.

A regional chemical metrology awareness workshop was held in Nairobi, Kenya in August 2008.

Further Regional awareness was carried out in December 2009, in Mombasa, Kenya where a proposed working group on this subject was recommended to be presented to the EASC for adoption.

1.2 Proficiency Testing (PT) Schemes

Chemistry PT

The activities of the third round of the EAC chemistry proficiency testing scheme went on as scheduled. The matrices included edible salt, wheat flour and edible vegetable oil provided by TBS, KEBS and UNBS respectively.

- a) PT samples were prepared in the month of August 2008.
- b) Homogeneity studies were carried out in August 2008.
- c) Samples were dispatched to 87 laboratories in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Mauritius, Malawi, Madagascar and Ethiopia in the month of October 2008.

- d) Stability studies were carried out in September 2008.
- e) Laboratories Performance assessment and evaluation were carried out in December 2008.
- f) Reporting was done in January 2009.

- g) One joint PT evaluation workshops was held successfully in Arusha, Tanzania on February 2009 to present the results of the third round.
- h) Participants expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Providers.

- i) The fourth round of the EAC PT had been scheduled for September 2009.

Microbiology PT

- (a) The first round of Water Microbiology PT provided by the UNBS Microbiology Laboratory was conducted in June 2008. This PT had participants from EAC and SADC regions. However, there were challenges related to sample stability leading to inconsistencies in data evaluation.

- (b) The first notification of the PT was done in March 2008 and 25 laboratories from Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe registered for participation. Samples were shipped in September 2008.

- (c) An evaluation workshop was held in Kampala, Uganda from 11th to 12th December 2008, where 24 laboratories participated.

Coordination of PT in new member states

RBS has identified Mr. Antoine Mukunzi as the contact person for Regional PT schemes in Rwanda.

1.3 Draft Regulations for designation of laboratories

The committee forwarded the Zero draft of the regulations that were adopted by the EASC during the 12th meeting to the EAC Secretariat for legal editing. The sub-committee received feedback

and a copy of similar regulations from COMESA for benchmarking. The technical committee considered the two documents and prepared draft one to be sent for national consultations.

2.0 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

- a) Awareness of SQMT activities to stakeholders was still low.
- b) Inadequate maintenance & services of analytical equipment.
- c) Some problems in the Microbiology PT centered around packaging and problems related to delivery as some labs received samples weeks after dispatch.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Subcommittee recommends to EACSC to:

i) Training

- a) **More training of trainers be carried out so that the training can be enhanced in the region in order to achieve adequate and competent laboratory personnel. Priority should be given to new member states; Rwanda and Burundi as their capacity is still low.**
- b) **Strengthening of analytical skills within the testing laboratories through tailor made programmes be continued.**

ii) Proficiency Testing (PT)

- a) **Request to PTB to support NSBs to carry out more awareness & marketing for the PT schemes in order to attract more participants for laboratory competence improvement.**
- b) **Participation fee of US\$ 100 per PT matrix to subsidize the cost of the consumables by the PT provider was adopted during the 12th EASC meeting. Sub-committee recommends that laboratories which confirm**

participation should receive samples but only those which pay the participation fee of US\$100 per matrix should receive reports.

- c) EX-PT samples should be available for sale to laboratories for quality control purposes, where possible, at a cost of US\$ 50.

iii) Chemical Metrology

- a). Formation of working group on chemical metrology in line with the recommendation from the regional chemical metrology awareness workshop carried out in December 2009, in Mombasa, Kenya
- b). Chemical metrology being a new concept in the region, the sub-committee recommended continued awareness programmes in this area.

vi) Approval work-plan and meetings of the Testing technical sub-committee as follows:

- a) Work plan for 2009-2010, *Annex III*
- b) Two regular Testing Technical subcommittee meetings.
- c) One planning meeting for PT providers.
- d) One joint PT Evaluation workshop

v) Promotional materials:

The subcommittee recommends that the EAC Principal Standards Officer finalize and print the EAC Proficiency Testing Brochure. The same should also be uploaded on the EAC SQMT web portal.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The sub-committee requests the EACSC to approve and adopt this report.