

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015

Looking back at 2015 one can say it has been a successful year. Particular focus has been to re-strategise, realign objectives and refocusing on new goals. Key to achieve this has been the development of a long term strategic plan, updating our knowledge of the needs of our members and rebranding the image of the organisation.

The core focus of the organisation over the last decade had been to deliver a successful 2014 IFAC World Congress in Cape Town. To this end all energies were directed climaxing in the successful 2014 event. 2015 was thus almost a new beginning or rather a new chapter for the organisation. The primary objectives of the organisation had to be revisited for new inspiration and these are

- Strengthening SACAC's relationship with IFAC;
- Improving co-operation between industry and institutions;
- Developing capacity within the automation industry;
- Providing value for our members.

OPERATIONS

It is vital for our organization to stay relevant in the dynamic field of automatic control. As such, we conducted a survey with the aim of determining how SACAC can ensure that it aligns itself with this aim and how best to serve our members. Feedback from the members was sought querying a broad range of issues such communications by the organisation to members, activities, benefits. The results of the survey were then incorporated into the organisations strategic plans stretching for the next couple of years. Some key points raised in the survey responses were that members want more conferences and workshops. While the Gauteng region is the most condensed area for workshop hosting there is a need to also host workshops outside of Gauteng. Members are diverse in seniority and years of experience in the control field and our activities and benefits should cover this broad spectrum of members. Of significance though was the perception of the organisation and effectiveness of our methods of marketing and communication.

With the rapid and ever changing social media and other methods of communication SACAC has over the years attempted to keep abreast and modern. Ad hoc attempts had kept our organisation's image just barely up to date. The survey further highlighted the need for SACAC to modernise its image so a professional rebranding exercise was instituted. The website, logo, and a number of organisational communications utilities have been harmoniously rebranded and modernised. More will be presented on this later today.

Jean McKenzie had been secretary to the organisation for about two and half decades. Upon her retirement shortly after the 2015 SACAC AGM the organisation has since engaged the secretarial services of Office Executives led by Keri Caitlin Garland. Consequently an agenda item will require us to update the organisation's address as it is part of the Constitution.

EVENTS

The year saw more events being hosted outside of Gauteng. The ever popular Functional Design Specifications for PLC and SCADA Workshop was hosted in Port Elizabeth and also a Control Systems Day was hosted at Stellenbosch University. An Energy Optimisation and Management through Control Seminar was also held in Pretoria.

RELATIONSHIP WITH IFAC

Our members continue to represent SACAC in various IFAC technical committees. However IFAC events typically have a long lead time before hosting. This can be as long as ten years for key events such as the World Congress. The organisation thus took a strategic plan to target the hosting of particular IFAC events in line with the triennial IFAC World Congress cycles. The next IFAC event to be hosted by SACAC is the Control Conference for Africa scheduled for 2017. A key goal of this event would be to facilitate the setting up of IFAC National Member Organisations specifically from the African region. Targeted countries include but are not limited to Namibia, Mauritius and Botswana.

Another IFAC Event targeted is the MMM 2019 Symposium championed by Kevin Brooks. A bid document is in its final phases and is to be submitted in the next month. Our chances have been bolstered by increasing our organisations presence and activities in the relevant IFAC TC. Our members may benefit by being showcased through the Social Media initiatives that some of our members have taken in this IFAC TC. Immediate Past President Ian Craig shall provide more details in his report on IFAC matters.

FINANCES

Proceeds from the 2014 IFAC World congress provides SACAC with much needed resources to operate under difficult financial conditions and to improve its offering to members. These proceeds have been invested and are earmarked for projects aligned with the goals of the organisation, as described earlier. A financial report detailing SACAC's day-to-day financial dealings as well as investments and disbursements related to the 2014 IFAC World congress funds shall be tabled later.

OUTLOOK FOR 2016

Having funds available to cover more than day-to-day running expenses, changes the playing field for SACAC. Some of the actions EXCO has discussed include:

- a specific amount has been put aside in order to pay the IFAC annual fees in perpetuity;
 - attendance at EXCO meetings by members outside Gauteng;
 - completion of SACAC rebranding exercise;
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- a number of workshops have been planned for the year starting with Advanced Optimisation Techniques, Automation and the 4th Industrial Revolution, Introduction to Advanced Process Control Techniques, Observer Design Workshop and the Control Systems Day to be held at North West University at the end of the year;
- Bidding for IFAC MMM 2019 Symposium
- Finalising the preparations for hosting Control Conference for Africa in 2017

The successful running of an organisation like SACAC, with its high ambitions cannot be achieved without the tremendous passion and dedication of its members. To Kobus Oosthuizen, Derik le Roux, and all the EXCO members the organisation is truly indebted to your passion and dedication. To all members of SACAC thank you for your continued support and looking forward to the members support of the plans for the organisation.

Otis Tichatonga Nyandoro
February 2016
