

South African Council for Automation and Control

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012

2012 has been a successful year for the South African Council for Automation and Control. SACAC has fulfilled its mission by organizing and participating in national and international events in the automation and control arena; by maintaining SACAC's relationship with IFAC as its NMO; by facilitating contact between researchers, practitioners, vendors and suppliers in the automation and control domains; and by establishing contact with relevant national and international organizations.

Even in these economically challenging times, SACAC has maintained its presence as the foremost South African body fulfilling member's needs in the automation and control fields. Planning for the future continues, as we move towards very exciting times...

EVENTS

Several SACAC activities took place in 2012:

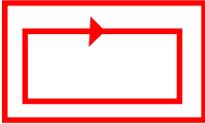
SACAC presented a repeat of the one day interactive workshop on the writing of control system functional design specifications for PLC and SCADA on the 23rd of April in Johannesburg. The guideline presented was completely generic and did not align with any specific automation product or manufacturer. At the conclusion of the workshop the attendees had a thorough understanding of the minimum requirements for an FDS as well as a complete sample document for reference. The workshop was attended by 25 delegates. Our gratitude goes out to Alfred Schroder for organizing this event and making the event a success.

SACAC also presented a repeat of the interactive workshop on modern techniques and software for process control on 25 September in Johannesburg. The workshop covered the fields of base level control and linear and non-linear model predictive control. The workshop was presented by Dr. Kevin Brooks and Dr. Loutjie Coetzee; who are experts in the fields. At the conclusion of the workshop the attendees gained a thorough understanding of both the modern techniques and software that is used in implementing advanced control schemes. Our sincere thanks goes out to Kevin and Loutjie for making this event a success.

SACAC hosted the control systems day at the University of Pretoria on 27 November, 2012. The control systems day is a one-day event showcasing control related research undertaken at universities across South Africa. The aim of this event is to afford postgraduate students, researchers and industry experts working in the field of automation and control the opportunity to engage with each other and share their research work. Faculty staff and students from UJ, UP, WITS, NWU and CPUT presented their work at the workshop. More than 30 people attended the SACAC event. Thank you to Professor Ian Craig and Derik Le Roux for making this event a success.

The IFAC Council awarded the 2014 World Congress to SACAC on 29 July, 2007 in Toulouse, France. Preparations for this prestigious event has successfully continued since then; with 2012 being a successful year in the preparation leading to the Cape Town Congress. 2500 to 3000 delegates from across the globe are expected over the five day technical period of IFAC 2014.

The SACAC appointed IFAC 2014 NOC has held 16 meetings since its inception. Members of the committee work closely with the appointed PCO, African Agenda, to make the World Congress at the CTICC a success. NOC meetings are held every six to eight weeks during major activity.



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The preparation highlights for the 19th instalment of the World Congress over the past year includes securing sponsorship from the Technology Innovation Agency to the amount of R 2,500,000. The funds are transferred over three years to SACAC, in annual instalments. SACAC and the Technology Innovation Agency have been working closely together towards making IFAC 2014 a success.

The IPC is led by Professors Edward Boje and Xiaohua Xia. The responsibility of the IPC is to ensure that the conference is a technical success and both Ed and Xiaohua are enforcing this objective.

The paper submission site opens in June 2013 and by then all systems will be go to handle the influx of papers from all over the world.

Marketing has been progressing well with quarterly newsletters sent out, flyers distributed at leading conferences such as the Chinese, European and American Control Conferences; setup of the conference website, monthly updates in the CSS e-letter. Furthermore, the conference is being marketed locally to achieve a high local representation at the conference.

African Agenda has also been working closely with élan communications to host the Process-Expo Africa 2014 exhibition in conjunction with the conference at the Cape Town ICC. The finer details of the contract with élan communications are currently being finalised and signing should take place soon.

The next major steps in the preparation include the technical review process; setup of the registration site; securing further sponsorship; further marketing of the event locally and abroad; determining venue logistics; organizing pre- and post-conference tours, technical visits and the social programme.

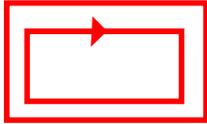
OPERATIONS

Together with the events, we have continued to consolidate the organisation, based on our primary objectives:

- strengthening SACAC's relationship with IFAC,
- improving co-operation between industry and institutions,
- developing capacity within the automation industry,
- providing value for our members and
- developing a strong balance sheet to support the 2014 Congress preparations.

In support of these objectives, a number of continual actions have been undertaken, and include;

- updating of the membership information database,
- revision of the SACAC website and providing access to executive committee members to easily update information,
- the workshops which aimed at providing both educational and practical value to the attendees, and received positive feedback,
- an increase of the visibility of SACAC in the South African environment through a number of publicity activities,
- making effort to broaden our relationships with fellow associations.



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RELATIONSHIP WITH IFAC

We are currently enjoying a strong relationship with IFAC, as several of our members are participating on various IFAC committees, either as members, chairs or the president!

FINANCES

Our Honorary treasurer and Honorary Secretary, Kobus Oosthuizen, is holding a firm hand of control over the SACAC balance sheet. With the World Congress on the near horizon, we will need to significantly strengthen the balance sheet, and realise that some extraordinary effort will be required from all our members. I urge all members to look at innovative ways to support this very prestigious event. The IFAC 2014 sponsorship prospectus has been circulated to all members.

OUTLOOK FOR 2013

SACAC has planned several activities for 2013. These include a rerun of the FDS and Modern Control Techniques for Process Control workshops due to their popularity and benefit to our members. SACAC further plans to host workshops on energy efficiency in grinding control, modern technologies in automation, common pitfalls of upgrading automation systems, autonomous mining, unmanned aerial vehicles, automation at the Square Kilometer Array, improvement of cooperation between academia and vendors, dynamic simulation for improved control design in the chemical engineering industries, control education and the control systems day. We also encourage members to both support these events, as well as provide suggestions for topics that are of specific interest to themselves. Preparations for the 2014 World Congress will continue.

Reina Aviges has been the accountant handling SACAC financial matters for many years. Reina has however decided to retire and I would like to thank her for her hard work during the past years.

SACAC would like to thank all the current executive committee members for their continued support during the year, and to Jean McKenzie, Reina Aviges and Kobus Oosthuizen for their dedicated and sometimes less visible behind the scenes secretarial, administration and finance management support.

To all the members of SACAC, thank you all for your ongoing support of the organisation. I look forward to see SACAC continue to grow and to host a successful three year IFAC tenure-ship, leading up to a magnificent 19th IFAC World Congress in 2014.

At the end of my presidency I would like to wish the new president and executive well with their duties.

Fernando Camisani
8 March, 2013