

Joint briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry and the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, Economic Development, Small Business Development, Tourism, Employment and Labour

**by
the dtic Technical Infrastructure Entities on
Contributions to Government's COVID-19 Response**

28 May 2020



the dtic

Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DELEGATION

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ABBREVIATIONS

SABS	–	South African Bureau of Standards
NRCS	–	National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications
SANAS	–	South African National Accreditation System
NMISA	–	National Metrology Institute of South Africa
SADC	–	Southern African Development Community
UV	–	Ultraviolet
NMS	–	National Measurement Standard
SANS	–	South African National Standard
TI	–	Technical Infrastructure

OVERVIEW BY the dtic

- The 6th Administration launched the Re-imagined Industrial Strategy (RIS) as a central strategy to deepen industrial development, preserve and create decent jobs and achieve structural transformation in the economy through a much co-ordinated effort and collaboration between the social partners.
- The department is implementing the Strategy through highly focused high impact programmes that are and to be set out in the sector specific Masterplans.
- The recent outbreak of the Corona Virus (COVID-19) is having massive impact on global health systems, supply chains and economic growth. The effects of this external shock are being felt in all key SA productive sectors and pose significant risks to industrial capacity and jobs. The pandemic has however also created opportunities that are being pursued to support the health system through development/ enhancement of industrial capabilities and local production.
- The sector Masterplans will be used as a base to identify and deploy appropriate suite of the industrial policy tools to achieve growth, job creation and industrial development in the national priority sectors → Standards/ Quality based Instruments – driven through the work of the Technical Infrastructure entities – form an integral part of our industrial policy toolbox.

OVERVIEW BY the dtic - continued

- The Technical Infrastructure (IS) is a system of setting standards and demonstrating that such standards are complied with in order to build confidence in the economy.
- Our national system is composed of 4 Entities, namely: the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS), the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS); and the National Metrology Institute of South Africa (NMISA).
- These 4 Entities, complemented by the private sector bodies that perform conformity assessment services, ensure that products and industrial processes meet the required specifications for safety and performance.
- The TI further provides scientific based support to industry helping them improve their products and services while protecting citizens and employees from unsafe products and environments.

MANDATE OF SABS

South African Bureau of Standards

Mandate: the Standards Act, 2008 (Act No. 8 of 2008), established the SABS as the peak national institutions to: develop standards, perform conformity assessment services, promote quality.

Role: of SABS is to develop, maintain and promote South African National Standards (SANS). Furthermore, the SABS provide third-party commercial testing and certification services for a specific range of products and services in accordance with requirements specified in SANS.

MANDATE OF NRCS

The National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) administers 3 Acts:

The National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications Act, 2008 (Act No. 5 of 2008), - established the NRCS to promote public health and safety, environmental protection and fair trade through the administration, maintenance and enforcement of Technical Regulations and Compulsory Specifications.

The Legal Metrology Act, 2014 (Act No. 9 of 2014), - strengthens enforcement of metrology, protects consumers against short measure.

National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act No. 103 of 1977), - its purpose is to: promote uniformity in the law relating to the erection of buildings, for the prescribing of building standards, require that building be approved by local authorities prior to erection, require local authorities to employ building control officers, establishes an appeal mechanism against decisions of local authorities.

Role: to develop Compulsory Specifications and Technical Regulations and enforce compliance of regulated products that fall within these categories: Chemicals, Materials and Mechanical, Electro-technical, Food and Associated Industry, and Automotive Industry.

MANDATE OF SANAS

The South African National Accreditation System (SANAS)

Mandate: SANAS was established by the Accreditation for Conformity Assessment, Calibration and Good Laboratory Practice Act, 2006 (Act No. 19 of 2006), as the sole national accreditation body to provide an internationally recognised and effective accreditation and monitoring system for South Africa in the fields of Conformity Assessment, Calibration and Good Laboratory Practice.

Role: to create an impartial and transparent mechanism for organisations to independently demonstrate their competence and facilitate the beneficial exchange of goods, services and knowledge, and provide a service that is recognised as equitable to best international practice.

MANDATE OF NMISA

National Metrology Institute of South Africa (NMISA)

Mandate: NMISA was established by the Measurement Units and Measurement Standards Act, 2006 (Act No. 18 of 2006), to provide for the use of measurement units of the International System of Units (SI) and to designate other measurement units for use; to provide for the designation of the national measurement standards (NMS) and to provide for the keeping and maintenance of the NMS.

Role: of NMISA is to ensure that measurements performed nationally in science, industry or for legal purposes are accurate and internationally acceptable as NMISA is the national custodian of the SI.

APPROACH OF TI ENTITIES TO COVID-19

- Following the declaration of a National State of Disaster in March 2020, the Technical Infrastructure Entities needed to continue, *inter alia*, to ensure the products sold in the domestic market meet the minimum quality and safety requirements/ standards.
- This Pandemic has resulted in much higher demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as facemasks, protective clothing, goggles, gloves and even hand disinfectants and sanitisers than ever before → PPE products are essential to ensure the safety and to protect the health of frontline medical workers and citizens.
- The quality and performance requirements of PPE products; foodstuffs; and other essential products are defined by relevant Standards and Technical Regulations on national and international levels.
- The Entities' leadership will discuss in detail how the work in their respective areas has contributed to government's COVID-19 response, and how the integrity of the TI system has been safeguarded for the broader economy and assured the quality, performance and safety of daily essentials.

The logo of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) is a circular emblem. It features a stylized sun with rays at the top, a gear or cogwheel in the middle, and a stylized mountain range at the bottom. The colors are primarily blue, green, and yellow, with a white background for the sun and mountains. The text "SOUTH AFRICAN BUREAU OF STANDARDS" is written in a bold, sans-serif font across the center of the emblem.

SOUTH AFRICAN BUREAU OF STANDARDS

SABS COVID-19 SUPPORT

- The SABS, together with the rest of South Africa, has been in lockdown from 24 March 2020, with a few labs operating under Level 5 as essential services.
- The SABS has assisted with consignment inspections on procured PPE to support the work of Business for South Africa.
- A small component of staff has returned to work, at our Pretoria campus, as prescribed by Lockdown Level 4 requirements.
- SABS has adopted a two-pronged response:
 - Safeguarding the health of SABS employees, tenants, customers and suppliers; and
 - Supporting essential services, where appropriate.

SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH OF SABS EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS

- Adherence to Regulations and protocols.
- Emergency Response team (ERT) activated at Groenkloof and crisis management protocols and business continuity at all SABS offices implemented. Relevant officials appointed as per Regulations.
- Comprehensive hygiene awareness campaign including all preventative measures across all operations.
- Imposition of travel ban or restrictions for all company employees for business travel. Limiting visits by customers and service providers to SABS premises, sample delivery is scheduled.
- Most employees worked from home during Level 5 lockdown and continuing where possible under Level 4.

SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH OF SABS EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS - continued

- Phased approach to lifting of restriction and returning to the office – 33% threshold maintained at all times.
- PPE equipment purchased and issued.
- Screening conducted of all staff, customers, suppliers and tenants entering the SABS premises.

SABS SUPPORTING NATIONAL EFFORTS

The SABS supports various essential services industries as well as assists manufacturers and distributors to prepare for licensing, approval of products and assisting government entities with procurement decisions. Product list:

- Hand sanitisers;
- Disinfectants;
- Masks; and
- Surgical gloves and aprons.

SABS SUPPORTING NATIONAL EFFORTS – continued 2

Laboratories operational during lockdown:

- Food microbiology (Pretoria and Cape Town);
- Pharmaceutical chemistry;
- Fiber & Polymers (standby);
- Industrial chemistry (standby);
- Condom lab (from 20 April 2020); and
- Cement and Radiation Protection Services.

SABS SUPPORTING NATIONAL EFFORTS – continued 3

- Free access to limited set of standards, applicable to critical products have been granted to industries and is available on our website:
 - ISO 10651-4:2002 Lung Ventilators;
 - ISO 17510:2015 Medical Devices;
 - ISO 374 -5:2016 Protective Gloves; and
 - ISO 22301:2019 Business Continuity Management.

SABS SUPPORTING NATIONAL EFFORTS – continued 4

- The SABS introduced a quick mechanism for the issue of letters of conformance (LoC) in terms of the SABS Product Certification (Mark) Scheme, for the products related to COVID-19. An LoC is issued as an interim license to allow distribution of products where audits have been conducted, pending finalisation of the mark scheme process.
- Various consignment inspection conducted:
 - Respirator masks;
 - Surgical masks; and
 - Gloves.

NATIONAL REGULATOR FOR COMPULSORY SPECIFICATIONS

NRCS ESSENTIAL SERVICES SUPPORT

Industry Sector	Product/service regulated under essential service
Automotive	Homologation services – Vehicle and components homologation approvals including natis model number and inspections approval. (added as part of essential services on 13 May 2020)
Chemicals, Materials and Mechanicals	Chemicals, detergents, Personal protective equipment, safety shoes
Food and Associated	Fishery products, canned meat and processed meat
Legal Metrology	Type approval of measuring instruments and approval of gambling equipment, verification of measuring instruments and the control of prepackages and measurements in trade, health, safety and the environment.

- Other regulated Industries not under essential services:
 - Electro-technical; and
 - Building Regulations.

SAFETY OF NRCS EMPLOYEES

- NRCS developed a COVID-19 Plan.
- Conducted risk assessment for all operations by 21 May 2020.
- All operations are as per determined risk rating to protect staff and shareholders.
- Procured relevant PPE for all staff.
- Most employees operating remotely except employees that need to be in office for laboratory work and work that can not be performed from home.
- External stakeholders being assisted remotely. Where the stakeholders need to present themselves at the NRCS premises, the NRCS has developed a screening protocol.
- Compliance with the Regulations – office preparations, screening of employees and stakeholders, social distancing and reduced staff at offices (one third).
- Electronic submission of approvals, health guarantee requests.
- NRCS Staff members encouraged to contribute to the Solidarity Fund.

NRCS PPE - COMPULSORY SPECIFICATION (VC)8072:2011 MASKS

- In response to COVID-19, the NRCS assessed the risks and considered issuance of sales permit for temporary approval and allow availability of masks on the market quicker.
- Specific technical requirements that are critical for the health and safety of consumers still need to be complied with and test report submitted for a sales permit to be granted.
- These interim measures were communicated to through a media release that was issued in March 2020 to the industry, laboratories and public on regulatory requirements for masks and chemical disinfectants.
- Application forms and processes are available on the website.
- 100 applications for Sales Permit were received during Lockdown 2020. Only 90 of the applications were registered and processed as they were within scope.
- 21 new Sales Permits were issued, 7 Rejected and 2 cancelled.
- Turn around times for the issuance of Sales Permits was on average 13 days.
- Resources directed towards profiling at port of entry to determine essential goods coming in and port of entry inspections on essential products.

NRCS PPE - continued

- Submitted a proposed Compulsory Specification on Sanitisers for Ministerial consideration due to market failure.
- Market surveillance inspections have been greatly reduced due to Lockdown, resources are being dedicated to critical inspections.
- In adapting to the challenges posed by COVID-19, the NRCS is monitoring social media for regulated products and contacting those suppliers.
- Responded to 10 customer concerns from public and industry.
- NRCS inspectors as from May 2020 will be part of Inspection teams for incoming or imported essential products mainly for government with other key stakeholders such as South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) and Business for South Africa (BSA).
- Participating in COVID-19 Occupational, Health and Safety (OHS) PPE COMMITTEE comprising of Department of Health, **the dtic**, National Treasury, BSA, Private Health Care, Hospital Association of South Africa (HASA), SAHPRA, Hospital Association, SABS, Protechnik in our capacity as regulator.

NRCS FOODS AND ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS

- Regulating fish and fishery products, canned meat, processed meats and respective manufacturing plants and fishing vessels.
- NRCS developed an operational plan to ensure continuity to both the Fishing and Meat Industry which was communicated to industry, where classification of products in terms of risk and food safety was prioritised for inspection without compromising the safety of the employees to COVID-19.
- Collaboration with Other Government Departments – e.g. The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF).
- In collaboration with DEFF, NRCS continuing the process of monitoring and sampling of live aqua-cultured animals to ensure farms remain productive both in the Eastern and Western Cape under strict hygienic controls the lockdown, this has allowed the industry to have enough live export products.
- Increase of Frozen Fish Export.

NRCS FOODS AND ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS - continued

- NRCS had to adjust the Operations to assist the industry to be able to export the frozen fish through Sea cargo, by registering most of the Exporter's on an electronic System called TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System for Food Safety) allowing issuance of Health Guarantees remotely and facilitated the trade to those factories that were operating during the Lockdown.
- Special Cargo Flight only departing from OR Tambo.
- With the special Cargo flights departing from OR, NRCS assisted by inspecting products at OR Tambo and issue the required Health Guarantees, therefore Fresh fish export certification increased for the Pretoria Office during the Lockdown.
- During the month of April a total of 1906 inspections were conducted for fishery, canned meat and processed meat products.
- A total of 1231 health guarantees including the compliance certificates were issued for the month of April.
- In total of 103 business (Local producers, Exporters and Importers) benefited from these services.

NRCS FOODS AND ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS – continued 2

Non-compliances:

- Food Packs for South African Defense Forces: manipulation of the best before date. The matter has been referred to NRCS Legal services.
- Canned fish specifically packed for the school feeding programme: during lockdown this product we discovered at Spaza shops, although they were clearly marked not for sale. Case referred Department of Education.

NRCS LEGAL METROLOGY

- Ongoing inspections of essential goods in terms of the Legal Metrology Act.
- Market surveillance mainly focused on desktop evaluations.
- Carried out 180 inspections focusing mainly on labelling requirements (majority was desktop inspections).
- 2 concerns that were received from consumers/ industry at regional offices were investigated and the non-complaint businesses were sanctioned.
- Investigated two labeling queries received for food products the non-complaint businesses were sanctioned.

NRCS LEGAL METROLOGY - continued

Non-compliances:

- Participated in Provincial Joint operations in the Free State (FS) area with the focus being eradication of non-compliant regulated products within the Legal Metrology Domain.
- 8 businesses visited and confiscated 8 product lines, one business was closed for not having all required documentation and confiscated one unapproved measuring instrument.

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

SANAS ADAPTED OR MODIFIED SERVICE OFFERING DURING THE LOCKDOWN



- **Operation -**
 - Optimisation of ICT:
 - Remote Assessments; and
 - New procedures developed to address the new way of work (e.g. Document P35 “Remote Assessments – Management and Execution”).
- **Finances -**
 - Financial support (Rebate); and
 - Free extension for COVID-19 related testing (Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies only).
- **Personnel -**
 - Working from home:
 - Tools of trade for working from home;
 - Wellness support;
 - Risk Management of office space to prevent and control COVID-19 risk; and
 - Preparing office space in compliance with Department of Labour & Employment (DEL) Risk Plan.
- **Regulators -**
 - Signed agreement with the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) in support of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs); and
 - Co-ordinated dissemination of requirements SAPHRA.

SANAS SUPPORT TO INDUSTRY

Medical Laboratories

COVID-19 testing

- A total of 12 laboratories including National Health Laboratory Service and Private Laboratories have been identified to be accredited for COVID-19 testing.
- Laboratories have agreed to have their assessments performed in June.

Calibration

Proficiency Testing (PT) for COVID-19 testing

- Enquiry under way for providing PT testing for COVID-19.
- A working group is being established to set guidance for the calibration of Infrared (IR) thermometers used for testing for high fever.

Drafting requirements for IR thermometer calibration

- Currently we have a number of laboratories accredited for the calibration of IR thermometers but the uncertainties are larger than required specifically over the range of 30 to 40 Degrees Celsius (Deg. C). The Working Group (WG) will have their first electronic meeting this week. The output will be a Technical Guidance (TG) document.

SANAS SUPPORT TO INDUSTRY - continued

Testing Laboratories

PPE Testing

- SANAS has accredited 3 laboratories that tests sanitisers, disinfectants and soaps. This information was communicated to the relevant stakeholders.
- SANAS has and is continuing assisting manufactures and other stakeholders by providing guidance on matters related to accreditation of PPE's, sanitisers and disinfectants needed in the fight of the COVID-19.

Inspection Bodies

X-ray equipment , Abattoirs, Gas cylinders

- The inspection of diagnostic X-ray equipment continues during the pandemic to ensure that the medical profession receives accurate and reliable diagnostic reports, especially when dealing with COVID-19 infected patients.
- Our inspection bodies accredited for the inspection of abattoirs continue to operate during the pandemic to ensure that the country is supplied with meat and poultry processed in facilities that comply with strict national and international standards.
- The accredited Gas Test Stations ensure that the gas cylinders that are supplied to hospitals, clinics and pathology laboratories are safe for use and comply with the various national standards for the safety and performance of these cylinders.

SANAS SUPPORT TO INDUSTRY – continued 2

B-BBEE Verification

- B-BBEE SANAS reviewed the R47-02 procedures in order to accommodate B-BBEE Rating Agencies in order to perform their normal business functions in terms of issuing B-BBEE Certificates and Reports. This allows B-BBEE Rating Agencies to continue to provide the required certificates to their clients.

SANAS WAY FORWARD

Sustainability

- Adjust our current strategic plans;
- Strong focus on efficiency improvements and savings (optimisation of ICT);
- Expands our offerings / scopes of accreditation, training etc.

Value addition

- Rollout e- certificates
- Expansion of new scopes of accreditation
- Expansion of projects and support to accreditation infrastructure development
- Closer cooperation with Technical infrastructure delivering on National development plan

Organisational set up

- Working from home, allowing more flexibility
- Access and control improvements

NATIONAL METROLOGY INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICA

NMISA RESPONSES TO LOCKDOWN

- NMISA activated the Disaster Management Plan in line the NMISA Business Continuity Plan:
 - NMISA Disaster Recovery Team (DRT) guiding the organisation in responses aligned to the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002), and related Regulations published in the Government Gazette.
 - Virtual Meetings held on Teams, Skype or Zoom when Necessary.
 - Employee Wellness Program Interventions activated to assist staff.
- Following Lockdown:
 - **Level 5:**
 - Work from Home with laboratories only opening laboratories when Essential Services requests are received from Government and Industry.
 - **Level 4:**
 - Laboratory work resumes under strict OHS guidelines for National Measurement Standards (NMS) comparison.
 - Certified Reference Materials (CRM) including primary reference gas mixtures in-stock are available to clients, but preparation and will resume at Level 3.

NMISA SERVICES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- NMISA continued to support essential services even during lockdown.
- Services included:
 - Calibration of Sound Meters for professional services;
 - Ethanol and Sodium Fluoride for blood alcohol analysis;
 - Mycotoxin Certified reference materials for South Africa and SADC countries for food testing/safety;
 - Various Primary Gas Mixtures for the chemical plants and air monitoring; also Ethanol in Nitrogen primary gas mixtures for production companies;
 - Calibration of Dosimeter for Radiotherapy Departments; and
 - Radiation Protection Equipment.

NMISA PROFICIENCY TESTING SCHEMES

In the essential area of food services, NMISA continued to prepare for the Proficiency Testing (PT) scheme that need to go out in May and June for food testing in Africa [International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) contract for food safety in Africa].

PTs being prepared for up to end July are for:

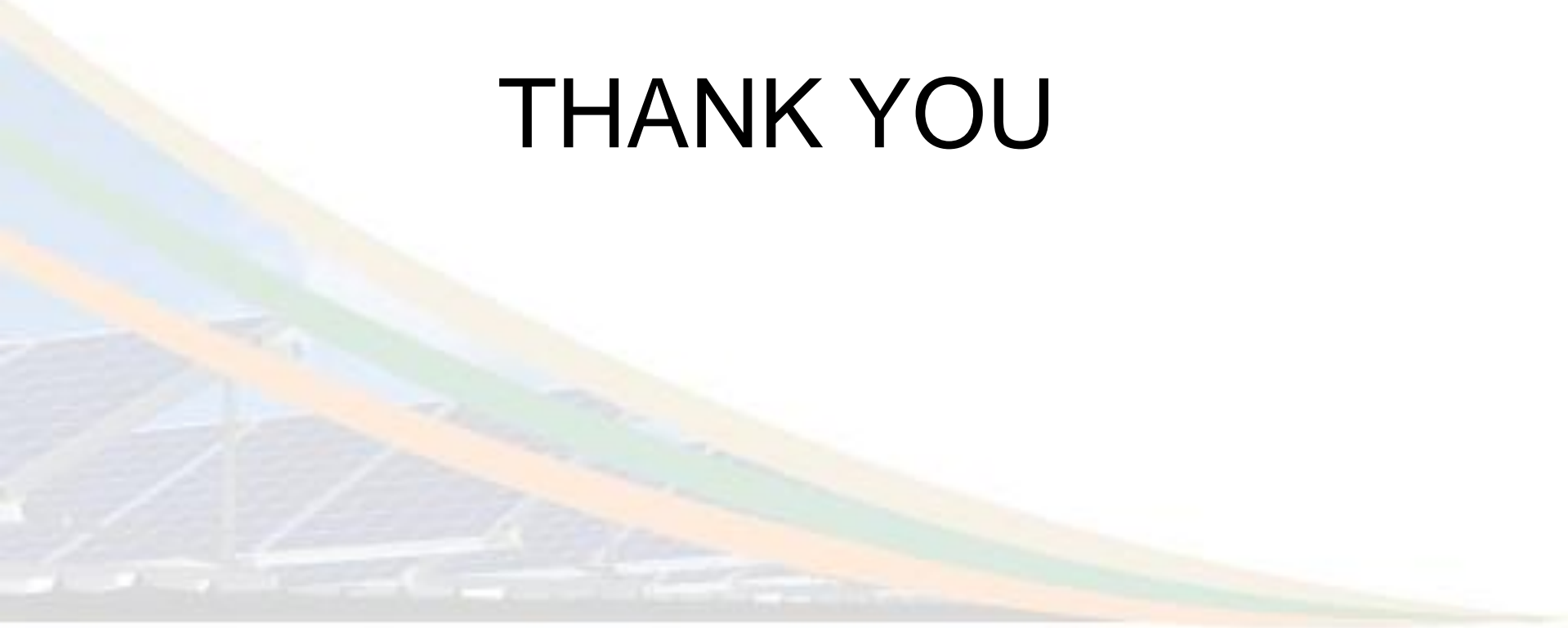
- Aflatoxins in peanut slurry;
- Forensic Blood Alcohol testing: Ethanol;
- Pesticides in sweet peppers;
- Mycotoxins in cassava;
- Aflatoxin M1 in milk;
- Pesticides in bananas;
- Pesticides in pears;
- Toxic elements in cocoa powder; and
- Toxic elements in maize flour.

NMISA SPECIAL COVID-19 PROJECTS

- Taxi and Public Transport disinfection project
 - NMISA providing measurements to a project of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), for developing a hand-held Ultraviolet C (UV-C) light based surface disinfection device.
- Ventilators
 - NMISA providing measurement solutions to a company that invented a UV-C Air Disinfection System for use in ventilators.
- Disinfection
 - NMISA providing measurements to a company that developed a UV-C Disinfection Chamber. Testing for efficacy and safety.
 - Providing UV-C measurement on disinfection units on a company's Touch-based Fingerprint Identification Unit.

LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The post COVID-19 world will be different, we still do not know the final impact of the pandemic, but our business and social environment will change.
- It is indeed anticipated that the pandemic will negatively impact the Entities' revenues and resources and therefore the importance of the strategy and programmes going forward.
- The integrated nature of TI work require seamless and timeous inter entity cooperation to address new needs.
- Modernisation of IT systems across all entities is helping to create capabilities for undertaking remote assessment and inspection and the issuance of e-certificates.
- The pandemic has heightened the important role played by TI entities. Government policy responses ought to include TI practitioners from the onset.



THANK YOU