

QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS BEFORE THE 2022 AGM

The questions below were raised by members before the Annual General Meeting, scheduled to take place on 26 May 2022.

Questions have been grouped into SAICA's four strategic pillars: Member Value, Relevance and Reputation, Growth and Transformation, and Organisational Sustainability. Questions have been answered by the relevant executives.

MEMBER VALUE

1. What is the one thing that SAICA has done well and is proud of in the past year?

Over the past year, SAICA's focus remained on supporting and delivering value for members and society by advancing its strategic initiatives while ensuring SAICA's financial sustainability. SAICA is particularly proud of the following successes within each of our strategic initiatives:

- Member Value: we hosted 130 seminars and events, which were attended by 34 325 delegates.
- Relevance and Reputation: the CA(SA) brand admiration index increased from 68% to 73% while trust in CAs(SA) increased from 81% (2019) to 85% in 2021.
- Growth and Transformation: 1 068 African and Coloured undergraduate and postgraduate students were funded by Thuthuka towards becoming CAs(SA).
- Organisational Sustainability: Our members continue to support us and our member fee collections improved with reserves from R321 million (2020) to R388 million (2021).

We encourage members to read the [Integrated Report](#), where the main achievements and challenges of the year are outlined, particularly on pages 18-21, and the SAICA scorecard on page 138, which provides externally assured ratings of how we performed against our goals for the year.

2. Is there any progress with obtaining reciprocity agreements with other countries with the AGA(SA) designation?

We are in the process of finalising a policy for reciprocity agreements for the AGA(SA) designation. Once the policy has been finalised, we will be in a position to begin negotiations with the relevant international bodies.

3. How does SAICA intend to give Top 35 Finalists opportunities on the SAICA Board and SAICA committees?

All SAICA members are eligible to apply for SAICA Board vacancies and SAICA Committees vacancies as and when they become available. SAICA communicates these opportunities via our various communications channels, after which a proper application, nomination and voting process is followed to ensure that the correct candidates are appointed to the relevant structures. Former Top 35 finalists currently serve on SAICA committees and the SAICA Board.

4. You are losing touch with your members by carrying on with virtual events. When are you starting face-to-face events?

We have begun phasing in face-to-face events for 2022, while remaining mindful of all potential health risks to our members. A few face-to-face events have already been hosted in regions this year, for example, the Bloemfontein golf day on 11 March, the SMP Roundtable Discussion in Cape Town on 17 May, and the West Rand Tax Event on 22 April. In June we will be hosting several new member events and the Limpopo Annual Dinner. In July two face-to-face events will take place in Cape Town, the SARS stakeholder engagement on 19 July and the Coffee Conversation with the Mayor on 21 July. The Coffee Conversations will take place in person every month until the end of the year. In August, we are hosting a two-day technical conference, Behind the Numbers, in Gauteng.

Taking into account the COVID-19 requirements as set out by the COVID-19 committee of SAICA, we will be presenting further face-to-face events as the rate of possible infection allows.

5. What is SAICA going to do with improving the labour market for CAs(SA), we're seeing a large number of them leaving the country on the basis of work culture and pay-related matters. What solutions is SAICA planning, if any, in the next 5 years to support local companies to have CA(SA) considering that most CAs(SA) are emigrating away from South Africa?

The number of CAs(SA) that are based outside of South Africa has remained fairly consistent for several years, at just over 20% of the membership base. (View our membership statistics [here](#)). One of the value drivers of the CA(SA) designation is that it can be positively compared to similar designations globally, a consequence of which is that members are able to excel in their careers anywhere in the world. It is very difficult for SAICA to direct members where they can or can't practice, who they can or can't work for, or force a member to stay in South Africa. SAICA is proud to know that its CA(SA) designation is strong and reputable enough to ensure global opportunities and recognition for our members.

6. Can you please consider making it compulsory for any company that employs a CA(SA) to cover the SAICA membership fees.

SAICA does significant marketing to ensure that companies recognise CAs(SA) as business leaders. Research shows that business leaders recognise SAICA as the most admired business designation in South Africa, showing the value that businesses place on Chartered Accountants. This is also indicated by the salary premium that many CAs(SA) earn over other designations. SAICA does not have the jurisdiction to legally enforce the payment of member subscriptions by independent companies. Members can access the SAICA [Member Value Proposition](#) to assist them in showing their employers the value that CAs(SA) bring to organisations, but the decision to pay for SAICA membership fees lies with each individual company.

7. Please give a membership fee breakdown and explain why it is so high?

The services that members have access to from SAICA are only one aspect of the value members derive from membership. The value includes a designation that is recognised and valued by business, over and above any other business designation in South Africa as well as being well recognised globally.

The CA(SA) designation enables members to access employability and recognition in the marketplace, and employers have indicated a preference for their employees to have the CA(SA) designation over other business designations, specifically in the financial area.

The statistics clearly demonstrate the value of the CA(SA) designation, which lies in the brand recognition that SAICA maintains through its trust reconstruction and brand reputation management strategies. You can read more on this in the Relevance and Reputation section below as well as in the [Integrated Report](#) on page 115.

Regarding the member services, in 2021 SAICA offered more than 80 complimentary events to members. If one was to calculate the cost of the value of these events, they would far exceed the cost of the annual membership fee. Nevertheless, SAICA sees the provision of services to members as being one of the drivers of the overall value that membership provides.

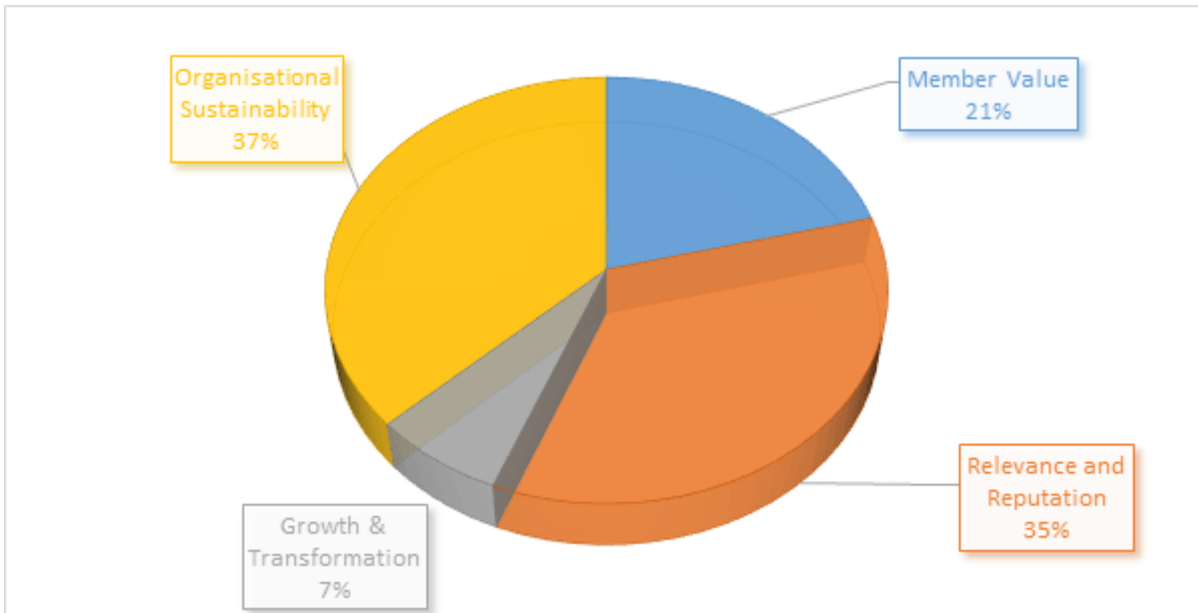
SAICA further achieved significant cost-saving measures in 2020 with the onset of the pandemic. These measures continue into 2022, as SAICA is maintaining significant virtual delivery mechanisms that save costs (for example, travel and venue costs) while enabling a wider distribution of content through online events and content-sharing. It should be further noted that SAICA had not increased membership fees for the three years prior to 2022.

SAICA's Member Value Proposition is premised on the fact that members are part of a prestigious and valued profession that enables them to participate and make a difference in South Africa and globally, while positively impacting the economy and society. The proposition is based on four pillars, which indicate that members are:

1. **Respected, recognised and relevant for the future**, which is enabled through: upholding high education standards, working with universities and training offices to maintain superior accreditation standards, providing learning and development opportunities to members; keeping member up to date on professional and technical developments; and maintaining the premiership of the brand through brand promotion.
2. **Connected, enabled and supported**, through advocacy and stakeholder engagements; representing the profession in national conversations; providing networking opportunities; maintaining strategic and global partnerships; and providing query logging facilities to members for support.
3. **Held to a high ethical standard**, through the SAICA by-laws that provide disciplinary processes that are fair and equitable; and holds members accountable to the Code of Professional Conduct.
4. **Make a difference to society** by being associated to the institute, given that SAICA enables the growth and transformation of the profession, which contributes to a positive economical contribution.

The full Member proposition has been communicated to members via SAICA's newsletters and ASA magazine and the full [Member Value Proposition](#) can also be found on the SAICA website.

Herewith below is the allocation of the 2022 membership subscriptions:



8. Firms are unethical through mismanagement of its day-to-day operations. What is SAICA doing to enforce better business practices?

Enforcement of better practices is not something that SAICA can do on its own. It requires a collaborative effort by all role players in the financial reporting ecosystem. Through regular interventions such as the Ethics in Practice series, Tax in Practice series and TechTalk, the operational and practical challenges are covered with a view to encourage the correct behaviour among all participants in the ecosystem, which is instilled in the [SAICA Code of Professional Conduct](#). Interventions such as the hosting of the JSE proactive monitoring findings as well as provision of guidance related to the IRBA inspection monitoring also give members insight into the findings of the regulators and mechanisms suggested for improvement and compliance.

In addition, SAICA's disciplinary processes are there to serve as a deterrent to members who may be crossing ethical boundaries.

It should further be reiterated that SAICA only has jurisdiction over its individual members, and not over firms.

9. The role of district committees in achieving SAICA's objective is not very effective. This is shown by the poor attendance of district committees at the AGM and events. Can SAICA focus more resources to improve the effectiveness of the District Committees?

District committees play an instrumental role as the interface between members and their institute, and in creating communities of members at the grassroots level. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 environment has seen all events over the last two years move online. With the resumption of face-to-face events over the past few months, the challenge of re-establishing the communities that existed previously remains.

Attendance at district AGMs and district events has been a challenge, especially as members still want the time advantage that online events present. The governance requirements to maintain district committees are currently being reviewed by SAICA. This is done in an effort to ensure that resources from both a member and a SAICA perspective will be concentrated on value-added activities that are member-focused.

The Central Region has already adopted a model that is currently being considered for all districts. District AGMs are no longer required, and all members can attend district meetings that are of interest to them. Where input is solicited from all members in attendance, the results show that significantly more resources are dedicated to events that add value to members.

Each district is supported by a Regional Executive, including a regional team and a district budget for events. Events are either proposed by or considered with significant input from the district committee and rolled out by the SAICA secretariat.

10. How long does it take to get your CA membership certificate? I've waited a month.

The SAICA welcome pack generally takes 3 to 4 weeks to print, prepare and despatch, depending on the volume of new members registered during the period. However, SAICA did experience a delay in receiving stock of some of the items contained in the welcome pack earlier this year. We have currently sourced alternative items and are awaiting delivery of these from the supplier. We expect to have despatched all welcome packs by 17 June 2022 for all members registered up to the end of May 2022.

In the interim, any new member who urgently requires a form of validation of membership, is able to access this via the [Member Portal](#), by selecting the "request confirmation of your membership" button in your profile and a letter of membership will be instantly available for download.

11. What are your thoughts and opinions on the demise of infrastructure in South Africa? It is blatant and in our faces. How can we collectively eliminate this?

SAICA engages with various stakeholders on matters that affect members and the broader community.

Our advocacy on matters of national concern are raised from a positive perspective where appropriate opportunities.

More information on our advocacy activities are outlined below in the question relating to SAICA's collaboration with the government.

12. Is SAICA able to outsource unemployed CAs(SA) to areas or entities that need short- to medium-term finance skills?

The number of unemployed CAs(SA) has remained fairly consistent over several years. High-level feedback from members is that there is a perceived shortage of members in the practice and audit industry, while there is a sense that there is an oversupply of members in commerce and industry. While there isn't any empirical evidence that the demand for CAs(SA) has changed at a macro level, there is a sense of an imbalance between the demand for CAs(SA) in practice versus commerce.

In 2021, SAICA communicated that it had entered into a memorandum of understanding with SARS to assist with the revenue collectors' capacitation project. Through this MOU, SAICA advertised 20 job opportunities to members and associates of which 74 members and associates (nationwide) applied for these job opportunities.

In addition to this, a CA(SA) Expert Consultancy webinar was held with the SARS Commissioner Edward Kieswetter and Judge Dennis Davis. Following this engagement, 79 SAICA veteran members completed the expression of interest process to apply to assist SARS with these consultancy roles and SARS has confirmed that, after an initial delay in its process, it is currently screening members and its interview process for these positions is ongoing.

As previously communicated to members, SAICA reiterates that SARS bears sole responsibility for any recruitment decisions, and therefore SAICA has no input into these processes or decisions.

RELEVANCE AND REPUTATION

13. What are some of the plans that SAICA has implemented to ensure sufficient disclosure is implemented relating to the ESG values.

From an internal, organisational perspective, certain measures and metrics in this regard have already been disclosed in SAICA's Integrated Report. SAICA further recognises the need to include ESG as part of its own sustainability as well as part of the detailed Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) disclosure within the Integrated Report.

From a member-facing perspective, the recent formation of the SAICA Sustainability Technical Committee (April 2022) and the member consultations on the recently released International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) will also assist in not only forming part of SAICA's formal advocacy but will also bring SAICA as an entity up to date with international reporting developments and proposals regarding sustainability.

The recently approved governance framework will support this.

14. How is SAICA responding to recent professional failures by its members on one hand and support for members facing ethical dilemmas, including whistle-blowers on the other hand?

SAICA understands that the chartered accountancy profession is undergoing a period of profound reflection encompassing debates on how to maintain professional independence as evidenced by SAICA's recent revisions to the Institute's by-laws which include enhancements to the disciplinary process. What we can all agree on, is that adherence to the highest standards of ethical conduct, professional integrity, and avoidance of conflict of interest must remain the bedrock of the accountancy profession. SAICA expects all its members to uphold these values in all professional circumstances. All members who are found to have contravened SAICA's Code of Professional Conduct (the Code), will be held accountable without fear or favour, including all members mentioned in the comprehensive Zondo Commission Reports.

SAICA confirms that it takes allegations against all individual members seriously and is currently investigating all allegations against its members. The initial investigation phase, in which SAICA gathers factual evidence, and testimony and conducts relevant due diligence, is confidential. In the interest of procedural fairness and as prescribed in the SAICA by-laws, SAICA cannot comment publicly, either in traditional media or on social media, on any member who is the subject of an investigation during this phase, unless otherwise provided for under the by-laws. This protects the reputation of the individual members involved (who may well be innocent) and also safeguards third parties who may be mentioned in a complaint but who have no opportunity, as non-members of SAICA, to explain themselves during the Institute's disciplinary process.

Once the investigation is concluded and there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a member may have breached the Code, that member will then be charged under the relevant section of the Code. At that point the process becomes public, should the CEO deem it appropriate. This is in line with the SAICA by-laws. The member will then have an opportunity to appear before an independent committee (either the Professional Conduct Committee or the Disciplinary Committee), chaired by a senior lawyer, generally an advocate, or a retired judge. This, of course, takes time, as SAICA's independent disciplinary committees deal with proven facts, and not only media reports. Each case is also unique, and therefore there is no prescribed timeline for SAICA's various disciplinary cases.

All cases before the Disciplinary Committee are open to the public unless the independent chair finds there are extraordinary circumstances, requiring the case to be heard *in camera* (private). The findings of these committees are also published where there is a guilty finding. Details of past cases, findings, and pending hearings can be accessed by following this [link](#).

A key responsibility of SAICA is the protection of its designations and it is also the responsibility of every designation holder to be a brand ambassador and to uphold the principles as set out in the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct.

Members who are facing ethical dilemmas have been and are welcome to continue reaching out to SAICA's Ethics and/or Discipline Units to discuss areas of concern. Members may also submit their concerns and any supporting evidence to the SAICA Whistleblowing hotline.

SAICA also offers a series of Ethics events, running throughout the year, to support members and trainees to help manage ethical dilemmas.

SAICA is currently investigating an insurance support initiative for whistle-blowers.

15. How is SAICA able to raise funding for Thuthuka but is not able to do so to support its members who are whistle-blowers?

SAICA is currently investigating an insurance support initiative for whistle-blowers.

16. What role can we play to ensure State Capture by responsible officers is prevented in the future? What measures are being taken to investigate SAICA members implicated in State Capture, not just via Zondo Commission but in cases not being

addressed by Zondo Commission but could very well have been, such as irregular expenditure on unapproved vaccines and PPE?

SAICA's role in preventing future ethical failures is the process of holding persons with SAICA designations accountable where they are found to have acted improperly.

SAICA has considered the Zondo Commission Reports and has initiated investigations against members against whom recommendations have been made or who have been implicated in the reports. Over and above the Zondo Commission Reports, SAICA investigates all complaints and media reports alleging unethical conduct by SAICA members. SAICA encourages persons having any information relating to unethical conduct by SAICA members to come forward to report such instances to SAICA or the whistleblowing hotline.

SAICA disciplinary findings have also been utilised to assist regulators and law enforcement agencies in their processes.

As mentioned above, a key responsibility of SAICA is the protection of its designations and it is also the responsibility of every designation holder to be a brand ambassador and to uphold the principles as set out in the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct.

17. Does SAICA have the leadership to enforce consequence management on unethical members?

The SAICA Board and management receive regular reports on SAICA's progress regarding disciplinary investigations. Disciplinary findings are concluded by the independent disciplinary committees of SAICA, chaired by senior lawyers and assisted by experienced Chartered Accountant members.

In terms of the SAICA by-laws, these disciplinary committees are empowered to impose a range of disciplinary sanctions on members found guilty of improper conduct including cautions; reprimands, fines up to R500 000 per charge, suspensions, exclusions, and/or disqualification from membership.

18. What role can SAICA and members play to actively restore faith and confidence in our chosen profession? What is SAICA doing to reposition the CA brand to remain a sought-after designation? What are the plans to repair the damage that was done to the Institute's and CA(SA) brand reputation as a result of the members implicated in state capture and fraud, and the 2021 examination issues?

As mentioned above, a key responsibility of SAICA is the protection of the CA(SA) brand and it is also the responsibility of every CA(SA), as a holder of the designation and therefore as a brand ambassador, to uphold the principles as set out in the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct.

SAICA implements on an annual basis an ongoing integrated relevance and reputation communications strategy. Since 2018, SAICA's marketing and communications priority has focused on protecting the reputation of the profession by rebuilding trust in the profession (#trustleadership) considering the ongoing revelations of alleged CA(SA) malfeasance in several widely published cases and several members implicated in the findings of the Zondo Commission. The strategy also aims to build the relevance of the profession by promoting it as a profession of national value (#aprofessionofnationalvalue).

In 2020 the Brand division prepared a ten-point SAICA relevance and reputation management and communication plan to pivot from a member-only focus to a public interest focus which was fully implemented last year, with the recommendations ongoing in 2021 and 2022.

The trust reconstruction strategy positions the profession's leaders as brand ambassadors using the Difference Makers Campaign that was launched in 2021 through thought leadership and member profile articles.

Regular updates on the outcome of SAICA's disciplinary processes are also critical in rebuilding trust in the reputation of the profession.

SAICA builds and maintains relationships with media, including regular meetings between prominent media editors and the SAICA CEO, to ensure balanced exposure in top-tier media such as print, broadcast (radio and television), and digital media. Further engagements include civil society organisations and communications include those with broader public interest while retaining a member focus.

Social media remains a strong platform and SAICA is currently active on around 15 social media channels with engagement levels well above published industry averages.

SAICA monitors the market status of its designations through an annual independent brand survey conducted by Ask Afrika among business decision-makers across all sectors of the business market in South Africa. This provides insight into the impact of external market factors on the profession as well as the effectiveness of SAICA's reputation management as well as the reputation of the CA(SA) designation.

	Stakeholder	2021	2020	2019	2018
Attractiveness					
- PHI ¹ CA(SA) attractiveness Index	Learners, students, and trainees	90%	87%	87%	84%
Relevance and reputation					
- PHI Brand Admiration Index	All stakeholders	79%	77%	95%	83%
Brand strength of the CA(SA) designation					
- Spontaneous Awareness Index	Business decision-makers	94%	90%	87%	85%
- Preference in Employees Index		78%	74%	67%	68%
- Net Promotor Score ²		29%	37%	36%	28%
- Trust Index		83%	84%	80%	75%
- Admiration Index		73%	68%	68%	66%

¹ Professional Health Index

² The rating of respondents who encourage their children to become CAs(SA)

The negative publicity around mainly the auditing profession that started in 2018 led to a decline in that year in all indicators, except spontaneous awareness. Since 2019 the lead indicators have recovered because of SAICA's Trust Restoration Strategy which is delivered through our reputation management activities despite ongoing and new negative revelations.

The important lead indicators of CA(SA) brand health have risen since 2019, despite ongoing historical and new negative publicity around the profession. The Brand Admiration Index, arguably the most important measure of the standing of the CA(SA) brand among business decision-makers, continues to be impacted by the ongoing negative publicity despite the positive

trend in the other lead indicators and increased by 5% to 73% at the end of 2021. The only lead indicator that has declined in 2021 is the net promoter score which is the result of the unattractiveness of the audit profession given the ongoing negative publicity that the audit profession is subject to. The challenge SAICA had with the APC examination will also have contributed significantly to this.

Chartered Accountants Worldwide commissions surveys of global business leaders and key decision-makers to assess trust in Chartered Accountants. The 2021 Edelman Trust survey showed that trust in Chartered Accountants was more resilient than the profession more broadly and strengthened across most markets. Trust in CAs(SA) improved from 81% in 2019 to 85% and trust in SAICA improved strongly, remaining well above the global average for CA bodies.

Edelman Survey	2021		2019*	
	South Africa	Global	South Africa	Global
Trust in Chartered Accountants	85%	78%	81%	75%
Trust in Chartered Accountancy bodies	86%	77%	78%	76%

* The survey was not conducted in 2020

While we believe our trust reconstruction promotion activities are effective in improving brand admiration over time, recovery is likely to continue to be affected by ongoing negative publicity implicating holders of the CA(SA) designation as and when this arises.

Given the results from the surveys mentioned above, the perception that the CA Profession in South Africa is slowly but surely losing its prestige or at an 'all-time low' as one of the best professions in the world, is not accurate. Yes, the profession has attracted negative exposure over the last few years, but our efforts to manage the brand's reputation are proving to be successful.

19. Are chartered accountants still in demand in South Africa?

Research conducted with business leaders in South Africa show that the CA(SA) designation is the most recognised and admired business designation in South Africa. This implies that more business leaders would choose a Chartered Accountant over a person with any other business designation when hiring in their organisations in relation to financial and operational functions.

Another indicator of demand is employment statistics. The number of unemployed CAs(SA) has remained fairly consistent over several years. High-level feedback from members is that there is a perceived shortage of members in the practice and audit industry, while there is a sense that there is an oversupply of members in commerce and industry. While there isn't any empirical evidence that the demand for CAs(SA) has changed at a macro level, there is a sense of an imbalance between the demand for CAs(SA) in practice versus commerce.

In addition, the recent trend of increased demand in hiring CAs(SA) to work abroad bears testimony to the demand for South African CAs(SA). When a CA(SA) decides to rather work abroad, this creates an opportunity for another CA(SA) to fill the local vacancy.

20. What were some of the outcomes of disciplinary enquiries into SAICA members that were public and in the media? What were the root causes of such misconduct/misbehaviour?

SAICA uploads a quarterly disciplinary update on the SAICA website, which is also communicated via the CA World Newsletter. The updates can be found on the website [here](#) and the full feedback on 2021 Disciplinary matters can be found in the [Integrated Report](#) on page 128.

Members should also note that SAICA only mentions members' names when charge sheets have been issued or when matters have been finalised. Hence, the list below includes some names and some general references to the matters.

Mr. Markus Jooste

- The charge sheet was communicated to Mr. Jooste in May 2021. The SAICA disciplinary hearing against Mr. Jooste was postponed at his request until the finalisation of the review of the FSCA finding, in order to avoid incurring additional legal costs.
- The FSCA's Financial Services Tribunal has concluded hearing the appeal against the FSCA finding. SAICA is considering the finding, liaising with the FSCA to provide us with the technical documentation required and is following the appeal litigation related to the May 2022 High Court decision to release the Steinhoff Forensic report to certain members of the media.

Members involved in the Tongaat Hulett improper conduct

- After experiencing several months of delays in gaining access to investigation documentation, SAICA is currently in the advanced stages of finalising draft charge sheets for three of the members implicated. The draft charge sheets against these 3 members will be tabled for approval by end June 2022.
- In late November 2021, SAICA was allowed to peruse a report related to one other implicated member and SAICA has commenced drafting the charge sheet against this member

South African Airways (SAA)

- A charge sheet has been issued to Ms Yakhe Kwinana, who was also implicated in the Zondo Commission Report and the matter is being prepared for a hearing before the Disciplinary Committee.

Transnet

- Mr Anoj Singh's disciplinary hearing was concluded in 2020 and the outcome was communicated to members and the media. SAICA is reaching out to the remaining members implicated in the Zondo Commission Report for responses and is investigating the matters further.

21. What is SAICA's initiative to collaborate with government to address fraud and corruption?

Beyond disciplining errant members, SAICA acknowledges its role in building a capable state at local, provincial, and national levels and has included a strategic initiative, namely the

Government Assistance Programme, on its strategy to support this approach. SAICA has embarked on various projects to accomplish this strategy, which includes:

(1) Development of a stakeholder engagement plan for the public sector which includes engagements with, amongst others, the National and Provincial Treasuries, Auditor General of South Africa, SALGA, and Parliament. The purpose of these engagements includes advocating for improved governance, financial reporting frameworks and public finance management. Regular engagements are also held with the AGSA to unpack the audit outcomes with the aim of receiving responses to poor audit outcomes, non-compliance and lack of internal controls from government.

(2) Advocacy submissions – SAICA has made several submissions to government with the aim of influencing fit-for-purpose legislation, standards, policies, processes and systems in the public sector. Examples of these submissions include commenting on the Draft Procurement Bill, Modified Cash Standards, the Public Audit Act, *A National Implementation Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service*, etc. SAICA is currently advocating for the urgency of filling key vacant posts within the National Treasury which are essential in assisting National Treasury to deliver on its mandate and monitor financial reporting, budgeting, and compliance.

(3) SAICA has positioned itself as a key stakeholder on many government structures to enhance its advocacy to improve legislation and standards and ensure that its membership voice is heard by acting as a representative on government structures. Examples of these structures include Treasury CFO Forums, the Public Sector Accounting Forum, and the Public Sector Audit Committee Forum.

SAICA agrees with government analysis that the public sector needs to be professionalised and that there are specific areas where we can contribute. Accountability and Competence is at the heart of the professionalisation as set out in our submission to the government, which can be found [here](#).

The recommendations include:

- Implementation of an ethics framework
- Setting minimum competencies, recruiting appropriate skills, and ensuring lifelong learning
- Ensuring implementation accountability through performance management

In addition to this, ensuring accountability and ownership thereof by oversight structures through the current framework is critical to ensure implementation and service delivery.

SAICA has, since 2020, also been working on an audit reform and wider corporate reporting ecosystem improvement plan. This followed the minister of finance's call in 2020 that audit reform is needed. To this end, SAICA has created a draft document and we are ready to work with Treasury when the call comes from the government.

SAICA has further been proactively advocating for the re-establishment of the Financial Reporting Standards Council (FRSC) that has been dormant since 2018, and we have been

expressing the need for an authoritative standard setter, in particular to deal with reporting consequences in the local context, such was the case with COVID-19 and the implications of the riots in July 2021. The SAICA Accounting Practices Committee has been serving as the de facto FRSC but the content produced is educational and non-authoritative. We remain active in seeking the FRSC's re-establishment by the DTI.

SAICA is also in discussions with Treasury around reporting considerations within the treasury itself and assisting to the extent it can with these matters. Our continued work with the JSE and its governance requirements, involvement with King IV and the work underway by the public sector team, all contribute to our continued focus on increasing both skills and accountability within South African governance landscape.

22. Can SAICA and leadership utilise its standing and collaborate with all business to enable economic growth?

SAICA is currently developing a strategy as a further phase in our Unite4Mzansi™ initiative to address broader economic issues in the South African context. More detail on this will be provided once the initiative is finalised.

GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

23. Please intervene in UNISA final results where scripts are not marked and marks are thumb-sucked.

SAICA and UNISA meet regularly to discuss matters regarding the accredited programme. The issues mentioned in the question will be raised with UNISA. If the member who raised this question has any proof or documentation of the matter, please send it to SAICA for the attention of Robert Zwane. In this way, we can ensure that the information gets passed on to UNISA. We are happy to assist where we can.

24. What was the outcome of the UNISA accreditation audit and what are the next steps?

SAICA recently completed an accreditation visit at UNISA and has decided to retain accreditation of UNISA's academic accountancy programmes. It is important to note that the philosophy behind SAICA accreditation is one of a partnership between SAICA and the provider. This means that both parties see SAICA-accreditation as a process and that SAICA works with each of the providers to ensure their programmes retain SAICA-accreditation. A list of all the accredited academic providers is available on the SAICA website.

25. There was a fair amount of noise that came out of the APC challenges. Is there comfort that mechanisms have been put in place to avoid a similar scenario?

SAICA assures all its members that the organisation has taken the necessary steps to ensure the smooth running of the examination process, including the rewrite sitting that took place on 30 March 2022. We reiterate the organisation's communication that it will, going forward, revert

to its hybrid model of eWriting as successfully utilised in previous APC sittings where candidates will be able to use their own or organisation-provided laptops to write the APC.

26. Can the Board please share the final findings and actions of the investigation into the December APC issues?

The investigation is still ongoing and currently, all information related to the investigation is privileged. SAICA will share the necessary information with members and stakeholders once the investigation has concluded.

27. How is SAICA monitoring effective Coaching & Mentorship at firms? What are the results? Action Plan?

Regarding trainees, SAICA accredits training offices based on several criteria including the ability to supervise and mentor trainees so that they develop the required competencies during the training programme. An ongoing re-accreditation process assesses this activity as and when an office is up for a formal re-accreditation visit. Re-accreditation visits are performed on a risk basis with high-risk offices being visited every 6 months. The supervision and mentoring of trainees are therefore assessed as part of this process.

In a recent survey done with trainees, they reported their experience of the training programme to be a good introduction to the working environment and they recognise the value it contributes towards building technical expertise. Trainees further value the support offered during the training programme.

28. How is SAICA addressing the need for Business Acumen and Entrepreneurial skills in young CAs(SA), AGAs(SA), and ATs(SA)?

The CA2025 competency framework, which is in the process of being implemented across the academic and training programmes, focuses on the following core areas:

1. Professional values and attitudes (Ethics, Citizenship, and Lifelong learning)
2. Enabling acumens (this includes decision-making acumen, business acumen, digital acumen, and relational acumen)
3. Technical competencies across the value creation process

In the process of deciding on the new competencies to ensure CAs(SA) remain relevant in the future, we specifically highlighted the need for business acumen to ensure that CAs(SA) better understand not only technical standards but also how a business operates and can succeed. You can find out more [here](#).

29. What monitoring tools are SAICA using to understand the working environment of trainees?

Kindly refer to the answer above regarding accreditation and re-accreditation of training offices. SAICA also conducted an independent survey among trainees and their managers in 2021 to better understand how they perceive the training environment.

SAICA engages with trainees through regular interventions such as Trainee Tuesdays as well as an annual Trainee Leadership Summit.

30. The implementation of CA2025 has been rushed and not well considered. Is there any scope for the 2023 implementation date to ensure all Training Officers have the time needed to fully roll this out properly?

The CA2025 programme has been in the making since 2016 when we started the process of reviewing the competency framework for entry-level CAs(SA). What is becoming more and more evident is that the rate of change is exponential, and we need to be able to adapt to both change and the rate at which change around us impacts us. We need to start somewhere and delaying only means postponing the inevitable.

SAICA recognises this change is not easy and stands ready to assist training officers in this implementation process. Change is intrinsic in everything we do in a rapidly changing business environment and we need to embrace this by starting to implement the development of the competencies as set out in the CA2025 competency framework. Academic and training programmes have been aware for some time that this change is coming and providers need to take the necessary support offered by SAICA to engage with these changes and take responsibility for implementing them to ensure the profession remains relevant.

31. Often, SAICA CPD comes at a cost. Given membership fees, why do we not have zero-charge CPD sessions?

There is a cost associated with all of SAICA's activities, including the offering of events. Even an online webinar attracts a digital cost to host the session, as well as the cost of SAICA staff who are employed to manage the annual events calendar, and the external specialist speakers who often participate in our events.

Events range from thought leadership to member engagement to learning and development activities. SAICA has developed a revised pricing model which is being applied to all events to balance the cost of complimentary events with the cost of paid-for events.

In 2021 SAICA offered more than 80 complimentary events to members in comparison to 40 events that were charged for. If one was to calculate the cost of the value of these events, they would far exceed the cost of the annual membership fee. Nevertheless, SAICA sees the provision of services to members as being one of the drivers of the overall value that membership provides.

32. Will future board exams integrate a heavier component of digital acumen that involves assessments on coding languages like Python?

The CA2025 framework has a large component of digital acumen included. This includes:

- Computational thinking
- Data knowledge and strategy
- Data analytics
- Automation
- New developments and protocols (e.g. artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, Internet of Things, etc.)
- Cyber security
- User competencies

We need to remember that the objective of developing competencies of entry-level CAs(SA) is not to create data scientists and as such, we need to balance the enabling competencies that need to be developed in respect of digital acumen against the remaining professional values and attitudes, acumens and technical competencies that need to be developed.

Universities will be required to have students develop the following learning outcomes: “Write a basic algorithm to solve a problem, using any programming language (such as Microsoft VBA, Python”.

What is developed and assessed in the academic programme by universities versus what is assessed in SAICA’s professional examinations is still being finalised, although it is envisioned that some level of digital acumen is likely to be tested in the ITC.

ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

33. It is my understanding that senior project directors (e.g., practice, ethics, training) are not being provided with the budget or staff support that they need to run the departments and projects efficiently. Hence the many resignations that have happened over the last couple of years. These places have not yet been suitably filled and from my point of view, it does not look like any effort is being made to fill them or provide at least adequately qualified support to these divisions. What is the budget for this and what is the plan to fill these roles? The members and the staff need to know that SAICA supports them and without these roles being filled there is very inadequate support. What is SAICA doing to retain their current senior staff to ensure that they don't resign and leave more unfilled places?

SAICA considers each vacancy as important and deliberate efforts are made to ensure that all vacancies are filled as a matter of urgency and to ensure that staff is not fatigued and members are adequately served.

The Human Capital Strategy Framework implementation focuses on staff retainment and includes talent management, a high-performance culture, learning and development, employee wellness, and organisational effectiveness. One of the key deliverables will be to revamp the performance management system to ensure that there is alignment to the strategy and elevate the aspect of customer service and feedback.

Further to the implementation of the Human Capital Strategy Framework, SAICA will embark on an organisational review (work study) process that will commence during 2022. Among the envisaged initiatives of the organisational review process are (the list is not exhaustive):

- Review and alignment of the SAICA mandate through a consultative process;
- Defining the broad SAICA capabilities in line with the SAICA mandate and strategy;
- Development of the SAICA target operating model;
- Relooking at the purpose of each part of the organisational structure and aligning to the target operating model;
- Review of the various positions and reporting structures to align to the target operating model;
- Review of the job descriptions/profiles to ensure fit for purpose in line with the capabilities within the target operating model;

- Where necessary, define the principles for placement into the redefined jobs/roles and other implications for various policies, processes, and practices;
- Conduct a skills audit to determine the skills gaps;
- Develop a targeted employee development plan with timelines to close the skills gaps;
- Review and realignment of the policies for employee engagement, experience, and enablement.

In addition to the above, SAICA's budgeting process is reviewed by different structures, including senior management, Exco, and the Board, with the underlying principle that the budget proposed and approved as suitable for the delivery of the corporate strategy. The recent business challenges (due to the pandemic) have led to a review of all applicable costs, including the business model in the current hybrid working environment. Budget processes will continue to be scrutinised to avoid any potential unintended consequences on the delivery of service to members. Management continues to have an opportunity to share areas of improvement and collaboration with Exco, to further ensure the financial success of the Institute.

34. When will SAICA's staff be fully working from the office again? Most workplaces are fully back at work. I believe that the debacle from the APC on 1 December would not have happened at all if everyone was back in the office. I am sure the rent is not cheap, and that full rent is still being levied for the building. These are members' funds, and we would like to understand that they are being utilised efficiently.

SAICA has a hybrid working model, with some staff working either from home or from the office. Certain staff members who do not have the facilities to work from home, work from the office full time. In instances where service delivery to members and stakeholders is maximised through working from the office, staff members are required to work from the office.

Risks that materialised on the day of the APC exam, for example, non-adherence to SAICA's processes for the escalation of risks, could still have occurred whilst operating from the SAICA offices.

Regarding the rent for the building, management has embarked on a process to reorganise the office space to accommodate the hybrid working model and ensure a working environment that is responsive to any potential disruption similar to COVID-19. The excess space that has become available due to the hybrid environment has been sub-let to external tenants and the space that remains unoccupied is currently being actively marketed.

35. How long should we continue having the finance or debtors department take 3 months to resolve debtors queries?

SAICA acknowledges the challenges that are being experienced by members regarding query resolution. SAICA is in the process of migrating to a new customer relationship management system to improve service delivery to our stakeholders.

Debtors queries are also centralised through this system, which means all queries are placed in a queue for processing and the system further provides overall visibility of all the interactions between SAICA and the member.

The migration to the new system has presented some challenges and therefore the plan for further development of the system includes the delivery of a finance module that is focused on an accounts receivable receipting process, processing proof of payment, refunds to members

and the self-service enabled the functionality to view member invoices and statements in pdf format.

We are further holistically reviewing the accounts management operating model to identify and eliminate inefficiencies, and improve the team members' adoption of the existing technology solutions. The complete debtors process is being reviewed to ensure that the delivery model that is being introduced will indeed be more efficient for members and staff.

36. Why is it always a hassle with getting queries closed with SAICA? I am continuously having to follow up on queries via phone calls after having logged cases on the Member Portal. It is frustrating that we pay so much for member fees for services to be below average?

The period from December to February every year is generally characterised by significantly higher than normal enquiry volumes to all SAICA departments, not just the Contact Centre. Traditionally the volumes are caused by the annual membership fee payment deadline and account-related queries at the end of January every year. During this period, the number of support staff in the Contact Centre is increased in anticipation of the expected increase in enquiries. The Contact Centre staff were also required to work throughout the SAICA shut-down period.

In 2021 however, additional queries were received due to:

- Members have to declare their CPD compliance via the Member Portal. This meant that some members tried to access the Portal for the first time and experienced difficulty, leading to an increase in Portal login and access queries. This led to a 94% increase in query volumes.
- The APC exam challenges experienced on 1 December 2021, led to additional queries being logged with SAICA. Exam candidates, families, and firms continued to reach out to SAICA, initially to enquire about what had happened and subsequently to confirm the information as published by the media. The influx of exam queries continued until the re-write of the APC on 30 March 2022.
- As part of the migration to SAICA's new Customer Relations Management system, the deployment of debtors@saica.co.za inboxes was executed on 3 December 2022. That deployment erroneously created an additional increase in the existing queries, which was resolved in March 2022. The backlog of enquiries emailed to the debtors' inbox is being attended to.
- A technical issue was experienced with the online Seminars and Events booking platform resulting in increased enquiry volumes from members trying to book for these services. A solution was identified and implemented at the end of March 2022.
- The confusion caused by the hosting of the functionality on two separate platforms (the website and the Member Portal) has presented challenges to users who are either looking on the incorrect platform for a specific functionality or are confusing the login details for these two platforms. A combination of these issues has led to an increase in query volumes that we expect will continue until we have migrated all functionality onto a single platform.

SAICA understands and accepts that the above-listed issues have led to frustration. SAICA did implement preventative measures for the expected increase in query volumes. However, several

unforeseen events occurred over the same period which negated the effectiveness of the preventative measures that were implemented.

SAICA apologises for the delays in responding to members and any inconveniences caused and expects to return to the standard query resolution turnaround time by June 2022.

