

November 2024

# ICFF NEWSLETTER



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:

### ICFF's First Annual General Meeting (AGM): A Strategic Milestone



*By Ingrid du Buisson, President of the ICFF*

On November 6, 2024, we gathered for a landmark event – the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding (ICFF). As an esteemed professional body, the ICFF holds the AGM as a vital platform for transparency, accountability, and strategic planning. This annual gathering is more than just a report-back on our progress; it's a space for reflection, collaboration, and forward-thinking that guides our journey ahead.

In the past two years, the ICFF has been on a mission to raise awareness of our work, establish standards, and grow our community. Our journey has taken us from a modest 12 members to an impressive 150, a testament to our industry's need for a dedicated body advocating for standards, professionalism, and growth. However, our vision is broader still. We continue to encourage freight forwarders and customs agents to support their staff members wishing to join the ICFF, as we believe that collective support will drive us forward.

Our success would not be possible without the powerful collaborations we've established with key organizations, including SAEPA, SAAFF, Da Vinci, and many others. Together, we are championing the importance of industry standards and

The AGM's purpose extends beyond simply sharing updates. It is an open forum for members to voice their insights, engage in decision-making, and elect leaders who will shape the future of the ICFF. I encourage each of you to continue actively participating in these sessions, as your input is invaluable in building an organization that supports your needs and strengthens our industry.

promoting professionalism within our field. We also applaud the Training Providers who have sought ICFF recognition for their programs, signaling their commitment to up-to-date, professional, and high-quality training within our industry.

Looking ahead, we invite all individuals to take the next step and apply for their Professional Designations. As we move into 2025, ICFF's mission is stronger and more ambitious than ever. This year, we are focused on building influential local and international partnerships, setting new benchmarks for excellence, and expanding our alignment with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to enhance our Professional Designation offerings. This aligns with our goal to strengthen supply chain designations, furthering the credibility of our profession and fortifying our industry's future.

Additionally, we are deeply invested in fostering youth development in freight forwarding and customs. We see this as our responsibility – to equip the next generation with the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity they need to innovate and lead.

As we reflect on our progress and look forward to the future, let's continue raising the bar, inspiring change, and making an enduring impact on an industry we are passionate about. The ICFF is a place for all of us, and together, we will drive positive, meaningful change.



## Vice President's Update:

### Creating a Legacy of Professionalism: Reflecting on 2023 and 2024

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***By Yolandi Dercksen, Vice President of the ICFF***

As we reflect on the strides made in 2023 and 2024, I am incredibly proud of the progress we've achieved in building awareness about the critical importance of professional designations within our industry. These past two years stand as a testament to our collective dedication, with everyone involved working tirelessly to bring to the forefront the value that professional designations bring to both individuals and organizations striving for excellence.



Through continuous engagement, strategic partnerships, and impactful initiatives, we have laid a strong foundation for recognizing and elevating professionalism across our field. Our message is resonating – we see a growing appreciation for the standards that designations uphold and for the career growth, credibility, and industry recognition they bring. This drive toward professionalism is not just about individual advancement; it's about strengthening the entire industry by creating skilled, credible, and trusted professionals who can set a standard of excellence.

A significant part of this journey has been our focus on aligning with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). This alignment will bring increased recognition and weight to our designations, reinforcing their value within both the local and global landscapes. With SAQA's endorsement, our professional designations will not only become synonymous with excellence but also further support our members in unlocking new opportunities and career pathways.

As we move forward, "watch this space" – early next year, we anticipate exciting developments in our alignment efforts with SAQA, which will be another step toward strengthening the credibility of our profession and establishing a lasting legacy of professionalism in customs and freight forwarding.

Thank you to everyone for your hard work and commitment. Together, we are not only strengthening the future of our profession but also setting a powerful standard for generations to come.



## Collaboration Announcement: ICFF and SAEPA Unite for Industry Standards

We are pleased to announce a strategic collaboration between ICFF and the South African Express and Parcel Association (SAEPA). This partnership marks a significant step forward in setting industry standards in Freight Forwarding and Customs. By working together, we aim to provide a unified approach to training, certification, and best practices, benefiting both associations and their members.

### **Exciting New Collaboration between ICFF and SAEPA: Setting New Standards in Freight Forwarding and Customs**

The Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding (ICFF) and the South African Express and Parcel Association (SAEPA) are thrilled to announce their landmark partnership aimed at elevating standards in the freight forwarding and customs industries. In a time when the challenges of international trade are more pressing than ever, this collaboration is set to make a lasting impact, driving professionalism and expertise in the sector.

As the global supply chain faces unprecedented demands and complexities, the need for skilled, qualified, and experienced professionals has never been more crucial. Both ICFF and SAEPA are committed to ensuring that the industry is not only equipped to handle these challenges but also positioned to thrive in a dynamic and evolving landscape. Through this partnership, both organizations will work hand-in-hand to offer pathways for individuals to achieve professional designations in freight forwarding and customs.



## A Unified Approach to Setting Standards

The urgency of setting and maintaining high standards within the industry cannot be overstated. Freight forwarding and customs professionals are the backbone of international trade, and this partnership reflects the shared vision of ICFF and SAEPA to create a network of highly skilled professionals capable of driving efficiency, compliance, and innovation across the sector.

ICFF, with its focus on individuals, enables professionals to attain recognized designations in customs and freight forwarding, ensuring they have the competencies needed to navigate complex regulations and global trade practices. SAEPA, on the other hand, focuses on the broader organizational and operational framework of express parcel and freight forwarding services, ensuring organizations meet industry benchmarks and global standards.



Ingrid du Buisson, Yolandi Dercksen and Garry Marshall

Garry Marshall, CEO of SAEPA, underscores the significance of this collaboration:

*"It is crucial for us to set the standard in our industry. As the demands of global trade evolve, so must the expertise and qualifications of the professionals in freight forwarding and customs. Encouraging professional designations through this partnership will raise the level of service and ensure our industry is equipped to face the challenges ahead."*



### Together, ICFF and SAEPA will:

- **Provide joint workshops, seminars, and webinars** aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of both individuals and organizations within the industry.
- **Encourage cross-membership** with benefits such as discounted membership fees for members of both organizations, ensuring greater participation and collaboration.
- **Offer discounted access to training programs, webinars, and industry events** for members of both ICFF and SAEPA, helping professionals stay up-to-date with the latest industry trends, technologies, and regulations.
- **Develop certification and accreditation programs** that uphold the highest standards in freight forwarding and customs, giving individuals a professional edge and helping organizations attract top talent.



## A Call to Action: Become a Part of the Change



The future of freight forwarding, and customs lies in the hands of qualified, experienced, and knowledgeable individuals. We urge professionals and organizations alike to take advantage of this collaboration by becoming members of ICFF and SAEPA, participating in upcoming initiatives, and working toward achieving recognized professional designations. In doing so, you will not only enhance your own skills but also contribute to raising the bar for the entire industry.

With the ever-growing demands in international trade and the complexities it brings, now is the time to invest in your career and the future of the freight forwarding and customs industries. This partnership between ICFF and SAEPA is a game-changer, offering the tools, resources, and support needed to build a stronger, more resilient industry.

Join us in driving this exciting initiative and be a part of shaping the future of global trade.



# FEEDBACK FROM THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Charting the Path Forward: ICFF Research and Development Committee's Focus for 2025

*By Strini Reddy, Director of the ICFF and Chair of the Research and Development Committee*

As we look toward 2025, the ICFF Research and Development Committee is excited to announce our strategic focus for the coming year. Our mission is clear: to foster greater awareness and understanding within the industry by equipping our members with the knowledge and skills essential for success in today's dynamic international trade and logistics environment. This year, we'll be dedicating our efforts to five key areas of focus, each designed to address current challenges, seize opportunities, and ensure that our members are positioned at the forefront of industry innovation.



## 1 International Trade Fundamentals

Understanding the core principles of international trade is more important than ever in a constantly evolving global market. We'll provide insights into these fundamentals, focusing on key principles and emerging trends that shape global commerce. By strengthening our members' foundational knowledge, we aim to enhance their strategic decision-making abilities and empower them to navigate complex trade environments confidently.

## 2 Trade Agreements

Trade agreements play a critical role in determining global business opportunities and market access. In 2025, we'll spotlight the impact of key trade agreements, examining how they affect industry players and open doors to new markets. Through our research and training sessions, we'll help members understand the nuances of these agreements and their practical implications for day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

### 3 Challenges in Freight Forwarding and Customs

The freight forwarding and customs landscape is constantly evolving, presenting unique challenges and opportunities. Our committee will focus on identifying these challenges—such as regulatory changes, compliance hurdles, and logistical bottlenecks—and explore solutions to overcome them. We aim to equip our members with the knowledge and resources to adapt and excel, regardless of the complexities they encounter.

### 5 Professional Development

Finally, continuous learning remains a cornerstone of our approach. Professional development will be a major focus for our committee, as we work to promote opportunities for ICFF members to remain at the cutting edge of industry changes. By supporting lifelong learning and professional growth, we're committed to developing leaders who not only adapt to industry shifts but also drive meaningful change within their organizations.

Together, these five areas of focus will serve as the foundation for our efforts in 2025. Our aim is to create a learning environment that supports ICFF members in mastering the complexities of international trade, staying ahead of emerging trends, and developing the skills that will shape the future of our industry. We look forward to an exciting year of growth, innovation, and shared success.

### 4 Technology and AI

In an era of rapid technological advancement, staying informed on technology and artificial intelligence (AI) is essential. We'll delve into the latest advancements that streamline, automate, and secure trade processes, focusing on innovations that can drive efficiency and enhance operational security. By providing members with insights into these transformative tools, we'll empower them to leverage technology as a strategic asset in their businesses.



## Feedback from the Membership, Standards, and Policy Committee

Our Membership, Standards, and Policy Committee has continued to refine the standards that define ICFF membership and the recognition of excellence in the field. We've updated our membership criteria and introduced new standards to ensure that all members are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of an ever-changing industry. We remain committed to supporting our members through every stage of their professional journey.



# A Call to Action: Become a Part of the Change

## Announcing the Formation of the ICFF Disciplinary Committee

We are pleased to announce the establishment of a Disciplinary Committee within the ICFF. The purpose of this committee is to uphold the standards of professionalism and integrity within our organization, ensuring that all members adhere to the principles and guidelines set by the ICFF.

**We invite any members interested in serving on this committee to volunteer and contribute towards maintaining our high standards.**

If you are keen to join, please reach out to Lerato to submit your application: [lmapheto@icff.co.za](mailto:lmapheto@icff.co.za)



# EMPOWERING THE FUTURE:

## A Call for Mentorship, Diversity, and Inclusion in Procurement, Logistics, and Transport

***By Lebo Letsoalo, ICFF independent Director***

At the recent ICFF Annual General Meeting, I had the privilege of sharing our commitment to advancing mentorship, diversity, and inclusion within the Procurement, Logistics, and Transport sectors. These are not just industry buzzwords; they are core values and strategic imperatives that shape the future of our field. Our goal is to create an environment where youth, women, entrepreneurs, and professionals are empowered, supported, and able to thrive.





## Driving Functional Mentorship

Mentorship is one of the most impactful ways to support the growth of emerging talent. Through structured, functional mentorship, we aim to transfer knowledge, build skills, and foster confidence in young professionals. Effective mentorship isn't just about guidance; it's about creating opportunities, opening doors, and providing a safe space for growth and learning. As leaders, it is our duty to pass on our insights and experiences, equipping the next generation to overcome the challenges of a rapidly changing industry. At ICFF, we are committed to building mentorship programs that foster long-term professional development and meaningful connections.

## Championing Diversity and Inclusion

Our industry is stronger when it reflects a diversity of voices and perspectives. We recognize the need to champion gender equity, cultural diversity, and an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued. For far too long, the Procurement, Logistics, and Transport sectors have faced challenges in achieving true diversity. Now is the time to break down these barriers. Our focus on diversity and inclusion goes beyond simply increasing representation; it's about creating a culture where everyone, regardless of background, feels they belong and can make a difference.



**A Transformed Transport sector could become a well of Opportunity for Women**

## Creating Opportunities for Youth, Women, Entrepreneurs, and Professionals

The future of our industry relies on nurturing diverse talents across all demographics. We have a duty to support the next generation of youth entering our fields, to champion women advancing in their careers, to foster entrepreneurship, and to provide professionals with ongoing support. By creating targeted initiatives, partnerships, and development programs, we're committed to helping these groups gain a foothold in the industry and advance into leadership roles. The ICFF is working closely with partners and stakeholders to ensure that meaningful opportunities exist for those who are underrepresented.

Our commitment to mentorship, diversity, and inclusion is more than a vision; it is a call to action. Together, we have the power to build a future where our industry becomes a model of equal opportunity, where talent and ambition are what define success, and where each member of our community feels empowered to bring their unique perspective and passion to their work.

Thank you for joining us in this mission. Let us continue to lead with purpose, creating a thriving, inclusive, and equitable industry for all.

Lebo founded African Women In Supply Chain Association (AWISCA) an NGO driving functional mentorship, diversity and inclusion agendas in Procurement, Logistics and Transport industry for the Youth, Women, Entrepreneurs and Professionals.

Lebo is a multi award winner with various recognitions and awards amongst others profiled one of the Globally as one of the 100 Most Influential Women (No 20) in Supply chain. This was achieved through advocacy in supply chain, driving diversity and

inclusion and empowering others. Through her work she has launched the TOP 100 women in supply chain in AFRICA (with 23 African countries participating), Supply chain women awards, Transport pledge, mentored and coached more than 400 Women in Transport sector (advocates for visibility, diversity and inclusion in Africa supply chain)

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Are you a learner entering the Freight Forwarding & Customs industry? Join the ICFF as a student member and gain access to exclusive webinars featuring subject matter experts (SMEs) who will share valuable insights. You'll also have the opportunity to network with professionals in the field, expanding your industry knowledge and connections.



**Don't miss out—join now!**





## Join the ICFF: Unlock Exclusive Benefits

Becoming a member of the ICFF connects you with a network of professionals committed to advancing their careers and the freight forwarding industry. As an ICFF member, you gain access to:



Industry-recognized certifications  
and training programs



Networking opportunities with  
industry leaders



Exclusive events and seminars



Resources to support your continuous  
professional development

The ICFF is hitting the road with amazing in person Roadshows in 2025. Don't miss the Subject Matter Expert Speakers, collaborations, networking, exploring and learning at these events:

Region	Date	Venue	Admission
Gauteng	Thursday 27 Feb'25	TBC	Free to members, R350 to non-members
Cape Town	Thursday 15 FMay'25	TBC	Free to members, R350 to non-members
KwaZulu Natal	Thursday 10 July'25	TBC	Free to members, R350 to non-members
Gauteng	Thursday 18 FSep'25	TBC	Free to members, R350 to non-members

**Reserve your seat now:** [lmapheto@saaff.org.za](mailto:lmapheto@saaff.org.za)

Sincerely,  
The ICFF Team