



# AQVN Peer Learning Webinar

## 28 September 2021

### Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC)

*Recognition and verification of qualifications - lessons from practice  
in the Covid-19 crisis and beyond. Experiences from Africa and  
Europe*

Ms. Gabisile Hlatshwayo : Senior Quality Assurance Officer  
(Qualifications)

# Presentation Outline

- ▶ About ESHEC
- ▶ Foreign qualifications verification and recognition
- ▶ Impact of COVID 19
- ▶ Interventions
- ▶ Way forward

# About ESHEC

- The Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) was established by the Higher Education Act 2013
- The Act was operationalised by the Higher Education Regulations 2015
- The two main mandates:



Development and implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework at post-secondary education



Development, coordination of implementation of the National Qualifications Framework

# What ESHEC aims to achieve?



To be a leader in the regulation and coordination of higher education, nationally and globally



Ensuring a coordinated and efficient higher education through credible QA and Qualifications mechanisms

# Functions and Responsibilities of ESHEC

- ▶ Accreditation, promotion and coordination of higher education
- ▶ Formulate policy on HE
- ▶ Promote and audit QA in HEIs
- ▶ Advise the Minister of Education and Training on all Higher Education issues Develop and implement the NQF
- ▶ Coordinate implementation of the Eswatini Qualifications Framework (ESQF)
  - Register qualifications in the NQF
  - Verify foreign and local qualifications

# Foreign qualifications verification and recognition

## Rationale for Verification

- ▶ To build trust
- ▶ Quality
- ▶ Enhance mobility

# Process of verification and recognition of qualifications



Verification of awarding institution



Verification of the awardee



Comparison

# Impact of Covid 19- Nationally

- ▶ Eswatini is a small country with a population of about 1.2 Million, hard hit by Covid 19
- ▶ Infection cases are very high for the size of the country, over 45,000 to date
- ▶ Country recently labelled as high risk destination, lost the Prime Minister and two Ministers during the second wave.

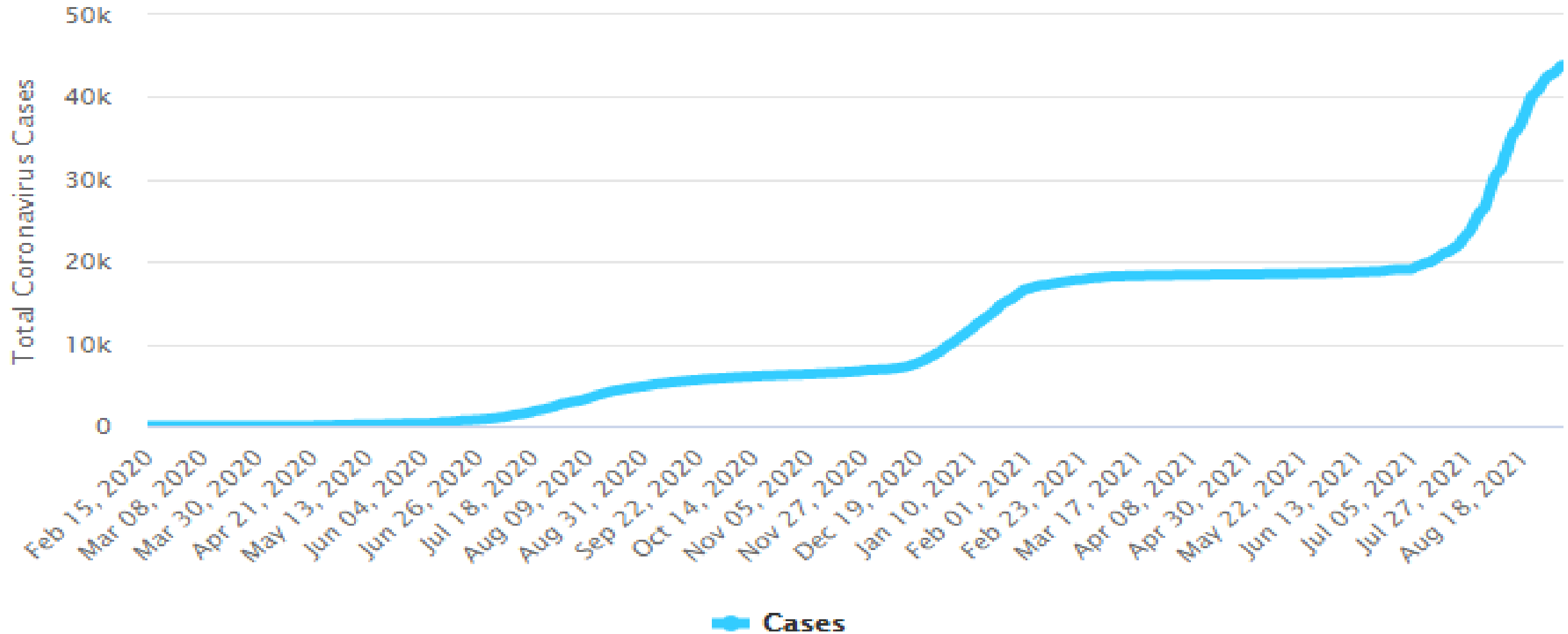


linear

logarithmic

# Total Cases

(Linear Scale)

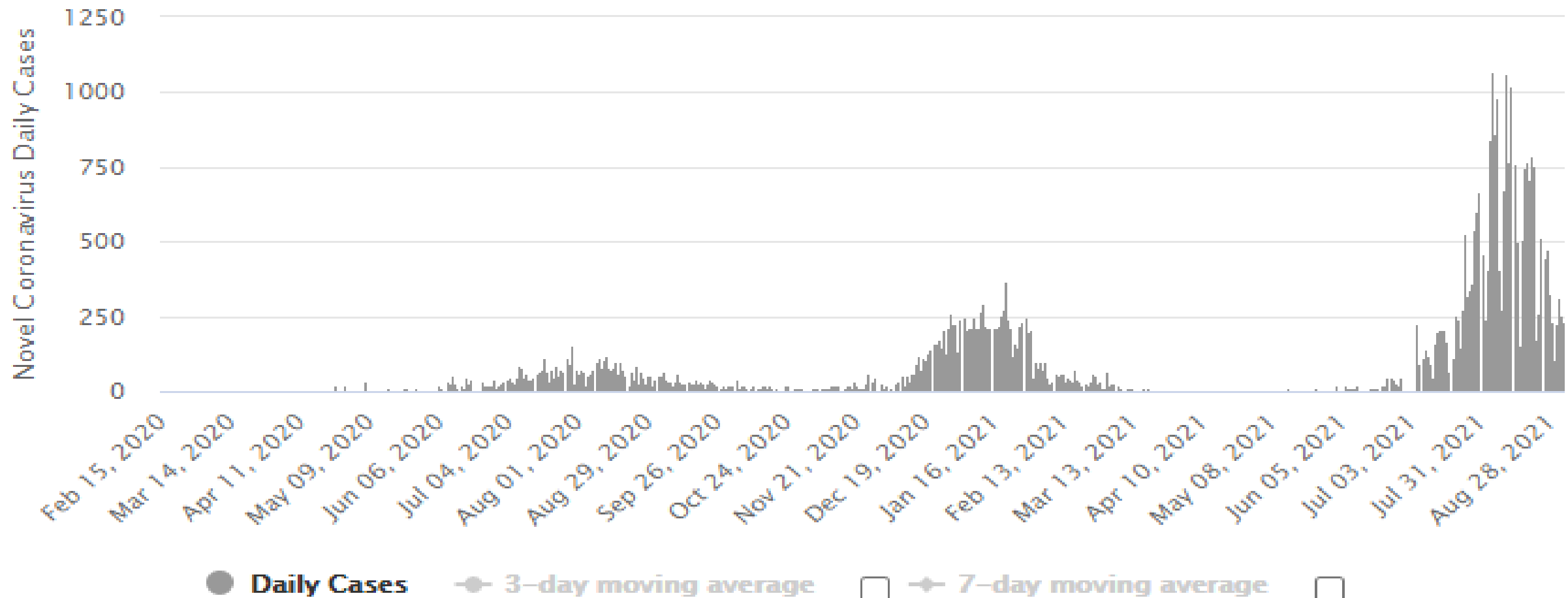


# Daily New Cases in Eswatini

## Daily New Cases

Cases per Day

Data as of 0:00 GMT+0



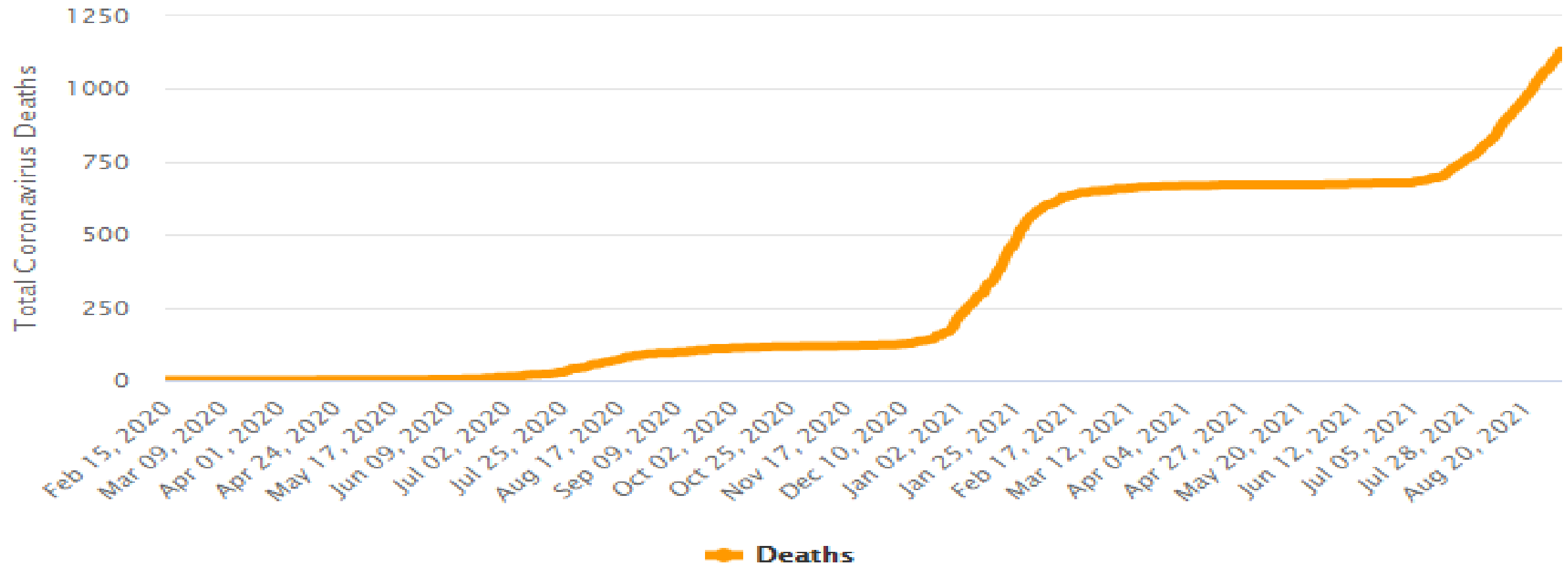
# Total Coronavirus Deaths in Eswatini

linear

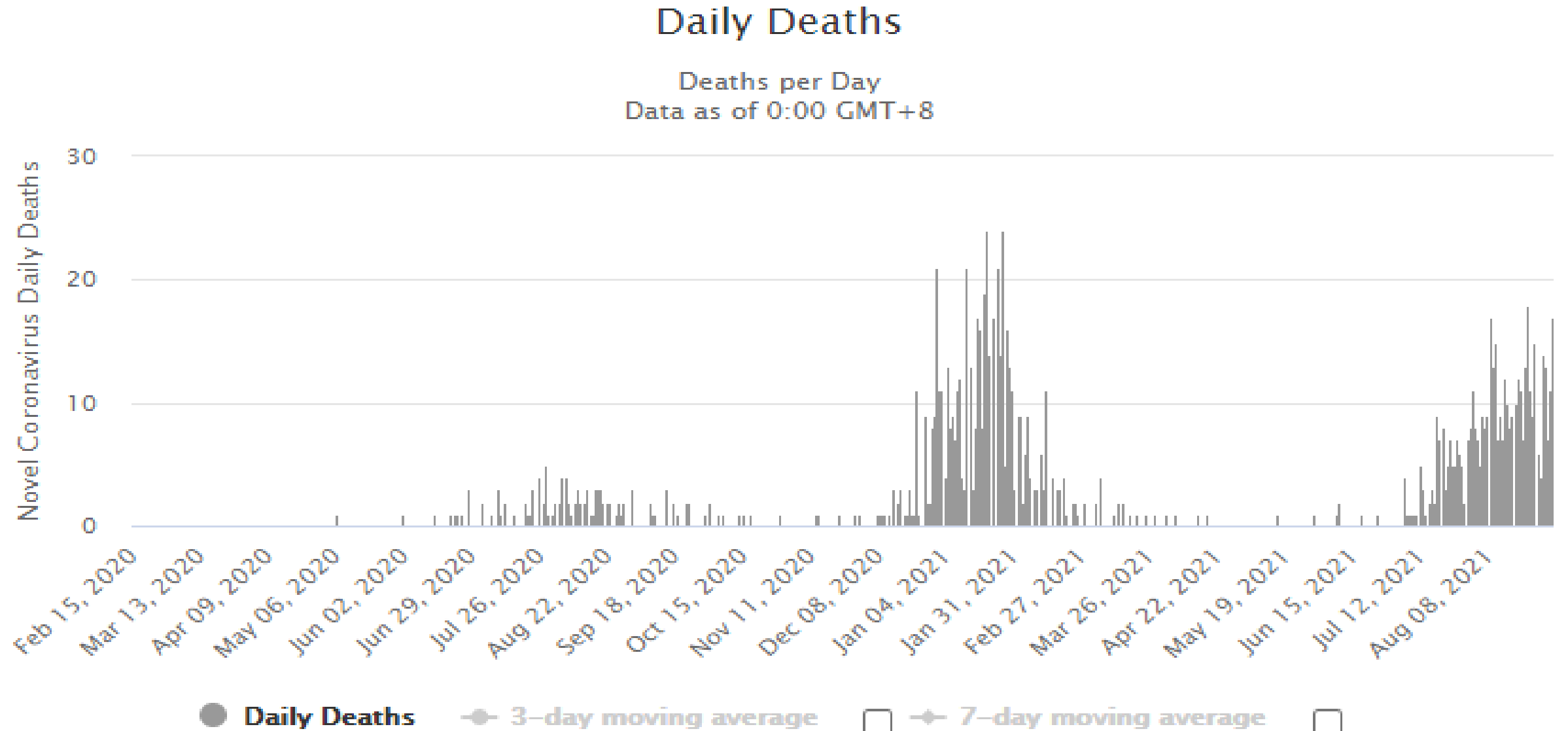
logarithmic

## Total Deaths

(Linear Scale)

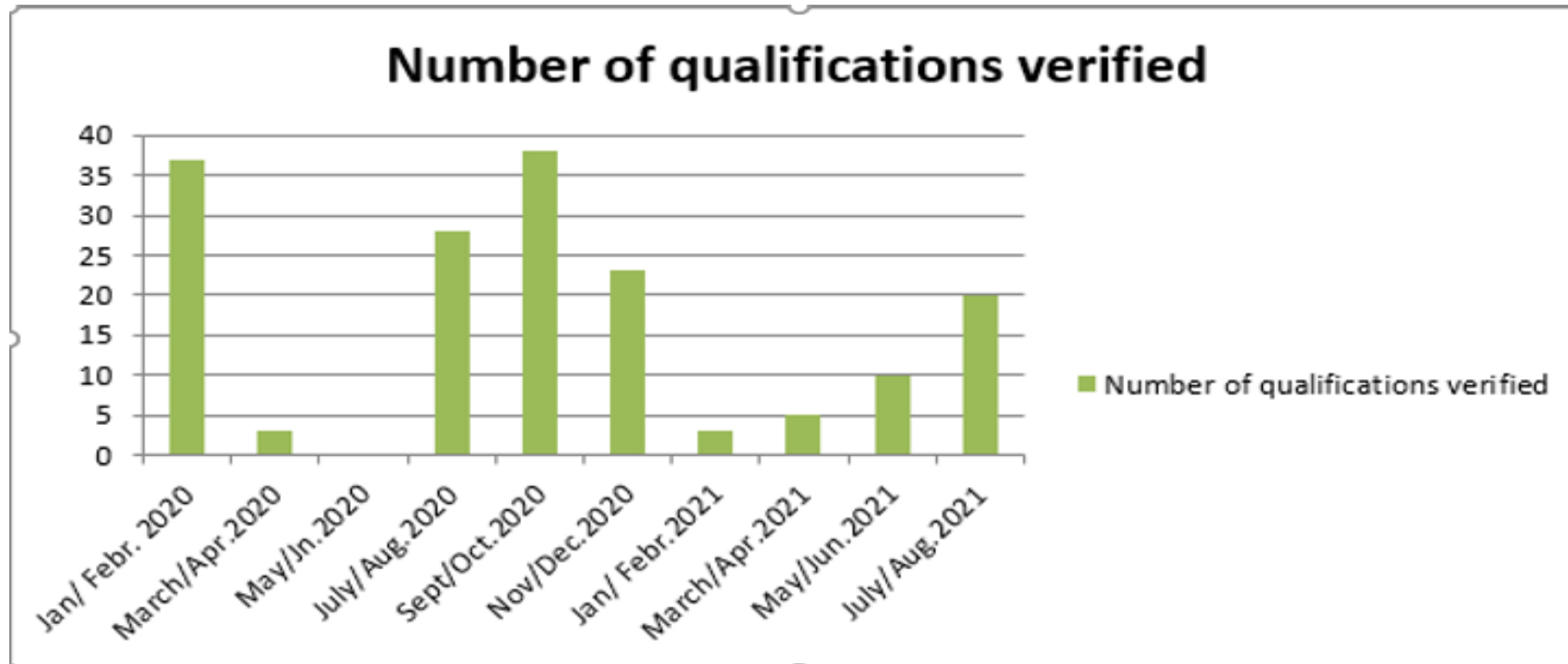


# Daily New Deaths in Eswatini



# Impact of Covid 19 on ESHEC

## 1. Drop in number of verification applications



# Impact of Covid 19 on ESHEC

- ▶ Turn around time extended, organisations closed
- ▶ Staff working from home and highly inefficient
- ▶ Poor network and internet connection
- ▶ Morale generally low, people infected or affected
- ▶ Shift from face to face delivery of programmes challenged our QA standards, which were designed for quality assuring face to face programmes

# Impact of Covid 19 on Higher Education Institutions

- ▶ Institutions were closed and teaching and learning was affected
- ▶ They were forced to switch from face to face mode of delivery to online which brought about a series of challenges
- ▶ Quality was compromised
- ▶ Business was affected

# Impact on verification clientele

- ▶ Drop in the number of verification clients due to lockdowns, as the verification application process was physical.



# Interventions

- ▶ Verification process has been fully automated
- ▶ Sought bigger and better office space to observe all COVID 19 regulations
- ▶ Development on QA standards that embrace all modes of delivery
- ▶ Creation of experience sharing platforms for HEIs on maintaining and improving quality in the COVID 19 era

# Way Forward

- ▶ Digitization
- ▶ Networking
- ▶ Let us have a database of recognised institutions
- ▶ Let us have the regional contact booklet
- ▶ Subscribe to legitimate verification sites

