



“SQAM has been one of the most successful projects in Malawi; it has greatly contributed to an efficient and adequate national quality infrastructure with improved consumer protection and direct benefits for SMEs.”

Andrew Spezowska, Portfolio Manager, UNDP

Malawi: from local to international standardization in agribusiness

Food quality and safety are critical to Malawi: 85% of its population depends on agriculture for its livelihoods, with agricultural products accounting for 80% of total exports. However, exporters are disadvantaged by the lack of internationally accredited testing facilities for certification of products for exports.

UNIDO'S APPROACH

Initiated in 2012 with funding from the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Malawi Government, the SQAM project was implemented by UNIDO and the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) in cooperation with UNDP and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MoITT). The project celebrated its successful closure in December 2018.

The purpose of the project was to contribute to a more adequate, effective and sustainable National Quality Infrastructure in Malawi in accordance with international and regional principles and practices by supporting the improvement of the performance of MBS.

As an outcome, MBS received an internationally-recognized accreditation of conformity assessment for its services. This contributed to an efficient and adequate National Quality Infrastructure and improved export capacity and consumer protection.

UNIDO provided technical assistance to enhance the ability to export goods from Malawi by reducing the need for re-testing, re-inspection and re-certification through acceptance of measurements, tests, and conformity assessment results issued in Malawi.

IMPACT

The project's main achievements include:

- ✓ The development of the National Quality Policy and National Quality Strategy, and of the MBS Strategic Plan for 2017-2022;
- ✓ The internationally recognized accreditation of selected testing laboratories and conformity assessment services offered by the MBS;
- ✓ Capacity building through specialized trainings at internationally recognized institutions;
- ✓ Strengthening of the MBS as a National Enquiry Point to the information and notification requirements of the World Trade Organization's Technical barriers to trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) agreements; and,
- ✓ Technical assistance to a pool of SMEs to help them comply with quality requirements and obtain ISO 9001 and 22000 certifications.

The sister project on “Market access and trade capacity building for agro-industrial products (MATCB)”, which is funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), also contributed to the sustainable operations of the MBS.

WAY FORWARD

The MBS testing facility is the first one in the country to have received accreditation and its sustainability plan contains a rollout strategy for accreditation of additional scopes. Achieving accreditation is the result of great efforts towards MBS' capacity and services and its contribution to an efficient National Quality Infrastructure. This will have direct benefits for the Malawian enterprises, which now can locally access internationally-recognized testing services for considerable time and cost savings. Indirectly, long-term benefits will be realized for Malawian citizens, especially in terms of improved consumer safety.

AT A GLANCE

Project title	Development of a robust standardization, quality assurance, accreditation and metrology (SQAM) infrastructure in Malawi
Thematic area	National quality policy, certification, metrology, laboratory accreditation, quality, standardization
Donor	European Union, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Government of Malawi
Project counterpart	The Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MoITT)
Budget	3,063,420.57 EUR for UNIDO to implement (SQAM: US\$ 12,710,911.00)
Duration	February 2013 – December 2018