



MOZAMBIQUE:

Correct weights and measures protect Mozambique's consumers

Context

Determining the precise volume, dimensions or weight of products is a problem that has long confronted consumers in Mozambique. The absence of a legal metrology system in market place transactions often results in buyers being overcharged. Through governing the accuracy of measurements, legal metrology assures commercial transparency and protects consumer health and safety. It is essential for trade in local markets, as well as the international market.

Mozambique's expanding industrial sector and growing presence in the global market place has resulted in greater demand for its products to meet internationally recognized quality and measurement standards. This need was made all the more urgent by the recent establishment of a free trade zone within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The Government recognized that, in order to ensure fair domestic market place transactions and pave the way for increased external trade, it must upgrade its quality infrastructure. It identified the improvement of technical capacities for legal and industrial metrology as the most urgent. With funding from the European Union, UNIDO assisted Mozambique in this important endeavor.

Main approach

UNIDO supported the establishment of a legal metrology framework in Mozambique and helped the National Institute of Standardization and Quality (known by its Portuguese acronym as INNOQ) to develop its legal metrology services. The project focused initially on improving the technical skills of INNOQ officers on metrological verifications, particularly mass and volume, and providing the Metrology Department with modern equipment. This, in turn, enabled INNOQ officers to deliver training courses to municipality inspectors across the country.

UNIDO also provided technical assistance to build the capacity of municipality directors and councillors to identify priority areas for regulation and provide measurement standards to ensure that legal metrology-related functions are carried out more effectively.

Impact and results

A new national Metrology Law was drafted by the INNOQ and approved by the Government. The new legislative framework, combined with the upgraded equipment and training courses provided by the project, has given a significant boost to the capacity of the INNOQ Metrology Department. The newly trained INNOQ metrology officials delivered a nation-wide training programme for municipality inspectors, who are now performing metrological verifications on mass and volume throughout the country. To date, 22,110 verifications of balances, 2,743 verifications of weights and 496 verifications of gas station fuel dispensers were performed.

The legal metrology system being established in Mozambique will not only increase consumers' confidence, but will also protect businesses from unfair competition. INNOQ officers have already gained the respect of both public and private sector stakeholders, a reflection of increasing confidence in the new system. The project will also help reduce trade barriers and support Mozambique's integration into the global market. Once the foundations of an effective legal metrology system are set, the focus will switch to developing national capacities for industrial and scientific metrology, both prerequisites for industrial development and improved scientific capabilities.

At a glance

Project title: Business environment support and trade facilitation (B.E.S.T.F.)
Donor: European Union
Budget: USD 3 million
Country coverage: Mozambique
Thematic areas: Metrology, quality, standardization
Other technical areas: Information and advisory services for trade, trade facilitation (customs)