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Malawi Quality Times Digest brings you quarterly updates on activities of the “Market Access and Trade Capacity Building Support for Agro-industrial Products” (MATCB) Project in Malawi - supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the “Development of a Robust Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology infrastructure for Malawi (SQAM)” Project - supported by the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Malawi (GoM)

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welcome

To the eighth edition of the Malawi Quality Times Digest - a quarterly publication related to the activities implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as part of the reform process of the National Quality Infrastructure in Malawi through the MATCB and SQAM Projects.

In 2012 and 2013, Malawi embarked on two projects: the EU/UNDP-funded SQAM Project and the NORAD-funded MATCB Project. Both projects are targeted interventions to reform the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), and are complementary to each other. The MATCB Project focuses on legal metrology and quality improvement amongst smallholder farmers whilst the

SQAM Project addresses the policy and regulatory landscape, the institutional reform of the Malawi Bureau of Standards, the accreditation of conformity assessment services and quality improvement initiatives amongst small and medium enterprises.

We offer a selection of stories related to the UNIDO activities in which we have seen results, touching on successful partnerships amongst other highlights, with the main purpose of enabling Malawi to achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

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UNIDO provides trainings to NASFAM linking their products to market



Successful completion of UNIDO trainings on MS 21 and MS 19 delivered by Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) to NASFAM in the whole country in February 2017

Malawi is a country of agriculturalists. Access to markets by smallholder farmers is one of the key pillars that defines an enabling environment for agribusiness in any economy that relies on agriculture. The National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) is one of the beneficiaries of the MATCB Project. UNIDO assists NASFAM by providing the necessary equipment to comply with general standards MS 21 (Food and Food Processing Units – Code of Hygienic Conditions) and MS 19 (Labelling of Prepacked Foods), and by training the people in the field of quality.

Encouraging farmers to work in organised groups and adopting a business approach to farming are prerequisites to success. These together provide a point of departure towards smallholder-led value-addition which has potential not only to stabilise agricultural markets and uplift the lives of farmers but are also to catalyse job creation in rural areas. UNIDO helps farmers to overcome those obstacles by providing training to NASFAM on how to produce high-quality agro-industrial products and meet the requirements to gain access to markets.

Together with NASFAM, UNIDO developed a work plan to provide technical assistance to their associations and to build the capacity at NASFAM Head Office to deliver similar training and advice services to its members after the project's completion.

Basic business and management trainings: farming as a business

MATCB Project provided Basic Business and Management Training to NASFAM association members from various Innovation and Productivity Centers (IPCs) at the end of 2016. The training was organized for 40 representatives from the 12 NASFAM associations in Mzimba, Balaka and Mulanje and from the NASFAM Head Office in Lilongwe. Lack of planning, financial management skills and understanding of the value of a business approach prevents smallholders from achieving their full potential and productivity. The Malawi Programme provides business

environment support to the country by training Malawian SMEs in enhancing their competitiveness and accountability.

“Time has come for small holder farmers to think commercially as opposed to in terms of subsistence”, said Mr. Henry Kalomba, NASFAM Business Development Manager. “Thanks to UNIDO smallholder farmers were trained on how to operate their farming activities in a business-like manner,” he added.

The association members were trained on business skills, entrepreneurship, development of business plans for their facilities and basic accounting. They were provided with Basic Management and Business Training manuals both in English and in the local language (Chichewa) enabling farmers to transfer the knowledge to others.

MS 21 and MS 19 trainings: towards a quality culture

UNIDO organized training sessions on MS 21 and MS 19 to NASFAM association members at the beginning of 2017. Malawi Bureau of Standards trained 90 members from the 12 participating associations in Kasungu, Balaka and Mulanje, Lilongwe South and from NASFAM Head Office in Lilongwe. The training focused on food safety and personal hygiene supporting the associations in certification of the production and warehousing facilities.

“Thanks to UNIDO we have acquired necessary skills and competences in MS 21 and MS 19 and now we understand what is required to get certified by MBS,” said Mr. Andre Chilomba, participant of the training. “Now even our families can change because we will apply this knowledge in our homes too,” he added.

Through the training, UNIDO helped association members to understand the importance of quality and certification, as well as provided information and guidance to the farmers on basic post-harvest management of produce in line with Good Agricultural Practices. NASFAM production facilities have to get certified on MS 21 and MS 19 to produce good quality products, thus gaining access to local markets and regional and international markets in the future.



Basic Business and Management trainings which took place from November to December 2016 in Malawi to provide business environment support to NASFAM farmers



The UNIDO Project Manager, Mr. Juan Pablo Díaz Castillo hands over the PICS bag to NASFAM female farmer during the training in Mulanje on April 28, 2017



PICS bags training: better food storage – safer consumer

In conjunction with NASFAM, UNIDO organized the training of Lead Farmers on usage of Purdue Improved Crop Storage (PICS) bags in April 2017. The training was organized in Mulanje in collaboration with the technology supplier (Purdue University, USA) and the PICS bag manufacturer, Polypack, Blantyre. PICS bag aims at reducing grain storage losses, improve farmers income, save lives and the environment from chemical pollution.

UNIDO encouraged farmers to use PICS bags as it could help to minimise postharvest loses and boost the quality of farm produce

in the country. It is estimated that up to 30% of crops are lost due to poor storage techniques and facilities. PICS bags have also proven to be effective in storing groundnuts as it reduces the spread of aflatoxin. UNIDO also stressed that improved rural infrastructure, including storage facilities would reduce post-harvest losses and maintain quality.

NASFAM’s farmers learnt how to use the bag from Lead Farmers trained by UNIDO. A PICS bag consists of two layers of polyethylene liners and a third layer made from woven polypropylene. When each layer is tied and closed separately, it creates a hermetically sealed environment for storing harvested grain. This oxygen-deprived environment proves fatal for postharvest insects.

“The PICS bags are easy to use and cost effective as compared to ordinary bags for storing produce,” said Mr. Barnabas Komakoma, PICS Supply Chain Business Consultant. “When using them there is no need to apply any chemicals to deal with postharvest pests. In addition, unlike ordinary bags, the PICS bags can be reused up to four times,” he added.

The NASFAM Business Development Manager, Mr. Henry Kalomba stressed that reducing postharvest loses could increase food security for local farmers, thus enabling them to offer the remaining produce to the market.



NASFAM Lead Farmer trains other farmers on how to use the PICS bags. Apart from maize, PICS bags can be used to store cowpeas, pigeon peas and other crops

Linga, how an analytical biochemist turned a hobby into a livelihood

“If you do what you love, you’ll never work a day in your life” - Marc Anthony. This is the saying that Dr. Timothy Ngwira, an analytical biochemist, lives by. He turned a wine making hobby into a recognized successful business.

Linga fine food and winery

Starting in 1978, Dr. Ngwira would make wine to serve his guests at dinners and parties. The product grew in popularity and receiving a lot of demand from friends. However, production ceased in the 1990s when he moved to Namibia to take up the position of the first head of Food Science and Technology Department at the University of Namibia. He taught Fermentation Technology including wine making. Upon his return to Malawi, he pursued his hobby, and in 2006 he and his wife Margaret registered Linga Fine Foods & Winery as a business entity.

With a need for visibility and an interest for exporting their products, the owners of the winery are seeking certification ISO 22000, international standards for food safety management. To improve the winery, they have made changes such as having meshed windows to prevent insects from getting in; having lab coats with zips instead of buttons (those often fall off and may contaminate the wine); introduced specific hygienic chemicals instead of “house hold chemicals” for the cleaning of hands, equipment and the working environment. They ventured to their suppliers to communicate and initiate food safety activities from the farming of the fruits, all in support of the processes involved to ensure a safe end product. The facility now has preventative maintenance programmes, effective product testing equipment



The Linga team and Ms. Anya Knoetze, UNIDO expert on ISO 22000 (Quality Management Systems and Food Safety Management)

as well as traceability data on the manufacturing of the product. By September 2017, the owners hope to have completed the development and implementation of the ISO 22000 and ISO/TS 22002-1 standards requirements and by December be certified to these standards.

“Our main market is Malawi but we are now exporting to the UK. Malawians who live there are buying from us,” said Dr. Ngwira. “In March this year we sold 70 boxes to the UK, that is 840 bottles,” he continued, “We now have an on-line store and we have received orders mainly from Europe and the United States of America.”

The Malawi Programme supports SMEs including Linga Fine Foods in meeting the international requirements of international standards for food safety management.



Linga's cellar where wine is kept until it is bottled. On the left is MBS representative, Mr. Patrician Kondowe and on the right is one of the owners, Dr. Ngwira



The winery boasts of 8 different types of wines, all made from local fruits from different parts of the warm heart of Africa

Ms. Anya Knoetze, UNIDO expert explains food safety and improvements at SMEs' facilities in Malawi



The Malawi Project team spoke with Ms. Anya Knoetze, UNIDO expert in Implementation of ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System. Companies having MBS certified products and advanced implementation of Quality Management Systems (QMS) to include food safety were selected based on their availability for the MBS certification as part of accreditation process for the MBS in terms of ISO 17021*. This will have direct implications in terms of benefits for Malawi enterprises through improved business services provided by the NQI and in the long term, in terms of improved protection of consumer rights of Malawian citizens.

Q1: What is the importance of food safety vs food security for Malawian people? How UNIDO's intervention supports it?

UNIDO provided technical assistance on the implementation of international standard for food safety management systems ISO 22000 to Malawian SMEs involving food manufacturing. In developing countries, the conflict of focus for governments between food security and food safety usually leads to prioritizing security over safety. Yet food safety plays an integral part in the health of a nation's population. Due to the lack of access to food leading to improper eating patterns and food diversification the immune systems of humans are more vulnerable to illnesses. Food borne diseases are present in both developed and developing countries, thus the controls are put in place through standardization, testing and conformity assessment related activities based on requirements from the trade agreements of the WTO to protect the safety of the consumer. Many consumer protection approaches are incorporated into regulatory requirements of a country which are further supported by voluntary requirements published as national and/or international standards.

Q2: What are the barriers to safe food practices in Malawi? How those could be overcome?

Malawian SMEs face many challenges such as the lack of financial resources, technical skills of personnel and availability of basic hygienic tools (i.e. hygienically designed cleaning equipment

*ISO 17021 Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management system

or protective clothing or cleaning chemicals and disinfectants). Challenges such as the availability and consistent supply of clean water and electricity stifle all safe food handling practices. The facilities may not be able to afford the constant running of generators or the safe storage of water, therefore not being able to carry out the basics of food safety and hygiene practices even such as hand washing. The Malawi programme applies the requirements of ISO 22000 to teach SMEs how to identify and mitigate their food safety risks, thus improving protection of consumer rights. Trainings provided to SMEs are not only aimed at supplying safe food but also at guaranteeing sustainable business practices. Management systems are designed for each SME suitable to their operations to meet the requirements of the international food safety standard. The overall goal is to achieve a certificate from MBS noting their compliance to ISO 22000 through an objective and independent evaluation.

Q3: What are the benefits of using standards for the country and its people?

Standards make a positive contribution to the world we live in by:

- Facilitate trade – Access new markets
- Improving the environment
- Spread knowledge - Increase productivity
- Disseminate innovative advances in technology
- Business operations becomes more efficient
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Share good management & conformity assessment practices
- Add credibility to your business
- Provide evidence of being pro-active rather than reactive
- Consistently meeting customer, regulatory and standards requirements



Ms. Anya Knoetze, UNIDO expert in Implementation of ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System

Achievements of the UNIDO programme highlighted during the Europe Day celebration in Malawi



Malawi's Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Mr. Joseph Mwanamvekha at the Europe Day 2017 celebration on May 5, 2017 in Lilongwe

The Delegation of the European Union in partnership with numerous organization, Embassies and municipalities organized the 60th anniversary of the European Union which was held on May 5, 2017 in Lilongwe. Europe Day is an annual celebration symbolizing the peace and unity of Europe. The event started with a networking reception to celebrate these values followed by the presentations of a panel of speakers on the theme “United in Diversity”, the motto of the European Union.

The UNIDO programme in Malawi supporting the business environment in the country to compete more effectively in the market was highlighted during the event. As implementing agency, through technical assistance and trainings, UNIDO has the role of strengthening the capacity of the MBS to deliver national auditing and certification services in compliance with food safety and quality-related international regulations. Visibility materials on UNIDO's intervention in the country were distributed among the participants. The success story on Linga Fine Food and Winery - one of the SMEs benefiting from the programme was presented. The brochure with the new equipment procured by UNIDO to improve MBS testing capabilities and service delivery to the Malawian industry for the country's economic growth was available for the interested audience.

Europe Day (9 May) marks the anniversary of the historical “Schuman declaration”. At a speech in Paris in 1950, the French foreign minister, Robert Schuman, set out his idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe, which would make war between Europe's nations unthinkable. His vision was to create a European institution that would pool and manage coal and steel production. A treaty creating such a body was signed just under a year later. Schuman's proposal is considered to be the beginning of what is now the European Union.



Malawian youth perform during the 60th anniversary of the European Union enhancing its motto “United in Diversity”

MATCB Project Steering committee holds its eighth meeting

The Deputy Director of Industry, Mr. Clement Phangaphanga from the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT), chaired the eighth Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of the MATCB Project in Lilongwe on April 26, 2017. The UNIDO Project Manager, Mr. Juan Pablo Diaz-Castillo from UNIDO HQ in Vienna, participated in the meeting to review milestones, progress achieved and to provide guidance for the successful implementation of the UNIDO project. One of the two beneficiaries of the MATCB project was represented by the Deputy Director General of MBS, Mr. Willy Muyila. NASFAM was represented by Business Development Manager, Mr. Henry Kalomba. Other meeting participants included UNIDO representatives: the National Project Coordinator, Mr. Jackson Hau, and the Administrative Assistant, Ms. Flora Katsabola.

The SC focused on the need to achieve accreditation of the MBS calibration laboratories by May 2018 and of attaining MS 21 and MS 19 certification by NASFAM associations' production facilities by October 2017. All parties shared success stories including efficient use of the weighbridge truck by MBS to carry out the effective calibration process. As a result, MBS generated revenue of approximately USD 50,000 between November 2016 and February 2017 which shows that companies and organizations are utilizing the weighbridge truck and demanding correct measurements of their weighbridges. NASFAM highlighted UNIDO's provision of Basic Business Management training to 40 association members, as well as MS 21 and MS 19 training to 72 association members.



The Deputy Director General of MBS, Mr. Willy Muyila gives the presentation on the achievements of the MATCB Project during its eighth Steering Committee meeting on April 26, 2017 Lilongwe