

# AID-FOR-TRADE: CASE STORY

GAMBIA

**THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA**

**AID FOR TRADE CASE STORY:**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
WEST AFRICAN QUALITY PROGRAMME**

**IN THE GAMBIA**

**2007-2010**



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## **AID FOR TRADE CASE STORY:**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The West Africa Quality Programme (WAQP) is a European Union (with UNIDO as the executing agency) funded Programme implemented by ECOWAS which seeks to

“...strengthen competitiveness and to ensure compliance with international trade rules, in particular the WTO agreements on TBT and SPS, through the establishment and or strengthening of national and regional support infrastructure for the improvement of quality, and for the delivery, along international good practice, of support services in standardization, conformity assessment and accreditation.”<sup>1</sup>

In relation to the above, the WAQP’s specific objective is to upgrade the compliance infrastructure of the beneficiary countries for greater access to the export markets, mainly to the developed countries.

In November 2007, The Gambia was amongst the 16 West African countries selected to implement the project over the span of 3 years. WAQP was therefore intended to be completed in December 2010.

This Aid for Trade Case Story on the West Africa Quality Programme in The Gambia will assess the intended primary and operational results of the project and its progress in order to demonstrate its effectiveness of achieving its specific objective.

## **OBJECTIVES PURSUED**

In the main project document for the WAQP, two main results to be achieved by the end of the Programme were identified as;

1. National and Regional support infrastructures should be effectively operating enterprise advisory services in the area of quality, in order to assist exporting companies to produce goods that comply with international requirements, such as standards, technical specifications, technical regulations and other TBT and SPS related issues.
2. Standardization, conformity assessment and accreditation activities should be operational and capable of verifying that traded goods comply with international requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> WAQP Project document

In addition, several operational results areas in order to create a quality infrastructure and meet conformity assessment needs were identified as follows:

<b>COMPONENT</b>	<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>
Trade Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of major trade flows, profile of exports, identification of main export obstacles (supply, conformity, etc.) SPS mapping for main products with export potential</li> <li>• Trade information facilitated through one-stop shop</li> <li>• Awareness on WTO rules increased, through more effective TBT and SPS enquiry points</li> </ul>
Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional accreditation scheme for the accreditation of laboratories, certification and inspection bodies established</li> <li>• Laboratory assessors trained</li> </ul>
Testing/Metrology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International standards implemented in a selected number of testing laboratories.</li> <li>• Selected metrology laboratories have established quality systems according to international standards in view of the international recognition of their calibration activities</li> <li>• Recognised calibration services available to laboratories and enterprises</li> <li>• Participation in international proficiency testing schemes for testing and calibration services</li> </ul> <p>Coordination of metrology activities at regional level, in particular with private sector efforts</p>
Standardization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority areas for product testing identified and laboratories strengthened in terms of equipment and training</li> <li>• Testing methods for priority products harmonised</li> <li>• Database on laboratories (services, equipment, etc.) established</li> <li>• Skilled testing equipment maintenance staff available</li> <li>• Capacities of National Standards Bodies (NSBs) strengthened, including development, adoption and regional harmonization of standards at the level of West Africa,</li> <li>• Access to standards and technical regulations by economic operators facilitated through NSBs</li> <li>• TBT and SPS enquiry point established and operational</li> <li>• National CODEX committees established and/or strengthened</li> <li>• Consumer affairs integrated in standard setting activities</li> </ul>
Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspection agencies for plant and animal health assisted in establishing quality systems according to international accreditation standard</li> <li>• Inspectors trained in auditing of inspection agencies</li> <li>• Awareness programmes on TBT and SPS implemented</li> </ul>

Quality Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 national quality awards established and implemented</li> <li>• Regional technology centre(s) in priority fields identified and initiated</li> <li>• Consumer associations and journalists trained in quality matters</li> <li>• Consumer protection Law established in each country</li> <li>• Local expertise in quality and environmental management systems strengthened</li> </ul>

## **DESIGN AND IMPLIMENTATION**

The design of the programme was based on detailed needs assessment for all 16 countries ECOWAS/UEMOA and Mauritania undertaken through a desk study of available documentation, a survey on quality, standards and conformity assessment infrastructures and services, and through field missions by UNIDO international experts during May and June 2006. The analytical work for the ECOWAS/Mauritania countries extended on earlier country assessments and the work undertaken during a regional technical workshop held in April 2002 at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria in cooperation with UNIDO.

These assessments and analysis were discussed and amended by technical country representatives from the national structure in charge of quality, standards and conformity assessment issues during two validation seminars.

Validation seminars were organized in 2006 and attended by national technical experts from all participating countries, the team of three UNIDO consultants and the UNIDO programme management based in UNIDO Headquarters, Vienna.

Coordination and Implementation of the Project is undertaken by a Programme Management Unit (PMU) at the Trade Capacity Building Branch at UNIDO, Vienna, a Regional Support Unit (RSU) at ECOWAS, Abuja and the National Technical Coordinators (NTC) at country level. The governance of the Programme is assured through Central, Regional and National Steering Committees. The National Steering Committee in The Gambia consisting of several public and private entities including the EC Delegation was established in 2007 to monitor the execution of activities at the national level.

Initially, the West Africa Quality Programme operated under the purview of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment in Banjul however due to Cabinet changes in 2010, it was moved to the newly established Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development (MEPID).

The National Steering Committee (NSC) meets 3 to 4 times in the year to review plans and reports of the implementation of the Programme.

The Three-year West Africa Quality Programme (WAQP) was to be finalized in 2010, however, the Project has been extended for one more year.

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

1. **Management of the Programme:** implementation of the national work plan suffered due to a tedious and slow process of disbursing funds while the implementation of the regional work plan suffered from inadequate personnel at both the RSU and PMU. For example, after work plans are approved by the NSCs, funding approval requests are to be sent to the RSU in Abuja which would recommend approval and then send them to the PMU in Vienna on behalf of the NTC before the PMU in Vienna would finally approve and disburse. This is further lengthened by the fact that the funds are sent to the UNDP country office which will also take time in processing payments.
2. **Delays in the mobilization of national counterpart funding:** With regards to the construction and/or refurbishing buildings for testing and metrology labs, there were difficulties and delays in government's disbursement of funds. Firstly, this is due to the fact that government was not involved in the design process of the project and was unaware of its commitment in providing funding for the refurbishment of such labs. This resulted in the exclusion of that component into the preceding annual national budget. Thereafter, the Project expected sector specific public offices to provide for the funding. However, due to the minimal involvement in the design stages, sectors had limited commitment in raising the funds. As a result, only 2 of the 4 testing laboratories identified for upgrading are likely to succeed.
3. **Difficulty in finding suitably qualified manpower for the institutions:** For example the testing and metrology labs require trained scientists which are not readily available at the national level. In addition, the manpower with the profiles required for the operationalization of the National Standards Body is difficult to find in-country (e.g. physicists and engineers).

## FACTORS OF SUCCESS/FAILURE

1. **Government Commitment:** The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment and subsequently the Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development have been very committed to supporting the Project from its infant stages. The Technical Units at the ministries have worked in close collaboration with the WAQP especially in the implementation of activities and facilitating the coordination with other stakeholders. Both Ministries have played a pivotal role in ensuring the involvement of stakeholders especially those from the public sector.

In spite of this, the responsiveness of some of the beneficiaries of the Programme from the Public Sector has left much to be desired. For example, the low commitment with which some critical activities have been implemented by other Ministries and Departments such as those responsible for laboratories in terms of putting up of necessary infrastructure and the placement of appropriately trained staff.

2. **The role of the National Steering Committee:** Supporting the implementation of the Programme by engaging key stakeholders in the Public Sector at national level and in influencing the decisions and focus of the Programme at regional level have been important success factors.

The work of the NSC and its effect on the Programme could be enhanced by the provision of better and more conducive working environment for its meetings and monitoring activities.

3. **Room for increased participation:** The Project's inability to facilitate the travel of participants to its events had the effect of reduced participation and interest in its activities.
4. **Project Design:** There was minimal Government or stakeholder involvement during the design of the project. This hindered the ability for those affected to provide input which resulted in minimal commitment. If the government was involved in this process, it would be in a position to voice its constraints in the implementation of the areas it was responsible for. Furthermore, decision-makers would take ownership of the project and drive its success.

## **RESULTS ACHIEVED**

The ultimate result of the project was to meet its objective of creating a quality infrastructure and conformity assessment to meet international standards in order to increase market access. This section identifies the progress made in each operational result in order to meet the objectives of the WAQP.

In a brief country analysis, it is realized that progress was only achieved in two out of the six operational results. This is due to the fact that the implementation of other components have not commenced. Similarly, the WAQP at the regional level has also indicated somewhat parallel results. Please find attached a brief description of the results achieved at the regional level. Progress was achieved in the following:

### **1. Testing/ Metrology**

The refurbishment of a Metrology lab was completed through government's contribution to the project. Thereafter metrology equipment was identified by a UNIDO consultant. It is expected that the project will procure the equipment by the end of the year.

The UNIDO consultant had also identified areas in the Weights and Measure Act 1977 that require updating, however the updating of the act is yet to be carried out.

#### **4 Standardization**

Following a UNIDO standards experts mission, it was recommended for the establishment of a National Standards Bureau. The Project succeeded in facilitating the process of formulating the legal instrument for the establishment of a National Standards Bureau. The National Standards Bureau Bill was enacted in December 2010. In addition, government has appointed a board for the bureau and the National Standards Bureau is expected to be operational in 2011. The Project has also supported the national SPS and Codex Committee on developing standards. To date, standards have been developed in edible oil, labeling and advertising.

The Project has been extended for an extra year with new operational targets. The less ambitious targets are highlighted in the annex and the hope is that by December 2011 they are achieved and hopefully resulting in meeting the objectives of the WAQP. Please find in the Annex a comparison of the regional and national expected operational results between 2010 and 2011.

#### **LESSONS LEARNED**

- 1.** There has little been focus on the agents responsible for producing goods and services whom should be the ultimate beneficiaries of the Project. In the last three years, the Project focused mainly on the development of the legal, policy and institutional framework. It has been realized that institutional capacities has increased especially in the groundnut and fisheries sectors however, the producers are unable to meet international standards for export. For example, It has been observed that the fisheries and groundnut sectors are in fact facing more barriers to accessing markets and red alerts of such products have increased resulting in the ban of the export of most fishing companies to the EU. Activities should be directly targeted to the private sector operators to ensure they are informed and trained in order to increase their technical ability to access markets.
- 2.** The lifespan of the Programme is too short to achieve the expected results.
- 3.** In order to better facilitate the mobilization of resources for the implementation of projects under the Programme, there should be a faster, more efficient procedure to access the donor funds.
- 4.** Sensitization at the very beginning is critical especially towards the decision-makers and other stakeholders. This will ensure that institutions understand the importance of the standards and conformity assessment infrastructure and its effect on the performance of their respective sectors.



## ANNEX

August 2010	December 2011
<b>Standardization</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional Thematic Working Group on Standardization is functional</li> <li>▪ National Standards Bodies and their documentation centers are strengthened</li> <li>▪ The first set of standards is harmonized across the 16 countries of West Africa</li> <li>▪ National seminars on WTC agreements and regulations are organized</li> <li>▪ A database of standards and technical regulations is established at the ECOWAS Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standards for the main imported and exported products are harmonized</li> <li>▪ The regional secretariat for standardization is functional</li> <li>▪ National Standards Bodies and their documentation centres are functional</li> <li>▪ A legal framework for regional harmonization of standardization, accreditation, metrology, testing and quality promotion is developed for adoption by the ECOWAS Commission</li> <li>▪ Support is given to the development of the legal capacity of food safety institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Metrology</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Regional Thematic Working Group on Metrology is functional</li> <li>▪ The first batch of calibration laboratories is technically upgraded</li> <li>▪ The first basic metrology equipment are delivered</li> <li>▪ A database on calibration and legal metrology laboratories is established at the ECOWAS Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Basic capacity in legal metrology available in each country</li> <li>▪ The main metrology services are harmonized across the region</li> <li>▪ The regional secretariat for metrology at the ECOWAS Commission is functional</li> <li>▪ An agreement for the regional sharing of responsibilities for the calibration of laboratory analytical instruments</li> <li>▪ The metrology function enhanced in pilot enterprises</li> <li>▪ 1 or 2 regional metrology centers strengthened</li> <li>▪ 1 or 2 reference regional laboratories are operational and accredited for key parameters</li> </ul>
<b>Accreditation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At least two laboratory auditors per country</li> <li>▪ First mission for the definition of a regional accreditation system and proficiency testing is carried out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A regional laboratory accreditation scheme covering all 16 countries of West Africa is</li> </ul>
<b>Inspection</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Main needs of inspection services are identified</li> <li>▪ At least 2 inspectors per country receive training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ECOWAS regional harmonized inspection procedures in place</li> <li>▪ ECOWAS Regional Thematic Working Group (RTWG) on inspection operational</li> <li>▪ 2 inspection bodies per country have a QMS in place and operations assured according to international best practice</li> </ul>

### Product testing

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Complementary equipment needed by 9 laboratories and meeting agreed specifications is delivered to 8 laboratories (value: about €1,000,000)</li><li>▪ 9 laboratories participate in Proficiency Testing schemes (7 laboratories moving towards accreditation and 2 already accredited)</li><li>▪ Study tours for technical staff of laboratory are conducted</li><li>▪ The Regional Thematic Working Group on Testing Methods is functional</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ At least 16 testing laboratories within the region internationally accredited or ready for accreditation to ISO 17025:2005</li><li>▪ Harmonized testing methods for main imported/exported (agro-based) products</li><li>▪ Regional laboratory database/knowledge centre operational</li><li>▪ ECOWAS Regional Thematic Working Group (for all 16 countries) operational</li><li>▪ Harmonized regional Proficiency testing schemes operational</li><li>▪ Participation in international proficiency testing schemes by 2-3 labs per country</li><li>▪ 1-2 ECOWAS workshops (centres) for lab equipment repair and maintenance operational</li><li>▪ Regional reference labs operational for micro-biological, chemical and pesticide testing</li></ul> |
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### Certification

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ HACCP studies are conducted for pilot enterprises and related training is provided</li><li>▪ National auditors are trained</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 10 pilot enterprises of the region are certified for quality management or food hygiene</li><li>▪ The Regional Thematic Working Group on Certification is operational</li></ul> |
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### Quality promotion

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ An inventory of quality associations is carried out in each country</li><li>▪ Pilot enterprises have adopted quality management systems such as HACCP, ISO 22000, ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.</li><li>▪ A database of quality matters (quality associations, consumer associations, certified enterprises, certified auditors, etc.) is functional at the ECOWAS Commission</li><li>▪ Quality associations and consumer associations are strengthened</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ National and regional Quality Awards are in place</li><li>▪ A regional quality policy is defined and proposed to the ECOWAS Commission</li><li>▪ A consumer protection law is proposed to the ECOWAS Commission</li><li>▪ The database of quality matters (quality associations, consumer associations, certified enterprises, licensed auditors, etc.) at the ECOWAS Commission is functional.</li></ul> |
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