



**Forum: Metrology – Trade Facilitator  
Request for support**



**BHUTAN**

**Core Problem:**

**Bhutan's accession to WTO Membership**

The Royal Government of Bhutan has initiated its accession to WTO membership. The Standards & Quality Control Authority, under the Ministry of Works & Human Settlement, has been identified as the implementing agency for Metrology, Standards, Testing & Quality (MSTQ). Accordingly, the Standards & Quality Control Authority has, with other stakeholders, discussed and agreed that the proposed Standards and Metrology Centre should be established within the existing Material Testing & Research Division (Laboratory) under SQCA. UNIDO has also identified SQCA as the implementing agency for UNIDO assisted projects to SAARC LDCs. Hence, it has been felt necessary to establish a National level centre for Metrology, Standards, Testing & Quality (MSTQ) for certification purposes to meet international requirements. An MSTQ system does not exist in Bhutan and thus it is not possible to address the question of offenders in the fields of weights, measures, weighing or measuring instruments until such an institution has been established in the country. We are looking for some donors to support us in establishing a Centre for Metrology, Standards, Testing & Quality (MSTQ) in terms of finance, equipment, expertise and training of staff on the use of equipment to ensure that technical regulations and standards are complied with. This would include packing, marking and labelling requirements, as well as procedures for the assessment of conformity with technical regulations and standards so as not to create unnecessary obstacles to international trade. The SQCA is also in the process of obtaining ISO membership.

**Significance of the problem:**

At present Bhutan does not have a national standards institution or legal metrology system for modern commercial operations. Hence, the establishment of an institutional structure for standards and legal metrology, as well as internationally accredited test laboratories for the main exportable products are pre-requisite. The centre would enable the adoption of international standards for products and services to facilitate exports and domestic trade and to protect the interests of consumers in Bhutan. The main objective would be to promote national standards for products and services in harmony with international standards and the technical regulations adopted by major trading partners with a view to protecting the interest of consumers and facilitating international trade.

**Negative Impacts:**

- 1 Interests of consumers and domestic trade are not protected.
- 2 Difficulty in interacting with international standards organizations and standard bodies of trading partner countries.
- 3 Difficulty in maintaining close liaison with standard bodies of neighbouring countries.
- 4 Difficulty in maintaining a database on standards and technical regulation in Bhutan and trading partner countries and operating national enquiry points as required under the WTO TBT Agreement.
- 5 Difficulty in maintaining reference standards for weights and measures and in arranging their periodic calibration.
- 6 Not easy to enforce weights and measures laws of Bhutan.
- 7 Difficulty in promoting quality improvement in Bhutan to make its products and services globally competitive.
- 8 Difficulty in coordinating activities in the areas of conformity assessment to facilitate international trade.
- 9 Difficulty in serving as the secretariat for the National Standards Council (NSC) to be established by the Bhutan Government.

**What is needed:**

There is a need to establish a Standards Metrology Centre for Bhutan within the Material Testing Laboratory of SQCA and so support is required from donor agencies for both financial and technical expertise to establish a small, compact and efficient Standardization and Legal Metrology Centre. The building for Material Testing Laboratory is near completion. The existing equipment, which is primarily for road and building works, will be moved to the new building. In keeping with the expanded mandate of SQCA, the laboratory services will also need to be expanded significantly. Therefore, the following support from the donors have become crucial:

- 1 Short Term TA (about 3 months) of a Material Testing Laboratory Specialist to support SQCA in streamlining the Laboratory set up. The TA could also identify requirements for technical expertise.
- 2 Laboratory equipment & training facilities for the establishment of the Standards & Metrology Centre.

**Contributions:**

The Royal Government of Bhutan will provide office space, building, manpower and general office facilities, etc. According to Article 10 of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, each member shall ensure that an enquiry point exists which is able to answer all reasonable enquiries from other members and interested parties in other member states as well as to provide the relevant documents relating to standards, technical regulation and conformity assessment system. SQCA is the focal agency for WTO enquiry point.

**Whom to address:**

**During the Forum:**

**Saha Bir Gurung,**  
Material Testing & Research Division,  
Standards & Quality Control Authority,  
Ministry of Works & Human Settlement,  
Royal Government of Bhutan.



**After the Forum:**

**Mr. S. B Gurung,**  
Head, Material Testing & Research Division, Standards & Quality Control  
Authority,  
Ministry of Works & Human Settlement  
Thimphu: Bhutan