



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



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Core Problem:

The Department of Intellectual Property, Standardization and Metrology (DISM), established in 1993 under the Science, Technology and Environment Agency (STEA) is the governmental body having responsibility for implementing SMTQ activities in the country, including the formulation of national standards, the maintenance of national measurement standards, the provision of testing services, quality assurance and certification. Standards activities are carried out by the Standards Division, and the metrology activities by the Metrology Division of the DISM.

As for the legal framework, Decrees on metrology management (26 October 1993) and standards and product quality management (2 November 1995) have been promulgated. Also regulations for the control of products and measuring instruments and national standard marks have been issued.

Vientiane, the capital city of Lao PDR is identified as the priority for the establishment of a metrology laboratory and the capability to verify weighing and measuring instruments, and it requires equipment, staff training and transportation. The establishment of a metrology laboratory will in particular enable us to provide traceable measurements to the branch offices and industry. But in fact, Lao's overall legal metrology infrastructure is poor and doesn't have the ability to support trade measurements, nor domestic or export markets because the central metrology office only has some simple weights up to about 5 kg for testing weighing equipment and 5 litre measures for testing fuel dispensers. Neither the masses nor the volume measures have been calibrated due to the lack of calibration equipment and reference mass or volume standards.

Significance of the problem:

Since the testing laboratories have been established in Lao, neither their equipment, nor measuring instruments have been calibrated. There are always problems with the export of goods or trade products to other countries due to products not meeting their specifications or standards.

There are also problems at the fuel depot of the fuel company. The storage tanks, initially fitted with gauging devices to measure the quantity of fuel contained have not been calibrated for 18 years, and neither have their dipsticks. These gauges have not worked for many years, and now we rely upon dipsticks to determine the amount of product. Petroleum products are delivered from imported road tankers to the storage tanks and the quantity is measured by simple dipsticks used to determine the product level. The company loses up to 1.5 %. Unexplained losses are also an indication of possible leaks, with impacts on the environment and on safety.

We always get complaints from households and manufacturers about watt meters and water meters. We, the main authority on Legal Metrology directly responsible for the management of these matters have only informed the electricity company to fix the problems. We don't have our own electricity laboratory or portable master meters. Sometimes companies or industries have installed watt-meters (class 2) instead of class 1 due to lack of knowledge. Then they lose money.

What is needed:

We have a very weak metrology infrastructure, such as facilities and skilled manpower to handle effective testing and inspection of electricity and water meters as well as calibration and verification of length, mass, volume and calibration of mobile mass laboratory. Urgent needs for improving the MSTQ system in Laos are the following:

- A technical expert visit to Lao to provide expertise and assistance in the development and implementation of policy, legislation, testing procedures and training programs.
- Working standards of mass, volume and length for the department of Intellectual Property Standardisation and Metrology (DISM) to undertake the verification of weighing and measuring equipment and the inspection of goods and trade products.
- Small mobile laboratory for mass and volume for calibrating standards and measuring instruments in the provinces.
- Training courses on the use of the equipment mentioned in the paragraph above and procedures for inspecting and verifying as well as standards for calibrating weighing and measuring equipment for key staff and attend metrology training for the implementation of OIML Recommendations such as R 111, R 76-1, R 117 and other important related Recommendations.

Contributions:

The Lao government, along with the Science Technology and Environment Agency will provide:

- Assistance to permit effective execution of the work,
- Offices and land areas for working and training courses, and
- Personal salary.

Whom to address:

During and after the Forum:



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