



Forum: Metrology – Trade Facilitator Request for support



RWANDA

Core Problem:

The core problem facing RBS today is that of inadequate "Technical Capacity". RBS is under-funded and is therefore unable to adequately train its staff, hence making it difficult to assist industry in the implementation of the requirements of MSTQ as summarized here below:

- RBS staff lack basic training in metrology and therefore cannot offer calibration services to industry. This includes lack of training in the Management of calibration Laboratories, including the establishment of a credible and reliable traceability chain.
- RBS is unable to assist industry in the availing, in time, of much needed product standards. Knowledge in standards development and the importance and relevance of standards in the promotion of trade is needed. Adequate and relevant tools necessary for standards development work could be of help.
- Testing laboratory staff needs training to assist uplift standards of performance of the laboratory. The training should cover laboratory Management and the institution of proficiency testing in order to improve on the reliability of the test results. This is important for conformity assessment which will lead to eventual recognition and accreditation of the laboratories.

Knowledge and appreciation of quality management systems, including auditing is still at a rudimentary level. This is true for both RBS and the industry in country. This limits the possibility of Rwanda goods gaining access to the regional and global market.

Significance of the problem:

According to "The Industrial Policy of Rwanda", published in August 2002, the Bureau is categorized under government authorities with the task of providing services to industry, including Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs). Such strategic tasks are highlighted as:

- providing training to industry so as to upgrade the human resource,
- Setting of standards in order to assist improve the quality of goods and services,
- Advising on the necessary efficient equipment.

With its present structure and strength, it is almost impossible for the Bureau to fulfill its mandate as spelt out in the industrial policy. It is for this reason that the inadequate technical capacity negatively impacts on the economy, society, international trade and the environment. The following should also be borne in mind, as they are relevant to the present existing situation in Rwanda:

- Trade is based on reliable and traceable measurement. Measurement which customers can trust. The lack of such level of measurement does not just affect RBS, it also has negative effect on the industrial development of the country. The products rarely conform to the requirements of the standard, where such standards do exist. They cannot compete with other products in the regional and international Market.
- When the products cannot sell, the country cannot export to earn the much needed hard currency. The country becomes unable to service its debts and even to procure the needed high technology equipment, drugs and other life saving items.
- Unemployment becomes a problem when industries cannot expand. Standard of living drops and the social fabric of the society collapses. This affects the security, health and safety of the general population.
- Environmental protection is only possible in a state where the people are able to get the normal provisions. Evidence shows that poor countries are not known for encouraging existence of safe, healthy and sustainable environments. Already the country faces problems with the disposal of large amounts of substandard and unsafe products imported into the country.
- Infrastructural improvement and maintenance is expensive and calls for heavy funding. In the absence of viable trade, to earn the necessary cash, the country finds it difficult to set a side the needed funds. This leads to deterioration in other sectors of the economy especially when the cost of transport and general communication is factored in.
- Conformity assessment regimes is totally lacking. As a result of this deficiency, Rwandan goods cannot penetrate and compete fairly in the cross-border and international markets.
- The country is speedily becoming a dumping ground for substandard and counterfeit goods. This is mainly as a result of RBS not having the capacity to put in place checks and balances for such practices and habits. These impacts negatively on the young upcoming industries which are striving to manufacture quality products.
- The economy of Rwanda is basically Agro-based. This calls for good knowledge on Management principles in the areas of HCCP, GMP and SPS, in order to assist the industry to fulfill the requirements of WTO and take full advantage of market potentials. Training in these areas is needed.
- Industry needs to be trained on the implementation of standards in addition to assisting them develop enterprise standards. This is a culture which needs to be ingrained into the industrial sector. RBS needs the capacity to impart this knowledge.

What is needed:

The Rwanda Bureau of Standards (RBS) needs assistance for capacity building in the following areas:

- Basic Industrial Metrology, Calibration techniques, Analysis of results and Laboratory Management.
- Legal metrology and the enforcement of fair trade including the interpretation of OIML recommendations.
- Enhancement of capacity in Standards Development including assistance in the acquisition of necessary aids to help speed up processing of standards.
- Assistance in the establishment of a National Enquiry Point (NEP) in order to meet the requirements of WTO and provide information necessary for the business community.
- Strengthening of the present existing laboratories with a little additional equipment assistance.
- Training in laboratory testing, especially in chemistry, food and microbiology, including instrumentation.
- Capacity building in the following areas also needs to be covered:
 - ISO 9000 Quality Management System (QMS);
 - ISO 1400 Environment Management Systems (EMS);
 - SPS, HCCP and GMP Management System;
 - Auditing of both Quality Management and Environment Management Systems (ISO 19011).

Rwanda has never had a formal legal Metrology system. There has never been any national body tasked with the responsibility of verifying measuring instruments and measuring units to ensure correct measurement in areas of public interest such as trade, environment health, and safety. The population has been at the mercy of the sellers - "virgin sellers Market".

Rwanda Bureau of Standards, though still young has been given the mandate of setting up a legal Metrology (Weight and measures) system in the country. Recently, RBS has been accepted as a member of OIML, and thus representing Rwanda.

There is hope in this new development as the Institute struggles to put in place structures and systems which could enable it enforce fair trade in the market place and promote health and safety, in addition to protecting the environment. Needing urgent attention are the weighing scales, the fuel dispensers and other volume measures.

Major assistance required in this area can be summarized as:

- Training of staff in legal metrology;
- Assistance in the acquisition of basic measurement standards and other relevant enabling tools to facilitate the work.

Contributions:

The Government of Rwanda has provided the following resources:

- Modestly equipped laboratories, Standards development working areas and a library space;
- Human resource which can be capacitated to competently run the facilities;
- Office space and equipment including Internet Network.

Whom to address:

During the Forum:

Dr. Tito Migabo, Director General, Rwanda Bureau of Standards.

After the Forum:

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