



“The production of Zikometso Chillie Sauce has doubled from 1,200 to 3,600 bottles per day, enabling Malawian farmers to increase sales volume, income, and employment. Zikometso Sauce is now sold in Malawi’s shops and used in local restaurants.”

National Smallholder Farmers’ Association of Malawi

Malawi commits to a quality culture

Trade is an engine for growth that could lift many Malawians out of poverty. The agricultural sector provides jobs for more than 80% of the population. The majority of the country’s products are imported from other countries. To sell what they produce, Malawian producers need to connect to markets by demonstrating the safety and quality of their products. To help them do so, UNIDO launched the market access and trade capacity-building support for agro-industrial products (MATCB) project in 2013 with the financial support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

UNIDO’S APPROACH

With the partnership of the Malawi Government, the project aimed to reform national quality infrastructure (NQI) in order to improve Malawi’s product safety and quality, to strengthen enterprise competitiveness and to increase consumer protection. This was achieved through targeted interventions in legal and industrial metrology, two key building blocks of NQI, with the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS). UNIDO also facilitated capacity building of MBS’ national auditing and certification services, in compliance with food safety and quality-related national regulations, to service the National Smallholder Farmers’ Association of Malawi (NASFAM). NASFAM’s Innovation and Productivity Centres (IPCs) achieved pre-certification or certification against Malawian Standards. Through strengthened testing and certification performed by MBS and enhanced quality systems implemented in selected value chains, NASFAM farmers have obtained greater local market access.

IMPACT

The project laid the foundations for an efficient NQI system in the country. The legal metrology framework was reinforced through the enactment of a new National Quality Policy and a new Metrology Law, effective as of 2014 and 2015, respectively, strengthening the overall commitment of the Malawi Government to a culture of quality.

MBS’ service provision to the public and private sectors have been measurably strengthened and diversified by project closure. In particular, legal metrology capacity gaps in calibration and verification of weighbridges were addressed. In the area of mass and volume, the project delivered weights and laboratory handling equipment. The project acquired a customized vehicle for weighbridge verification and prioritized the upgrading of the Metrology Services Department (MSD) of MBS in Blantyre. Calibration Laboratories under the MSD have been rehabilitated and capacitated to meet accreditation requirements against ISO/IEC 17025:2005 for selected scopes. A heavy mass and large volume laboratory was newly constructed. Metrology laboratories under the MBS now generate an annual revenue of approximately USD 122,000 through their calibration processes.

The competitiveness of the country’s commodities locally produced has improved. Almost 6,000 NASFAM farmers,

half of whom are women, were trained on better pre- and post-harvest and business management techniques and best practices. There is an increased awareness of and demand for conformity assessment services from the private sector, particularly calibration for higher measurement accuracy and certification in compliance with related standards and regulations. Selected processing facilities of NASFAM Innovation and Productivity Centres (IPCs), such as Lilongwe South, Zikometso and Mzimba South, were supported in achieving certification for the chili sauce, soybean and sunflower oil value chains. Zikometso Chillie Sauce produced in Zikometso IPC has been certified by MBS against national standards MS 21 (code of hygiene) and MS 19 (labeling of pre-packaged foods) under the product certification MS 53.

WAY FORWARD

These collective interventions have ultimately placed Malawi on a trajectory based on a quality-led growth model for market access both at home and abroad.

AT A GLANCE

Project title	Malawi: Market access and trade-capacity building support for agro-industrial products (MATCB)
Thematic area	Legal and Industrial Metrology
Donor	NORAD
Project counterpart	Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT)
Budget	Euro 2,000,000
Duration	5 years (October 2013 – September 2018)