



Terms of Reference

End of Project Evaluation: “Development of a robust Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) Infrastructure Project in Malawi”

1.0 BACKGROUND

There is a clear need for rapid and sustainable economic growth if Malawi is to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the overall objective of poverty reduction on a meaningful scale. Trade, as recognized by the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II and III (MGDS), has the potential to be an engine for growth that can lift many Malawians out of poverty.

Over the years, Malawi’s standardization, quality assurance, accreditation and metrology infrastructure has been inadequate to support the growth in exports. The Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) is the national enquiry point required by the World Trade Organization (WTO) under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. MBS sets and implements standards and conducts conformity tests on selected imports and exports. However, certificates from MBS have not been recognized on regional and international markets and exporters have been incurring high costs to obtain certification overseas. Generally, infrastructure at MBS has not been adequate to meet the growing demands for the provision of SQAM services within Malawi.

To address the deficits in the national quality infrastructure, the “Development of a Robust Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology (SQAM) Infrastructure in Malawi” project was developed with funding from the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Malawi Government. The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), provided specialized technical support, while the MBS was the lead implementing partner responsible for overall project implementation. The purpose of the SQAM project was to contribute to a more adequate, effective and sustainable National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) in Malawi in accordance with international and regional principles and practices (e.g. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC), by supporting the improvement of the performance of the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS).

Implementation of the project started in 2012 and ended in December 2018 with an intention of achieving internationally recognized accreditation of the conformity assessment services of the MBS, contributing to an efficient and adequate National Quality Infrastructure in Malawi by

2018. This was to have direct benefits for Malawian enterprises, and indirect, long-term benefits for Malawian citizens in terms of improved protection of consumer rights and safety.

The National Quality Policy paved the way for Malawi to gradually implement a modernized National Quality Infrastructure and its approval was a clear statement of Malawi Government's commitment towards this modernization process and laid a solid foundation that supported the project objectives.

1.2 Project Objectives

The SQAM project was aligned to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2018 and to the MGDS II, that prioritised export-led economic growth. The project was to contribute to poverty reduction through the achievement of UNDAF Outcome 1.2, "Women, youth, people with disability and households benefit from decent employment, income generation and pro-poor private sector growth by 2018," under Theme 1, "Sustainable and equitable economic growth and food security". More directly, the project tied into UNDAF Output 1.2.2 that aimed at improving Malawi's access to international and regional markets by assisting domestic enterprises to meet the pre-requisite quality standards. The overall objective of the SQAM Project is the enhanced ability to export goods from Malawi by reducing the need for re-testing, re-inspection or re-certification abroad through the acceptance of measurements, tests, conformity assessment results issued in Malawi and improvement of the protection of consumer rights of Malawi citizens.

Expected Project Output(s)

1. Strengthened capacity of the Malawi Bureau of Standards to deliver effective business services and to achieve financial sustainability;
2. Technical regulations reviewed to promote efficient, effective and accountable delivery of information in accordance with SQAM-related legislation and regulations;
3. Structurally enhanced capacity of the Malawi Bureau of Standards for conformity assessment services;
4. Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) infrastructure improved and mainstreamed into National policies;
5. Strengthened, proactive and responsive National Enquiry Points (NEP) to the information and notification requirements of World Trade Organization (WTO)/Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)/SPS agreements;
6. Capacity of Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME), and particularly women and youth led enterprises, strengthened to comply with quality requirements;
7. MBS compliant with International Regulations established;
8. Effective and efficient project management.

2.0 EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purposes of the end of project evaluation are to:

- (a) Determine the extent to which the outcome and outputs of the project have been achieved, and the potential impact the project has made on the targeted beneficiaries;
- (b) Assess the contribution of funders, implementing partners and responsible parties to the project outcome, and their cooperation and contributions towards success of the project;

- (c) Document the achievements, recommendations and lessons learnt from the project to inform future decisions in design, implementation and management of similar interventions;

3.0 THE SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will be conducted during the period April - May 2019, with a view to providing the status of progress towards the project outcome and outputs and providing lessons learnt and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of similar projects. The evaluation will assess:

- 1) The relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of the project.
- 2) The progress made towards achieving the outcome and outputs and what can be derived in terms of good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for future interventions and support together with other development partners, in the field of national quality infrastructure.
- 3) Progress and contributions to gender equality, women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- (i) Assess and analyse the progress made by the project towards achieving the project outcome, and outputs and the likelihood that these results can be sustained after project closure;
- (ii) Examine and analyze factors which have positively and negatively impacted on achievement of project outputs and outcomes;
- (iii) Assess the relevance of the outputs to the effective achievement of the outcome and goal of the SQAM Project;
- (iv) Assess the relevance and adequacy of the project outcomes and goal to address the challenges in the private sector development and the National Quality Infrastructure arena. The project aimed to reduce the need for re-testing, re-inspection or re-certification abroad through the acceptance of in country measurements, tests, conformity assessment and to contribute towards a more adequate, effective and sustainable National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) in Malawi in harmony with international and regional principles and practice like those of COMESA and SADC;
- (v) Assess the extent to which UNDP, EU, UNIDO and the MoITT cooperated and contributed to the successful implementation of the project.
- (vi) Examine the extent to which gender equality and women empowerment and human rights targets as cross-cutting issues were integrated and achieved;
- (vii) Assess the effectiveness of institutional arrangements, sustainability arrangements and partnership strategies;
- (viii) Provide recommendations and document lessons in strategic areas for improving on the design of the project, implementation, sustainability or exit strategies, impact, gender and other cross-cutting issues and partnership arrangements to inform future programming;
- (ix) Distil lessons learnt for future programming and improvement in planning.

4.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

4.1 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation will use standard evaluation criteria to assess performance, which includes relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

4.2 Indicative Evaluation questions:

In order to meet the objectives and purpose of the evaluation, the evaluators will among other tasks address the following list of indicative questions:

4.2.1 Design and Relevance:

1. Whether the problem the project addressed was clearly identified and the approach soundly conceived?
2. Whether the target beneficiaries of the project were clearly identified?
3. Whether the outcome and outputs of the project were stated explicitly and precisely in verifiable terms with SMART indicators?
4. The quality of the participatory needs assessment with intended partners and target beneficiaries prior to the development of the project.
5. Whether the project was relevant to the development priorities of the country?
6. Whether the relationship between outcome, outputs, activities and inputs of the project are logically articulated and relevant to address the problem addressed in the project?
7. To what extent did the project consider gender equality in its design?
8. Whether the project was relevant to contributing towards fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Malawi?
9. Did the design of the project adequately take into account scaling up and sustainability?
10. Given the capacity building objectives of the project, how effective were the programme's capacity building interventions?

4.2.2 Effectiveness:

1. Whether the management arrangements of the project were appropriate and analyze the institutional arrangements put in place, including coordination arrangements, financing arrangements and actual implementation?
2. What major factors affected project delivery and were appropriate interventions taken to address them, and how might these factors be incorporated into any planned interventions in support of National Quality Infrastructure in future?
3. Did the project meet the success criteria as outlined in the project document?
4. Assess the responsiveness of project management to significant changes in the environment in which the programme functioned (did these facilitate or impede project implementation)?
5. Determine whether or not lessons learnt from other relevant programmes/projects were incorporated into the project?
6. To what extent did the project prioritize gender equality in its implementation?
7. Assess effectiveness of monitoring and backstopping of the programme as expected by the Government, UNDP, EU, and UNIDO;
8. What are the major achievements of the project vis-à-vis its outcome and outputs, performance indicators and targets?

9. Whether there is evidence of UN's contribution (alone and with the financial support from the EU) to the outcome of the project?
10. Given the capacity building objectives of the project, how effective were the project's capacity building interventions?
11. To what extent are both women and men accessing the benefits/results of the project?
12. Given an opportunity, what actions the evaluation team members would have recommended to ensure that this potential for success translated into actual success?
13. Any underlying factors, beyond control, that influenced the outcome of the project?
14. Have there been any unplanned effects/results?
15. The effectiveness of the project's collaboration with the public and private sector, faith groups and civil society, if relevant;
16. The effectiveness of the UNDP Country Office and its impact (positive and negative) on project delivery.

4.2.3 Efficiency:

1. Whether the project resources (financial, physical and manpower) were adequate in terms of both quantity and quality?
2. Whether the project resources were used effectively to produce planned results (were the disbursements and project expenditures in line with expected budgetary plans)?
3. Whether the project resources were used cost-effectively compared to similar interventions?
4. Whether the technologies selected (any innovations adopted, if any) were suitable?
5. Whether there is evidence to support accountability of the programme (to be used by UNDP, EU, UNIDO in fulfilling its accountability obligations to its development partners)?
6. The efficiency of delivery by Government counterparts in terms of inputs such as personnel, equipment, and in-kind contributions such as office space.

4.2.4 Impact:

1. What are positive and negative changes did the project produce, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
2. What impacts have been achieved as a result of the project?
3. What real differences has the activity made to various beneficiaries?
4. How many people have been affected?

4.2.5 Sustainability:

1. Assess whether or not the project's achievements are sustainable.
2. Assess the robustness of the exit strategy for all elements of the project?
3. What should be done to strengthen sustainability of programme outcomes by BMS and other stakeholders?
4. Assess whether or not the UNDP resource mobilization strategy for the project was appropriate and effective.
5. Provide specific recommendations for future potential interventions beyond the current project with regard to impact and sustainability of recent support.

5.0 EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation team should undertake the following:

- a) **Review of project documentation.** Review of key project documents such as approved project support document, financing agreements and amendments, recent studies, reviews, project monitoring documents, disbursement reports, progress reports and other information available with implementing partners.
- b) **Construct a theory of change** to facilitate understanding of key interventions, identify detailed evaluation questions, methods (mixed methods) and instruments, stakeholder mapping, etc.
- c) **Data collection:** (i) visits to selected stakeholders mainly in Blantyre and Lilongwe to carry out in depth interviews, inspection, and analysis of project activities; (ii) phone interviews and performance data surveys of institutions not visited in person; (iii) interviews with implementing partners. For each of these interviews, the evaluators should first develop and present their ideas for the content and format of the interview forms that will be applied to capture the information required, as well as the method to be used in administering them and tabulating the results.
- d) **Analysis:** Data triangulation and analysis triangulation to validate evidence and arrive at findings.

The evaluators will be expected to develop and present detailed statement of evaluation methods/approaches in an inception report to show how each objective, evaluation question and criterion will be answered.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- a) The evaluation will be conducted by an independent firm which will provide a team leader, and a team member. Evaluation Team leader will have the overall responsibility for the conduct of the evaluation exercise as well as quality and timely submission of reports (inception, draft, final etc.).
- b) The Resilience and Sustainable Growth (RSG) Portfolio Manager, in collaboration with the PSD Specialist, will provide the overall oversight to the project evaluation. The Evaluator will ensure timely delivery and a satisfactory final product.
- c) The SQAM Programme Assistant and the PSD Programme Analysts will support the Evaluation Team on a daily basis with respect to providing background information and progress reports and other documentation, setting up stakeholder meetings and interviews, coordinating with the Implement Partner(s), and Development Partners. UNDP Planning, M&E Specialist will also provide support to ensure that the evaluation meets the expected United Nations Development Programme evaluation quality standards.
- d) The Evaluation Firm will be providing the evaluation services to UNDP Malawi Country Office in Lilongwe as the contracting organization, the Malawi Bureau of Standards in Blantyre as the main implementing partner of the SQAM Project, and the Vienna based UNIDO as the responsible party for some of the project activities.
- e) A reference group, already established as SQAM Project Management Technical Team, will assist in key aspects of the evaluation process including reviewing evaluation Terms of Reference, providing detailed comments on the inception and draft evaluation reports and dissemination of evaluation findings, lessons learnt and recommendations.

- f) The Evaluation Team will be expected to be fully self-sufficient in terms of office equipment and supplies, communication and accommodation. Furthermore, the evaluators will be expected to familiarize themselves with the United Nations Evaluation Group's standards and norms for conducting project evaluations.

7.0 DELIVERABLES

- **Inception report** – within 8-man days of the start of the assignment. The report will include a detailed approach and methodology, schedule, draft data collection protocols, the Theory-of-Change, and an evaluation matrix. The work plan should also include an outline of the evaluation report. The evaluators will also propose a rating of the performance in the four evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.
- **Draft evaluation report** – The Evaluator will present a Draft Report within 5 weeks after presentation of the inception report.
- **Final Evaluation Report** - which will include separate sections on lessons learnt and recommendations. The Evaluators will present a Final Evaluation Report 10 days after receiving feedback and comments on the draft report from key stakeholders. The Evaluation Report shall be compliant with the UNEG standards and should include the following components:
 - Executive Summary.
 - Description of the SQAM project (including theory of change and relevant information)
 - Purpose of the evaluation, evaluation scope and evaluation criteria
 - Description of the evaluation methodology (including evaluability assessment, limitations and ethical issues)
 - Findings broken down by evaluation criteria
 - Conclusions and lessons learned
 - Recommendations
 - Appendices, including the Terms of Reference, data collection tools, people contacted and other relevant information

8.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRM

8.1 Expertise of the Firm

- The firm must have a minimum of 5 years of experience in undertaking similar or related evaluations.
- A good track record in providing similar services to UNDP or any UN Agency is an asset.

8.2 Methodology

- The firm must describe how it will address/deliver the demands of the assignment in relation to the evaluation methods and deliverables highlighted above.

8.3 Management Structure and Qualification of Key Personnel

Team Leader assigned by the firm/company to carry out this exercise needs to fulfil the following prerequisites:

- Advanced university degree in economics, trade, engineering, development, business administration or related disciplines.
- A minimum of 10 years of progressive and proven practical experience in the field of quality infrastructure and private sector development, including experience at the international level involving technical cooperation in developing countries;
- Exposure to the needs, conditions and problems in developing countries;
- Proven experience in leading consultancy teams;
- Track record of conducting evaluations of national development projects in any of the following areas: 1) quality infrastructure and 2) private sector development;
- Experience in conducting evaluations for UN agency, government or international agency projects on quality infrastructure, economic and private sector development;
- Excellent communication skills for report writing.

The Team Member assigned by the firm/company to carry out this exercise needs to fulfil the following prerequisites:

- A minimum of 8 years of progressive and proven practical experience in the field of quality infrastructure and private sector development, including experience at the international level involving technical cooperation in developing countries;
- Exposure to the needs, conditions and problems in developing countries;
- Track record of conducting evaluation of national development projects in any of the following areas: 1) quality infrastructure and 2) private sector development;
- Experience in conducting evaluations for UN agency, government or international agency projects on quality infrastructure, economic and private sector development;
- Excellent communication skills for report writing.

Team Leader and Team Member competencies:

- Team work and leadership skills
- Strategic thinking
- Strong analytical, reporting and communication skills
- Team work skills and experience in leading teams
- Result oriented
- Excellent drafting skills in English language

The evaluation firm, and the evaluation team members must be independent from the project and stakeholders involved in the project design and its implementation.

9.0 TIME AND DURATION:

The evaluation team will be hired for a maximum total of 40 man-days within a period of 8 weeks.

a. TIME TABLE

Activity	Weeks							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Contract and Entry meeting	x							
Inception report, draft revised	x							
Data collection, analysis and submission of Draft Evaluation Report		x	x	x	x			
Receipt of comments from stakeholders and reference group members						x		
Revision and submission of Final Report							x	x

10.0 EVALUATION ETHICS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Responsibility of the Country Office to ensure credibility and independence of evaluation; responsibility of Team Leader to provide impartial, evidence-based, report adhering to international evaluation standards, etc.

The evaluation will follow UNEG guidelines on the ethical participation of human participants, including children and other vulnerable groups. All participants in the study will be fully informed about the nature and purpose of the evaluation and their requested involvement. Only participants who have given their written or verbal consent (documented) will be included in the evaluation.

As part of the inception report, the prospective evaluators are expected to provide a detailed plan on how the following principles will be ensured throughout the study: 1) respect for dignity and diversity; 2) fair representation; 3) compliance with codes for vulnerable groups (e.g., ethics of research involving young children or vulnerable groups); 4) redress; 5) confidentiality; and 6) avoidance of harm.

Specific safeguards must be put in place to protect the safety (both physical and psychological) of both respondents and those collecting the data. These should include:

- A plan is in place to protect the rights of the respondent, including privacy and confidentiality
- The interviewer or data collector is trained in collecting sensitive information, and if the topic of the study is focused on violence against women and children, they should have previous experience in this area
- Data collection tools are designed in a way that are culturally appropriate and do not create distress for respondents
- Data collection visits are organized at the appropriate time and place so as to minimize risk to respondents
- The interviewer or data collector is able to provide information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support

11.0 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

	Deliverable	Payment percentage
1	Approved Inception Report	20%
2	Approved Draft Report	40%
3	Approved Final Report	40%
	Total	100%