

# **QUALITY MANAGEMENT: LINKING TPOs AND NSBs FOR EXPORT SUCCESS**

## **1. Introduction**

Myanmar, approximately the size of France and England combined, is the largest country in mainland South-East Asia with a total land area of 676,578 square kilometers. The country is divided administratively, into 14 States and Divisions. The population of Myanmar in 2006-2007 is estimated at 56.515 million. (Source: [www.moh.gov.mm](http://www.moh.gov.mm))

The Ministry of Science and Technology was established to promote the development of science and technology in the country. Its aims and objectives include development of technology in the country for application in industry, education, human resource promotion and development.

The Ministry of Science and Technology is developed with the Myanmar Scientific and Technological Research Department, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Advanced Science and Technology, Department of Technical and Vocational Education, Department of Technical Promotion and Coordination and Material Science and Material Engineering Research Department.

One of the functions and duties under the Science and Technology Development Law (1994); is “conducting standardizations and specifications of weights and measures, equipment and machinery, raw materials and finished goods”. The law assigns the responsibility for Conformity Assessment and Metrology infrastructure to the Myanmar Scientific and Technological Research Department (MSTRD) under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

## **2. The Role, Structure, and Scope of the Organization**

### ***Main functions of NSB(MSTRD)***

- To develop the draft Standardization Law and the implementation of the National Standards Body(NSB)
- To prepare laws, rules and regulations on standards and conformance
- To develop the Metrology Law and the industrial standards
- To cooperate with the international standardization bodies
- To provide technical information on standardization
- To organize the seminar on awareness of standardization in industrial zones
- To calibrate the measuring equipments used in standards department's laboratories

### ***Strategy***

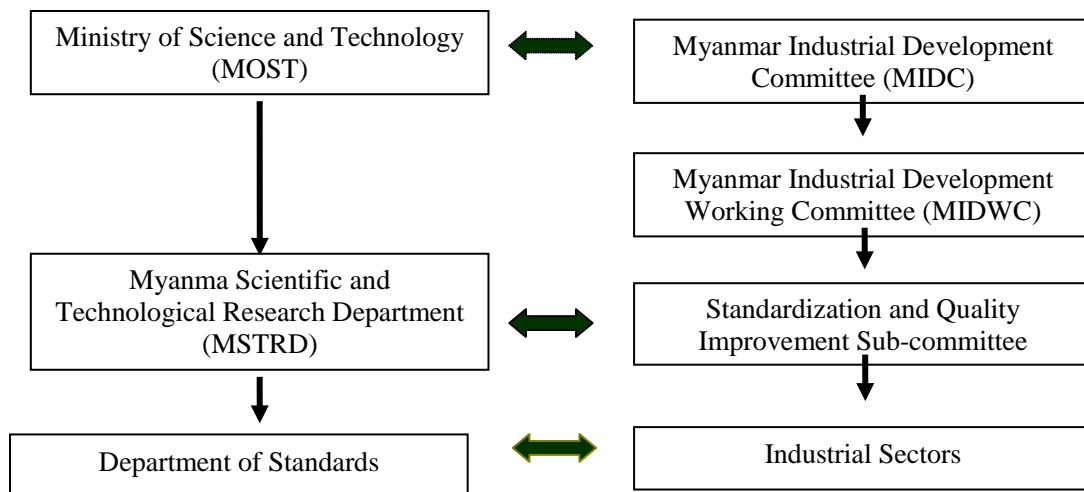
The Government has endorsed five objectives for Myanmar's industrial development:

1. Development of agro-based industries;
2. Qualitative and quantitative improvement of industrial products;

3. Production of new industrial items;
4. Manufacture of industrial equipment; and
5. Acquisition of good opportunities required for the industrialization of the nation.

In order to implement these objectives and to give greater impetus to industrialization process, the government has organized a high level Committee, Myanmar Industrial Development Committee (MIDC). MIDWC is one of the Working Committees of MIDC. At present, standardization activities are carried out by Standardization and Quality Improvement Sub-committee of MIDWC.

There are 42804 approved industries (of which 92.7% are SME's) according to the registration procedure under Private Industrial Enterprise Law. The SME's sector is an economic activity which is very important to socio-economic development of Myanmar. In our country where the majority of the industries are still in the early stage of development, standardization and quality control cannot be effectively practiced at times. The development of standardization and quality control for SME's is needed to enhance the capability of industries and to improve regional economic development. The Myanmar Industrial Development Committee (MIDC) has been providing necessary assistance for the development of the industrial sector. (Source: [www.mes.org.mm/!Other/SME.pps](http://www.mes.org.mm/!Other/SME.pps))



The Standardization and Quality Promotion Sub-committee of the Myanma Industrial Development Committee has drafted the National Standards Law. The draft law is in final stage of enactment.

MSTRD has proposed a draft Metrology Law which has been drafted with the assistance of a New Zealand-aid programme in 2007 to the higher authorities, Ministry of Science and Technology.

The total of (29) awareness seminars and workshops in local language were conducted at different industrial zones based in Yangon and Mandalay by local experts from government departments and private organizations. Current concerns of companies were addressed through, seminars on "ISO awareness", "How to get ISO certificates", "introduction to TQM concept", "Benefits of TQM on Business" were conducted jointly with international organizations like Japan Standards Association.

Speakers' from universities, government organizations and private firms (certified companies) were invited to share their experiences with industries.

The NSB provides measurements services and issues test reports to industries. Costs of calibration of equipment can significantly be reduced when auditors accept our measurement services. Since the first company was certified to ISO 9000 certification in 2000, there has been a steady growth in the number of companies that have achieved such certification.

Myanmar's export policy is to export all exportable surplus products to diversified foreign markets. Increasing and diversifying exports and improving the quality of products are among the main objectives of the export promotion policy.

Top priority is given to the development of agriculture as the base for all - round development of the economy. A number of new items in the manufacturing and processing sectors have been introduced in the past few years. Main export items include agricultural products, forest products, fishery products, metals & minerals, precious stones and industrial products.

Registered exporters and importers have the right to engage in foreign trade.. The registered exporters / importers enjoy to retain 100 percent export revenue to finance the import of goods. There is no export quota nor ceiling for any exportable product for any individual or organization.

15 Export Promotion Information Centers (EPIC) are established all over the country. The information about export/import regulations, principles, quality inspection and services are provided by the EPICs. The exporter can gain access to the regional and international markets with the aid of information from these centers.

### **3. The Existing Relationship between NSB and TPOs**

Ministry of Commerce (TPO) is WTO contact point of Myanmar and MSTRD (NSB) is the WTO/TBT contact point of Myanmar. NSB and TPO are collaborate in WTO and TBT matters in the joint meetings for the ASEAN Free Trade Area Agreement.

In Myanmar, the technical regulations are enacted by the respective government organizations. For example, FDA has promulgated the National Drug Law, Department of Agriculture has promulgated the Pesticide Law and Department of Electrical Inspection has promulgated the Electricity Law, and so on. The NSB and TPO sometimes face an information gap with regard to technical regulations enacted by other ministries.

### **4. The Potential Future Relationship between NSB and TPOs**

To avoid information gaps, the organizations concerned with the export/import sectors should identify a committee to enable regular exchanges of information. This committee should meet periodically in a video conferencing room and also should upload the updated technical regulation for export products on to their websites.

## **5. Conclusion**

There is a growing awareness of product quality both by consumers and manufacturers in Myanmar. Various activities and programs on standards and quality for export success have been undertaken to. undertake the obligations of Myanmar as member of WTO, ISO, IEC and the ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality. These measures also strengthen the standards development and conformance infrastructure and in line with the government's objectives. MSTRD has actively coordinated with TPO all the activities of the projects and will continues to do so in the future.