

Review of the National Quality Infrastructure

&

Recommendations of Improvement

1. Introduction with our definition of NQI and concept

The **National Quality Infrastructure** refers to all aspects of metrology, standardization, testing, quality management, certification and accreditation that have a bearing on conformity assessment. This includes both public and private institutions and the regulatory framework within which they operate. We agreed to add to these the market surveillance activity in order to take into consideration all areas our Project is looking at.

Following the meetings and the discussions held in Paramaribo as well as the review of the documents provided by the colleagues in Suriname, our team reached the following conclusions:

- There is a National Quality Infrastructure in Suriname and all the services, namely standardisation, accreditation, metrology, conformity assessment and market surveillance are present and also the regulatory framework governing these;
- However, there are some aspects which need attention in order to be improved:
 - The allocation of tasks between the institutions in the NQI is not always adequate
 - The difference between mandatory technical regulations and voluntary standards, as stipulated by the international principles and rules, is not always clear
 - The institutional capacity is not at a level to allow the NQI institutions to deliver services of the expected quality
 - The regulatory and financing system, reflected in the way the NQI institutions are organised and function, are out-dated and rigid, which reflects in a lack of effectiveness and efficiency of the majority of institutions.

In the following pages, each area will be analysed and recommendations of improvement will be made.

2. Standardisation

Standardisation is the process of developing and implementing technical standards based on the consensus of different parties that include companies, users, interest groups, standards organizations and governments. Standardization can help to maximize compatibility, interoperability, safety, and repeatability.

Standards are technical specifications defining requirements for products, production processes, services or test-methods. These specifications are voluntary. They are developed by industry and market actors following principles such as coherence, transparency, openness, consensus, voluntary application, independence from special interests and efficiency, which are known as ‘the founding principles’. Standards ensure interoperability and safety, reduce costs and facilitate companies' integration in the value chain and trade.

The National Standards Body of Suriname is the “Standaardenbureau” – Suriname Standards Bureau or SSB. SSB is a legal entity subordinated to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism and is organised and operates according to the following legal framework:

- Law of 20 August 2004 on the rules for standards for goods (‘Standaardenwet’).
- Law of 22 February 2006 on the establishment of the Surinamese Bureau for Standards.
- Law of 6 March 2012 on the amendment of the law on the Surinamese Bureau for Standards.

The Suriname standards Bureau has 12 employees and the Director still needs to be appointed; however it is headed by an acting Director. Currently, SSB is in charge of:

- Standardisation activities
- Developing of technical regulations
- Metrology
- Conformity assessment
- Accreditation
- Market surveillance
- WTO & TBT Enquiry Point.

Suriname is a member of ISO and affiliate Member of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) as well as a member of the CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) and a member of Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT).

Additionally, Suriname is a member of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement).

The Suriname Standards Bureau organised 5 technical committees; these are:

- Waste management;
- Made in Suriname standards mark
- Tourist guides
- Good Agriculture Practices
- National Electrotechnical Committee

SSB approved 34 national standards so far; 9 of these standards are pure national standards, 12 are based on international ones while 12 on regional standards and 1 on a national standard of another country.

In December SSB also drafted a 3 year standardisation plan from 2016 until 2018, where the development of almost 150 standards is foreseen distributed as follows:

- 32 for the first year
- 58 for the second year
- 53 for the third year.

However, it is not clear whether this plan was approved and is being implemented taking into consideration that the experts received a draft version and not an approved one. Looking to the number of approved Surinamese standards and the figures foreseen by the plan for the first year (2016) and the second year (2017) it can be concluded that the implementation is lacking behind.

In theory Suriname standards are voluntary documents – this is what the experts were told during the discussions. However, it was not possible to find this statement in any of the three legal documents referring to standardisation and the Suriname Standards Bureau. The only reference to the statute of Surinamese standards is made in Art. 1 of the Law on Commerce S.B. 2003 no. 58, where the definition of standards regards them as voluntary documents. However, in the

draft of the new standards law from 2014, there is a proposal for an amendment to change this definition. Even without this change, it is very easy to change a voluntary standard into a mandatory document by an order of the Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, following a proposal coming from SSB.

The SSB has a staff of 12 persons. This is limited considering the many different tasks the organisation has according to the law: standardisation, metrology, technical regulation, accreditation and market surveillance. However, the number of foreseen staff for SSB would be sufficient if the institution is providing only the activities foreseen by the international principles and good practices, namely standardisation and, eventually, certification.

The experts do want to note that we have found the staff of the SSB to be enthusiastic and knowledgeable and dedicated to develop standardisation in Suriname.

Currently, one of the main challenges of the SSB is that they have limited financial and human resources. The organisation is almost solely financed by the State Budget, with only a very limited revenue from the sale of standards.

According to international best practices, many of the tasks that the Surinamese Standards Bureau has should not be combined in one organisation. This, in addition to the limited resources that are available, we recommend that technical regulation, metrology, accreditation and market surveillance are removed from the tasks of the SSB. This allows the Bureau to focus on their core task of standardisation, and to develop specific services to serve the Surinamese business community, such as consulting, training and certification. These services fit with the role of a standards body as a service provider to the industry, and adding accreditation and market surveillance to the tasks would contradict to this role, and result in the lack of trust in the organisation's independence.

In our interviews, the experts found that the stakeholders in Suriname regard standardisation and technical regulation as interchangeable terms, which they are not. It was not clear that mandatory standards are prohibited by the WTO TBT agreement, and that this agreement prescribes that mandatory requirements are to be laid down in technical regulations, the drafting of which represents the responsibility of regulatory authorities. Obviously, the National Standards Bodies, which are institutions gathering a high technical competence in all areas, should support the regulatory authorities to develop technical regulations, but they cannot be a regulatory authority themselves. Standards are voluntary consensus document, the development in which the

business community, the consumers and the government take active part (facilitated by the national standards body). Sometimes, standards are recognised as describing solutions that may be used to prove compliance with requirements in technical regulations. However, even then, the application of standards is voluntary. Technical regulations are obligatory in nature, and therefore drawing up technical regulations is the responsibility of a governmental authority, and should not be made the responsibility of a standards body.

The experts also found that there is confusion among the stakeholders about the concepts of conformity assessment and market surveillance. These terms also are used interchangeably in Suriname and one important reason for the confusion mentioned earlier comes from the fact that SSB is in charge of these both activities, which, by their nature are conflicting and cannot be combined in the same institution. These terms must be strictly differentiated: ‘conformity assessment’ refers to the responsibility of the economic operator to ensure the compliance of their product/service with technical regulations before placing the product/service in the market¹. Sometimes an economic operator may be required by technical regulations to involve a third party conformity assessment body in order to demonstrate compliance of the product / service with the requirements stipulated by the technical regulation; however the responsibility for the above mentioned compliance remains with the manufacturer. Conformity assessment is a pre marketing activity, meaning that it precedes the placing of the product on the market.

Market surveillance², on the other hand, refers to the activities carried out and measures taken by public authorities to ensure that the technical regulations are properly and effectively enforced or, in other words that products comply with the requirements set out in the relevant technical regulations and do not endanger health, safety or any other aspect of public interest protection. As a difference to conformity assessment, market surveillance is a post marketing

¹ **Conformity assessment:** the process demonstrating whether specified requirements relating to a product, process, service, system, person or body have been fulfilled.

(Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Common Framework for the Marketing of Products, and Repealing Decision 93/465/EEC from July 9, 2008)

² **Market surveillance:** activities carried and measures taken by public authorities to ensure that products comply with the requirements set out in the relevant Community harmonisation legislation and do not endanger health, safety or any other aspect of public interest protection.

(Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Setting Out the Requirements for Accreditation and Market Surveillance Relating to the Marketing of Products, and repealing Regulation (EEC) No. 339/93, of July 9, 2008)

activity performed by (market surveillance) authorities in charge with enforcement of technical regulations, after the product was made available on the market.

It is a well-established principle in international law and best practices that conformity assessment services (f.e. testing, certification inspection) and market surveillance shall not be done by the same organisation, because it would result in the lack of trust in the market in the compliance. These two activities are generating conflicts of interests, since it is not possible for the same entity to assess the conformity of a product with the requirements of the applicable technical regulation(s) before placing the product on the market and also check if this assessment was correctly done when the product is sold in the market.

A standards body may provide conformity assessment services. These services complement its role of providing a platform and infrastructure for the business community, consumers and public authorities to develop standards, and they would help to finance the body's activities. Market surveillance by nature involves controlling and checking economic operations, and where necessary restricting them. Economic operators will feel little incentives to take part in developing standards together with a standards body, if this body at the same time controls and may restrict their business activities. On the other side, market surveillance authorities should be able to work completely independently. If the same body cooperates with economic operators to develop standards, they may not be inclined to affect the good working relationship by controlling the economic operators.

Therefore, our recommendation is that market surveillance activities are removed from SSB portfolio of responsibilities and entrusted to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism.

Accreditation is another task of SSB which should be removed because the international principles and rules for the accreditation area absolutely and explicitly forbid the same entity to perform conformity assessment and accreditation activities. In this respect clause 4.3.6 of the reference standard EN ISO / IEC 17011:2004 - Conformity assessment — General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies - reads:

“The accreditation body shall not offer or provide any service that affects its impartiality, such as

- a) those conformity assessment services that CABs perform, or*
- b) consultancy.”*

The accreditation activity may be taken over by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism, or, if considered appropriate and economically efficient, a National Accreditation Body may be established. More details on accreditation are provided in the dedicated section below.

Regarding SSB responsibilities in the metrology area, our recommendations are that these are moved to the Metrology Department in the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism. Again, the details are presented in the section dedicated to metrology.

Legislation

Suriname has the following legislation in the field of standardisation:

- Law of 20 August 2004 on the rules for standards for goods ('Standaardenwet'). A draft amendment to this law has been developed. The last version is of 29 June 2016. This amendment would also change the title of the law into 'Law on the adoption of rules on standardisation, certification, conformity assessment and accreditation of laboratories and certification bodies'.
- Law of 22 February 2006 on the establishment of the Surinamese Bureau for Standards.
- Law of 6 March 2012 on the amendment of the law on the Surinamese Bureau for Standards.

As explained above, the '*Standaardenwet*' of 2004 and the law on the Surinamese Standards Bureau combines functions that in accordance with international rules and best practices should not be combined (e.g. conformity assessment and accreditation or conformity assessment and market surveillance). Also we have found that the SSB actually performs market surveillance, which does not correspond to its legal task of conformity assessment. For that reason, the experts recommend a revision of the '*Standaardenwet*', the *Law on the Surinamese Bureau for Standards*, and a reorganisation of the SSB.

The '*Standaardenwet*' in Article 6 includes a provision on the adoption of mandatory standards. The concept of mandatory standards is not in line with the rules of the World Trade Organisation, in particular the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade agreement. This provision therefore should be removed from the law. The experts recommend to include in the '*Standaardenwet*' provisions that lay the foundation of standardisation in Suriname through the basic internationally recognised principles.

3. Metrology

At this moment, Suriname misses a dedicated law on metrology. Currently, a draft law is being developed.

The experts found a limited institutional framework for metrology in Suriname. Article 2 of the *Law on the Surinamese Standards Bureau* appoints the Surinamese Standards Bureau as national metrology institute. Officially, the SSB has the task to keep the national standards. However, at this moment the SSB has no facilities to keep standards in proper conditions, or expertise to ensure the required traceability. The only standard that is kept is a small mass calibration set that has been gifted to the SSB.

The '*Dienst van de Waarborg en voor het IJkwezen*' ('Verification and Calibration Service') is a metrology service established under the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Republic of Suriname. The service has the following responsibilities:

- the calibration and verification of the content of processed gold and silver ;
- execution of the legal rules for the verification of measuring instruments;
- hallmarking (of precious metals);
- callibration of petrol pumps;
- the verification and repair of weighing and measuring instruments.

This means that the *Verification and Calibration Service* provides industrial metrology services (calibration), and that they perform some legal metrology. One of the main challenges that we have found is that the Service is not in charge of setting their own service fees, for example for their calibration services. The fees are set by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Suriname. From the interviews with the stakeholders, the experts found that the fees do not reflect all the expenses that Service has in order to perform the calibration services. For example, proper calibration instruments are missing and many calibration instruments themselves are not verified. The example we can give is of the calibration instruments for calibrating petrol pumps, which are artefacts build by the Service itself and which are not verified and calibrated with a proper level of traceability.

Also, the *Verification and Calibration Service* is not allowed to keep the fees, but these flow back to the State Budget. The Service lacks the budget for the development of the organisation

and increasing the competence of their staff through necessary training and continual education. Currently, there is only limited training, mainly done by senior officers ‘on the job’. Even there is a lack of financial resources to pay for the calibration of their own equipment, and this means that the Service cannot even provide their legal tasks in a (internationally) traceable and accurate way.

We also found that the *Verification and Calibration Service* does not have the required facilities to store and maintain their measuring and calibration instruments in the proper conditions. For example, weights for the calibration verification of measuring instruments have been kept outside and due to the humid climate conditions are showing signs of rust, and thus cannot be regarded to be accurate weights. The measuring and calibration standards should be kept in closed rooms with controlled environmental conditions and should be properly calibrated at prescribed intervals using calibration services assuring traceability to the SI and a known measurement uncertainty. Proper calibration certificates should accompany these calibration services.

To bring metrology in Suriname up to an acceptable level in order to have international recognition for Suriname’s competence and measures, we recommend the following steps to be taken in the short term:

1. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of the Republic of Suriname should perform a market analysis and determine the calibration services needed to support agriculture, trade and industry in Suriname now and in the next 10 - 20 years.
2. Based on this needs assessment, the MTIT should draft a policy and an implementing strategy for the development of metrology. This policy plan should also provide a vision on the necessary investments for the required metrology infrastructure.
3. In line with what we discussed under standardisation, we recommend that the task of national metrology institute is removed from the Surinamese Standards Bureau, and a separate organisation is established by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism to function as the National Metrology Institute of Suriname.
4. We recommend that the National Metrology Institute and the *Verification and Calibration Service* will be provided with:
 - budget for salaries to attract staff with the proper education and background;

- budget and planning for continual training of staff and procedures for keeping training and education records;
- budget for participation and representation of Suriname in international meetings, as well as the membership fees of international metrology organisations. This is crucial in order to stay informed on the latest international developments that influence metrology, as well as to build international relationships and build the recognition for Suriname's metrology competences and thus build of trust for Surinamese products and services;
- budget to build and maintain laboratories and facilities that allow for the proper functioning, storing and maintenance of the national standards and the necessary peripheral equipment.

However, if the needs analysis mentioned at para.1 in the Metrology section reveals that the necessary metrological services are not such as to justify the establishment of a NMI and the financial investment required by this, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism may decide to establish or encourage the establishment of one or several calibration laboratories providing services to the national economy while obtaining their units and necessary calibration services from NMIs abroad. This calibration laboratory(ies) may a public or private entity, either established by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism or by private associations like manufacturers or professional associations or even private economic operators. In this case, the investment of the public budget will be reduced to a minimum and the calibration services will be a market driven economic activity, as in many other countries.

4. Accreditation and Conformity Assessment

4.1 Accreditation

Accreditation is the third-party attestation that a conformity assessment body fulfils specified requirements and is competent to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks³. In other words, an accreditation body has to verify to assess and to confirm that calibration services, test laboratories, medical laboratories, certification bodies of all types, and inspection bodies are organised and functioning independently and that they have the necessary competence to deliver the services that they are meant to deliver. The ‘Standaardenwet’ makes the Surinamese Standard Bureau responsible for accreditation. However, details on the procedures and rules for accreditation are missing in this document. In Suriname, there is no dedicated law on accreditation.

According international rules and principles, such as laid down in the reference standard EN ISO / IEC 17011:2004, the accreditation body shall be impartial and not offer services of consultancy and conformity assessment.⁴ If one organisation performs accreditation activities as well as conformity assessment, it undermines the trust in the market for their accreditations, as their accreditations will be regarded as not independent and politically motivated, as well as governed by (conflicting) interests, as opposed to impartial. Considering that the ‘Standaardenwet’ also assigns the SSB to be a conformity assessment body, the law conflicts with the international rules and best practices.

The experts therefore recommend that the ‘Standaardenwet’ will be amended and that accreditation will be removed from responsibilities of the SSB.

³ Definition taken from clause 2.4.6. of the standard ISO 17000.

⁴ See ISO 17011:2004, clause 4.3.1. and 4.3.6..

Even although the SSB has the task of accreditation, no concrete accreditations performed by the SSB have been found. Currently the organisation in Suriname that is in the process of receiving accreditation in accordance with international standards, is accredited by a foreign accreditation body.⁵

The experts recommend to establish a separate accreditation body in Suriname, but to do so at the moment that there is enough demand for accreditation services in Suriname and following a market analysis.

The demand for accreditation services would come from conformity assessment bodies, such as laboratories and certification bodies. Currently, there are quite a number of certification bodies in Suriname. There are also a number of laboratories. If we add the organisations that are providing system certification services (like the certification of ISO 9001 quality management systems), calibration laboratories for (medical) instruments, as well as the potential market for person certification in medical laboratories and ISO 22000 person certification in the food industry, we consider that there is potential for sufficient demand for accreditation services in Suriname for a small accreditation body of 3 or 4 employed staff members, and supported by a pool of external assessors and lead-assessors. These external assessors would not be permanently employed by the accreditation body, but contracted for their services on a case by case basis, as needed.

The accreditation body would be established outside the government structures. It may be a public body, or even a private body. For example, in the Netherlands the '*Raad van Accreditatie (RvA)*' is a not-for-profit private organisation.

The experts do consider that at this moment establishing a separate accreditation body is not the highest priority in the modernisation of the National Quality Infrastructure of Suriname. This activity can also be started within the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism until the demand reaches such a level to justify the establishment of a separate entity acting as National Accreditation Body. First step should be that the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism takes

⁵ The VKI is in the process of completing its accreditation by the Jamaican Accreditation Body.

over the current tasks of the Suriname Standards Bureau, which in fact acts as a interface between foreign accreditation bodies and local conformity assessment bodies seeking accreditation. When the economy is prepared and the need of accredited conformity assessment services justifies the establishment of a National Accreditation Body, this option may be taken into consideration.

Alternatively, just like in the case of calibration services, establishing a domestic accreditation body may be the initiative of the private sector and the result of a private – public cooperation. In this case, the private sector would establish the accreditation body, while the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism would develop the national accreditation policy and strategy and would monitor the National Accreditation Body in order to make sure that it follows the internationally recognised principles and rules and follows the national accreditation policy as developed by the MTIT.

4.2 Conformity Assessment

According international rules and best practices, the SSB would be allowed to keep its conformity assessment tasks, and thus they could develop testing and certification services to serve Surinamese companies, as well as companies in other countries in the region (and even internationally). This conformity assessment services would provide an extra source of income for the SSB, which can help to develop the organisation, and to pay for the accreditation. For example, the SSB could develop certification services for company's and organisations that want their quality management systems to be certified against ISO 9001 or other international standards, which will help these companies and organisations to export. The fact that these certification services are available locally, will make it more affordable for Surinamese companies and organisations, and it would help to raise awareness for quality, and contribute to a mind shift in appreciation of quality in Suriname and to the export capacity. The implementation of quality procedures and quality management systems can provide a significant amount of people with a (consulting) job and thus a source of income.

In this regard, we would like to point out two concrete initiatives that could help spark the system:

a) The organisation that represents medical laboratories in Suriname has requested the Ministry of Health to pass legislation that would require certain staff functions in medical labs to have certification of their competence.

b) A few years ago, the Surinamese Business Forum had a program to stimulate and contribute financially to the implementation and certification of quality management systems. The certification was done by a Dutch certification body, but in the future such a program could help finance local certification services.

5. Market Surveillance

As noted above, the experts found that in Suriname the terms conformity assessment and market surveillance are used interchangeable. However, they should be differentiated. Market surveillance represent the activities carried out and measures taken *by public authorities* to ensure that products comply with the requirements set out in the relevant technical regulations and that they do not endanger health, safety or any other aspect of public interest protection. It is a post marketing activity related to enforcement of technical regulations.

Conformity assessment, on the other hand is the process of demonstrating whether specified requirements relating to a product, process, service, system, person or body have been fulfilled. While conformity assessment is done under the responsibility of the manufacturer before the product, process, service or system have been made available on the market, market surveillance is done by an authority typically after market introduction.

In Suriname, the verification of compliance of products, services and processes with health and safety requirements, is done by several agencies, departments or services under the government. During their mission the experts have spoken with market surveillance organisations under the Ministry of Trade and Industry (*Verification and Calibration Service, SSB*) and the Ministry of Agriculture (VKI, labs for plant inspection and for meat inspection), as well as with representatives of Customs services.

In Suriname, market surveillance inspectors have extraordinary control powers provided by law, which are controlled by courts and public prosecutors.

Currently, one of the main challenges in the area of market surveillance is the lack of financial resources. The experts are informed that regularly there is no budget to pay the petrol for the cars that are needed for the inspectors to visit premises and conduct surveillance actions. Lack of financial resources is a structural problem, which has to be solved.

Another challenge is that there seem to be a lot of products in Suriname that are not regulated. This makes Suriname an attractive dumping market for products that are barred from entering other countries like the United States and the Member States of the European Union, because they cannot fulfil the requirements in there. We have found no regulations for many products that are imported into Suriname and which have specific safety concerns: toys, medical devices, machinery, and electrical equipment. This is a weakness resulted from the use of mandatory standards rather than of properly drafted technical regulations. The solution to this issue is the introduction of the internationally accepted system build on mandatory technical regulations and voluntary standards.

Our findings show that the existing *Law on Business and Professions* ('Wet op Bedrijven en Beroepen'), in Chapter 2, Article 3, paragraph 3(c) allows the government to adopt technical regulations to regulate the execution of a business or profession. This legal base could be used to develop and adopt technical regulations in Suriname until a possibly dedicated law on technical regulation is adopted. In the **Annexes** to our report, the experts will suggest concrete recommendations in this regard.

Considering the lack of resources in market surveillance, what is important to note is that international rules and best practices do not require the market surveillance authorities to have their own test laboratories. Also there is no requirement to use specifically approved laboratories. In other words, many of the tests can be subcontracted to private laboratories, as long as some precautions are kept in mind: the laboratory that is contracted to perform the tests for the market surveillance authorities should not have been involved in any way in the conformity assessment of the product under discussion, or even used by the manufacturer of that product. Subcontracting offers the authorities the possibility to have test results without the need to invest in a laboratory of their own.

In the technical regulations, the requirement should be laid down for manufacturers, importers and distributors in Suriname to compile the documentation that will demonstrate that their products, services, processes etc. fulfil the requirements of the technical regulation(s) that applies to them and to make this documentation available to the authorities upon request. In other words, put the burden of proof of compliance on the shoulders of the manufacturer. This provides the market surveillance the possibility to first conduct a documentation review to detect non-compliance, decreasing the cases in which expensive and time-consuming tests have to be done in order to establish non-compliance.

6. Governance and Management

6.1 Coordination Role of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism

The responsibility of the coordination of the National Quality Infrastructure is a task of the public authorities and, in most countries this lies with the ministry in charge of the industry, namely the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism in the case of Suriname. For this purpose, the ministry should establish a dedicated department the tasks of which can be:

⇒ **In the NQI sector**

- draft, in cooperation with all NQI institutions and other stakeholders, the National Quality Policy and the implementation Strategy and put them in practice

⇒ **In the Standardisation sector**

- draft the National Standardisation Policy and the implementation Strategy in cooperation with SSB
- monitor SSB to make sure that the National Standardisation Policy and the implementation Strategy are properly followed
- draft a new standards law, in line with the international principles and best practices

⇒ **In the Metrology sector**

- decide, based on a market survey and discussions with the market players whether or not to establish a National Metrology Institute in Suriname. If the decision is to have a National Metrology Institute, develop a plan to establish it, which should also include the development of the metrology law

The options could be:

- a) to establish a National Metrology Institute (NMI) and follow the model proposed by the 10th EDF-CRIP-EPA-TBT Programme, namely the NMI takes its measurement units and traceability from the Caribbean Reference Laboratory (CaRL), which at its turn, takes the measurement units and traceability from a recognised foreign NMI outside the region and distributes them to all local NMIs in the framework of CARIMET, the regional metrology association
- b) to establish one or several calibration laboratories in a public – private

partnership providing the necessary metrological services; this calibration laboratory / laboratories would also achieve the required traceability from (CaRL), similar with the previous case

- draft the National Metrology Policy and the implementation Strategy based on the above mentioned decisions, and put them in practice

⇒ **In the Accreditation sector**

- decide, based on a market survey and discussions with the market players whether or not to establish a National Accreditation Body in Suriname. If the decision is to have a National Accreditation Body, develop a plan to establish it, which should also include the development of an accreditation law
- if the conclusions of the market survey is that a National Accreditation Body is not sustainable and there is not sufficient market for it in Suriname to be economically efficient, then the National Accreditation Focal Point (NAFP) should be maintained in order to assist the CABs seeking accreditation and guide them towards the other National Accreditation Body in the region, preferably members of the Caribbean Accreditation Cooperation. However, the NAFP as to be part of the NQI Department in the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism and not of the Suriname Standards Bureau.

Regarding **Market Surveillance**, this is another activity which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism and not of the Suriname Standards Bureau. Therefore it should be removed from SSB and entrusted to the specific department in the MTIT.

6.2 Legal Status

The best practices from many countries with a properly developed and effective National Quality Infrastructure show that the NQI institutions should be legal entities having a public or private statute, outside the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism but under its coordination. The main task of the Ministry is to develop the various national policies and strategies (for standardisation, for metrology or accreditation) and make sure (through proper monitoring and evaluation, that the above-mentioned institutions are following and applying these policies and strategies.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism must also make sure that the NQI institutions have adequate resources in order that they operate in an effective way, can make sure that their

staff is competent and are able to meet their membership obligations in the specific regional and international organisations, according to the country's interest. This is of critical importance in terms of cooperation with the similar institutions in the neighbouring countries from the perspective of an efficient use of resources as well as for maintaining the competence and being always aware of the developments in the region and at global level.

6.3 Financing

In terms of financing, the NQI institutions should have a flexible system, allowing them to manage their financial resources and use them in order to have competent personnel and to provide efficient and effective services to the market players and to the public authorities. It is of crucial importance that these institutions are allowed to calculate the fees charged for their services and take into consideration all the direct and indirect costs for delivering these services, which is not currently the case.

7. Summary of Recommendations

This section provides a summary of the recommendations that were given in the document plus some specific recommendations on things that the Ministry and Government could decide shortly:

- ⇒ Establish a dedicated department in the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism in charge of the coordination of the National Quality Infrastructures.
- ⇒ Bring together the most knowledgeable local experts and establish an advisory committee to support the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism.
- ⇒ Remove accreditation, metrology and market surveillance from the Suriname Standards Bureau and reallocate them as shown in section 6.1.
- ⇒ Place the NQI institutions outside the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism. Allow the NQI institutions to have a flexible financing system and sufficient autonomy in order to function in an effective and efficient way. In this respect VKI can be a good model.
- ⇒ Use the regional infrastructure in order to minimise the investments and to make good use of the results of the 10th EDF-CRIP-EPA-TBT Programme. Particularly in the metrology sector, where the investments to establish and to maintain an own NMI are very high both in terms of equipment (purchasing and maintenance) and in competence of the personnel needed to maintain and operate it.
- ⇒ Standards **ARE NOT** mandatory technical regulations; they are **VOLUNTARY** technical specifications, which are meant to support the enforcement of the technical regulations and to help economic operators to have a more efficient activity. If these two instruments are not properly separated and used by the authorities, confusion will be generated both on the domestic market and among the trade partners.
- ⇒ Technical regulations **ARE NOT** the responsibility of the Suriname Standards Bureau; they are the responsibility of regulatory authorities, which a National Standards Body cannot be.
- ⇒ Draft a new standards law which should cover the standardisation activity in the country and the use of standards; the current law, as well as the draft provided which follow the same model with the law in force, are dealing more with the placement of products on

the domestic market and with the tasks of the Suriname Standards Bureau in market surveillance, metrology and accreditation, which should not be its tasks.

A possible structure of a standards law is provided in **Annex XXX**.

- ⇒ Support SSB to reorganise as a National Standards Body and to develop training and certification activities, which will support to the development of the economy through the better education of the economic operators, will increase the awareness of the consumers and will improve the financial situation of the institution. It will also support the development of a domestic certification structure. A model of a possible structure of a National Standards Body is provided in **Annex XXX**
- ⇒ A National Accreditation Body is not a priority in this moment; this should be established if the Ministry finds it appropriate after the conformity assessment infrastructure has reached a sufficient maturity and the accreditation body would have enough customers to be self sustainable. In addition, the Government should decide whether it wants to use accreditation as the instrument for evaluating the competence of the conformity assessment bodies used for the enforcement of the technical regulations. A possible structure of an accreditation law is presented in **Annex XXX** while a possible organisational structure of a National Accreditation Body is shown in **Annex XXX**.