



For Immediate Release

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NEWS RELEASE

Swaziland Seeks to Grow Trade and Improve Standards

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade is working with the support of USAID to improve the business environment for investors, importers and exporters in Swaziland in order to help Swaziland meet World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations.

USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub is working with the Swaziland Standards Authority (SWASA) to conduct a three-day workshop on *Code of Good Practice for the Development and Application of Standards* based on WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), June 1-3. This will be followed immediately by a two-day workshop on *Guidelines on Referencing Standards in Technical Regulations* on June 4-5.

The two workshops will be facilitated by Dr. Geoffrey Visser, a well-known standards expert from South Africa, and are part of the USAID Southern Africa Trade Hub's technical assistance program for Swaziland, implemented through SWASA. The program supports and enhances the standards development process, strengthens the legal and regulatory framework for standards, improves the effectiveness of the WTO TBT Enquiry Points, and engages the private sector in Swaziland.

SWASA, under the auspices of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, is the sole custodian of standards and quality in Swaziland. Since 2010, SWASA has developed 130 standards. The two workshops are designed to help SWASA's ongoing efforts to develop more market relevant standards to increase trade opportunities and ensure the safety of both imported and domestic products.

Dr. Lomkhosi L. Mkhonta, Executive Director, SWASA, commented, "These workshops are part of our ongoing efforts to improve the business environment for investors and both importers and exporters in Swaziland and will help meet our obligations under the WTO. Standards are critical for our business community to know how to meet the different requirements of both local and international markets."

The overall Southern Africa Trade Hub technical assistance and capacity building program for SWASA consists of training of stakeholders on the WTO TBT Enquiry Point, a benchmarking visit to Kenya for three designated Enquiry Point officials, purchasing of essential IT equipment and office furniture for the National Enquiry Point (NEP), and training of NEP staff on how to effectively manage the Enquiry



Point. These efforts will culminate in the official NEP launch and awareness building seminars in three districts of Swaziland scheduled for late June-July 2015.

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