Pacific Quality Infrastructure

What is Pacific Quality Infrastructure?

Pacific Quality Infrastructure, or PQI, is the name for the regional QI system in the Pacific. Although in its infancy, the first steps of its establishment are currently being undertaken through the PQI project which commenced in late 2020.

PIFS initiated the PQI Initiative in 2017 by engaging with regional and international development and technical partners and donor agencies. A regional workshop was held in Fiji in September 2019 to raise awareness on the significance of QI for Forum Island Countries and to discuss the way forward. PIFS, with support from partner agencies, then prepared a conceptual framework document (PQI concept note) for the next phase of the initiative which was endorsed at the February 2020 Forum Trade Ministers Meeting.

The PQI project started in October 2020 with funding provided by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), DFAT, Australia and the EU, and technical assistance by Germany through PTB, the Metrology Institute of Germany.

The PQI project aims to strengthen a demand-oriented QI and access to services that enhance trade competitiveness in the Pacific region. The project is achieving this by:

(a) establishing regional QI frameworks for standardisation, metrology, and conformity assessment.

(b) identifying quality challenges in selected value chains in key export sectors which shall be addressed through targeted project measures at the national and regional level.

The overall objective is to generate change towards higher quality products and processes making products safer and more competitive on domestic and international markets.

Why is it important to the Pacific Region?

In the Pacific, access to recognised QI services based on international best practice, such as testing laboratories and certification bodies, is limited.

As compliance with international quality standards requires access to these services, the countries’ economic competitiveness is deeply affected, as well as the safety of goods and services, and the quality of life of their citizens.

The PQI project will undertake first steps in addressing these challenges by establishing regional frameworks for standardisation, metrology (the science of measurement) and conformity assessment, and by supporting Pacific Island countries in accessing relevant QI services.

How/who does it benefit Pacific economics/businesses?

Increased economic competitiveness helps create new jobs and investment, which contributes to poverty reduction. In addition, QI services contribute to the protection of consumers (e.g. product and food safety), the workplace (occupational health and safety), and the general population (medical services, environmental protection) thus enhancing the quality of life, which benefits poorer groups of the population.