



DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PRESS RELEASE

Belmopan, Tuesday, January 20, 2015

EU funds construction of Metrology lab at the Belize Bureau of Standards

A new state of the art laboratory testing facility is to be constructed at the Belize Bureau of Standards (BBS). Ground was broken for the building today which in turn is expected to be completed by early 2016. The building is being constructed under the Belize Rural Development Project which is being funded by the European Union along with counterpart funding from the Government of Belize. The lab will be constructed at a cost of BZ\$ 2.3 million and its main use will be Metrology testing, that is, ensuring that products manufactured or produced in Belize meets the international standards of weights and measurements.

The building will host seven (7) laboratory areas, offices, conference/training rooms, bathrooms, utility rooms, storage rooms and external areas. The BRDP support to BBS also includes the supply and training in the use of key metrology equipment including: mass comparators and balances, weights and related mass laboratory equipment, pressure, temperature, dimensional and volume metrology equipment. All of which has already been handed over.

EU Ambassador to Belize, Paola Amadei pointed out that the intervention consists not only of the construction of the building but includes also the purchase of equipment for the BBS. She explained that the services which will be offered to local businesses will guarantee that they are meeting all the standards necessary to compete locally and internationally. *"The Belizean economy is largely agricultural based with products like sugar, bananas, citrus, fisheries, cattle and I could go on. While no one can question the quality of the products which are produced here, buyers local and international alike all want to make sure that they are receiving value for money. The quality of products needs to be equitably tested for products to be fit for trade. Therefore the absence of these basic metrological services puts constraints on how far industries can advance in the global trade."*

The Belize Rural Development Project is a broad rural development initiative which started in Feb 2010 for six years. The programme offers a broad based rural economic growth aiming at:

1. A more efficient market driven productive and competitive, small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMEs) established for rural groups and communities.
2. Improved access to strategic infrastructure measures to create an enabling environment for rural development and
3. Strengthened policies and institutional environment within which rural enterprises, traders, processors, local organisations and communities operate.

The overall budget for BRDP is 15,900,000 EUR or just over BZ\$36.8 million.

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