



33RD ASIA-PACIFIC LEGAL METROLOGY FORUM MEETINGS

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KIRIBATI

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SECTION 1 – Structure and organisations for metrology

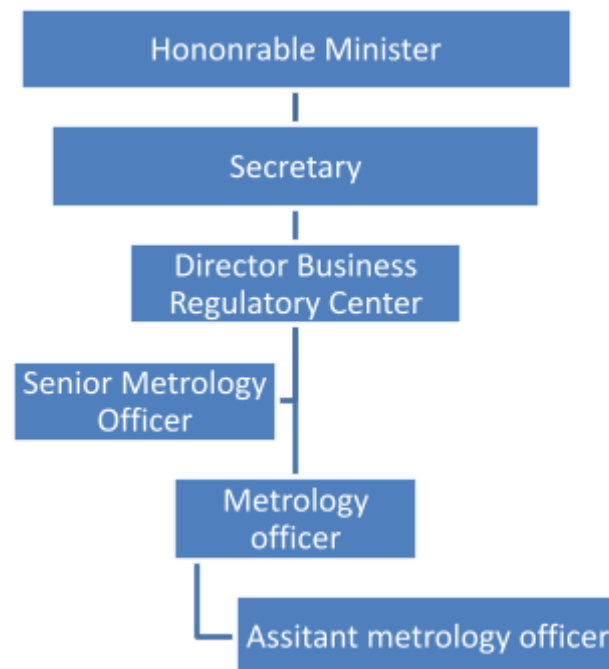
The Metrology Division was established under the Business Regulatory Centre (BRC) within the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives (MTCIC). The Division is responsible for administering and regulating the Metrology Act 2021 and its associated Regulations, with the aim of ensuring accurate and reliable measurements, promoting fair trade, protecting consumers, and supporting economic development. The Government of Kiribati recognises that strengthening trade is an important component of the Kiribati 20-Year Vision (KV20). Achieving this vision requires improvements to the country's National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), including metrology, to support businesses and industries engaged in domestic and international trade. Metrology has been identified as a critical component of the national quality infrastructure, particularly in supporting international trade and improving confidence in measurements across key economic sectors, including fisheries, tourism, health and copra. Reliable measurements are essential for ensuring fairness in commercial transactions, meeting relevant quality requirements, and supporting the competitiveness of Kiribati's products and services in external markets. As part of its strategy to improve the quality of life for the people of Kiribati, the Government has prioritised the development of metrology as an important mechanism for strengthening trade, consumer protection, and industrial development.

Development of national metrology infrastructure

With support from the Kiribati Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Trade Project, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Government initiated efforts to strengthen the capacity and capabilities of the Metrology Division within MTCIC. In September 2018, a Metrology Capacity Needs Assessment was conducted to identify the actions required to establish a robust and sustainable national metrology infrastructure. The assessment began with desk research examining the Government's development priorities and the existing metrology situation in Kiribati. This was followed by two missions to Tarawa, involving interviews with MTCIC personnel and stakeholders, site visits, and validation workshops. The assessment examined the existing institutional and technical capacity of the Metrology Division and identified the metrology services required by stakeholders to support their activities. Its findings provided a foundation for identifying development priorities,

strengthening technical capabilities, improving infrastructure, and establishing a more effective national metrology system. Since then, Kiribati has continued to develop its metrology capabilities through legislative reform, equipment procurement, technical training, and regional cooperation.

Organisation Structures



The division manned by 3 staff and supported by the Director

Its main functions and responsibilities include:

- Administering and implementing the Metrology Act 2021 and its associated Regulations.
- Conducting verification and inspection of measuring instruments used in trade and other regulated activities.
- Verifying fuel dispensers, weighing scales, weighbridges, and other regulated measuring instruments.
- Monitoring measurement practices in retail businesses, fisheries, copra trading, fuel outlets, and other relevant industries.
- Promoting compliance with legal metrology requirements to ensure accurate measurements and fair commercial transactions.
- Raising awareness among traders, businesses, government agencies, and other stakeholders about their legal obligations.
- Strengthening technical capacity, measurement standards, and verification infrastructure.
- Developing partnerships with regional and international metrology organisations to improve technical expertise and measurement capabilities.

Through these responsibilities, the Division supports consumer protection, fair trade, and confidence in measurements across Kiribati's economy.

Legislative Frameworks

Metrology Act 2021

A major development in Kiribati's metrology system was the introduction of the Metrology Act 2021, which replaced the former Weights and Measures Act 1984. The Metrology Act 2021 was passed by the House of Parliament and received presidential assent on 19 May 2021. It provides an updated legal framework for the regulation of measuring instruments and measurement activities in Kiribati. The new Act strengthens the legal foundation for the administration and enforcement of metrology requirements, including the powers and responsibilities of inspectors, verification and inspection of measuring instruments, and measures to address non-compliance. This legislative reform reflects the Government's commitment to modernising the national metrology system and strengthening its contribution to consumer protection, domestic trade, and international commerce.

Metrology Regulations 2026 (Fees and Schedules, Regulated Instruments and Prepackage)

A further important development occurred in 2026, when the Metrology Regulations commenced under the authority of the Minister responsible for MTCIC. The commencement of the Regulations establishes the regulatory framework needed to support the practical implementation of the Metrology Act 2021. With the Act and Regulations in place, the Metrology Division is progressing implementation activities, including stakeholder awareness, compliance monitoring, inspection and verification activities, and the development of practical procedures to support effective enforcement. These developments represent significant progress in strengthening Kiribati's legal metrology framework and establishing a more structured approach to regulating measuring instruments used in trade.

International arrangements and engagement

Kiribati recognises the importance of cooperation with regional and international metrology organisations, including the Asia-Pacific Legal Metrology Forum (APLMF), the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), the Asia-Pacific Metrology Programme (APMP), and other national metrology institutions and technical cooperation partners.

These organisations provide opportunities for technical knowledge exchange, training, access to international recommendations, and the progressive development of measurement capabilities. Kiribati's ongoing priority is to strengthen these partnerships to support the effective implementation of its legislation, improve the technical competence of metrology officers, and develop measurement infrastructure that meets the needs of the national economy. Kiribati recognises that international and regional cooperation is essential for developing a sustainable national metrology infrastructure, particularly given the country's limited technical resources and the importance of international trade. The EIF Trade Project, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), supported the initial development of Kiribati's metrology infrastructure through the 2018 Capacity Needs Assessment. The assessment identified institutional, technical, and infrastructure requirements for developing a robust national metrology system. It also helped establish priorities for improving the capacity of the Metrology Division and responding to the measurement needs of key economic sectors. This initiative provided an important foundation for subsequent metrology development activities in Kiribati. Kiribati continues to strengthen

its metrology capabilities through technical assistance and equipment support under the PACER Plus programme. Recent development activities include the procurement of equipment to support thermometer calibration, together with technical training and work attachment opportunities for Metrology Division officers. The objective is to develop local technical capabilities, reduce reliance on overseas services where appropriate, and improve the reliability of temperature measurements used in sectors such as health, fisheries, and laboratory services.

SECTION 2 – Key activities of 2025/26

Working with the industry

The Metrology Division works closely with businesses and industry stakeholders and government ministries and agencies to promote compliance with the Metrology Act 2021 and its associated Regulations.

The Division conducts inspections and verification of measuring instruments used in commercial transactions, including fuel dispensers, weighing scales, and weighbridges. These activities help ensure that measuring instruments provide accurate results and that businesses conduct transactions fairly and transparently. The Division engages with stakeholders in key economic sectors, including fisheries, copra trading, fuel retailing, and general retail businesses. Through inspections, consultations, and awareness activities, the Division provides guidance on the proper use of measuring instruments and the legal responsibilities of traders and instrument owners.

In addition, the Division works with relevant government agencies, laboratories, and industry stakeholders to identify measurement needs and improve confidence in measurement results. These efforts are particularly important for businesses involved in international trade, where reliable measurements support product quality, compliance, and competitiveness in external markets. Following the introduction of the Metrology Act 2021 and the commencement of its Regulations in 2026, the Division is strengthening its engagement with industry to support the implementation of the new legal framework. Awareness and education are important priorities to help businesses understand their obligations before more intensive compliance and enforcement activities are undertaken.

Key achievements include:

- Conducting regular inspections and verification of measuring instruments used in trade.
- Strengthening verification capabilities for fuel dispensers and weighing instruments through the acquisition of measurement standards and equipment.
- Improving engagement with fuel suppliers, retailers, fisheries operators, copra traders, and other businesses.
- Promoting awareness of legal metrology requirements and the importance of accurate measurements.
- Supporting the development of a stronger National Quality Infrastructure to facilitate fair trade and improve confidence in Kiribati's products and services.

Major projects - What we did and what we learned

Kiribati has undertaken several important initiatives to strengthen its national metrology infrastructure, improve technical capacity, and support the implementation of its legal metrology framework.

1. Metrology Capacity Needs Assessment – 2018

What we did:

In September 2018, a Metrology Capacity Needs Assessment was conducted under the Kiribati Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Trade Project, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The assessment examined the existing capacity of the Metrology Division, identified stakeholder measurement needs, and recommended actions to establish a robust and sustainable national metrology infrastructure. The work included desk research, stakeholder interviews, site visits, and validation workshops in Tarawa.

What we learned:

The assessment highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, improving technical infrastructure, acquiring appropriate measurement standards, and developing the skills of metrology officers. It also demonstrated that reliable measurement services are essential for supporting international trade, particularly in fisheries, tourism, and copra.

The findings provided a foundation for identifying national priorities and guiding subsequent investments in metrology development.

2. Development of the Metrology Act 2021 and Regulations

What we did:

Kiribati modernised its legal metrology framework through the introduction of the Metrology Act 2021, which replaced the former Weights and Measures Act 1984. The Act received presidential assent on 19 May 2021.

In 2026, the associated Metrology Regulations commenced under the authority of the Minister responsible for MTCIC, providing the regulatory framework for implementing the new legislation.

The Division is progressing activities to support implementation, including stakeholder awareness, compliance monitoring, inspection procedures, and the strengthening of enforcement arrangements.

What we learned:

A modern legal framework is essential, but legislation alone is not sufficient to ensure effective compliance. Successful implementation also requires clear procedures, trained inspectors, adequate equipment, stakeholder awareness, and sufficient operational resources.

Early engagement with businesses is important to help industry understand its obligations and support a smooth transition to the new regulatory framework.

3. Strengthening Fuel Dispenser Verification

What we did:

The Division acquired a 200-litre proving measure to strengthen its ability to verify fuel dispensers. This equipment supports the assessment of fuel dispensing accuracy and helps ensure that consumers receive the quantity of fuel for which they pay.

The Division has also conducted inspections at fuel outlets, identified issues requiring corrective action, and carried out follow-up verification where applicable.

What we learned:

Access to appropriate verification equipment is essential for effective enforcement of legal metrology requirements. Regular inspections and follow-up visits are also important to ensure that identified problems are corrected and that measuring instruments remain suitable for use in trade.

Maintaining equipment, developing technical skills, and ensuring that fuel outlets understand verification requirements will remain important priorities.

4. Strengthening Mass Measurement Capabilities

What we did:

The Division strengthened its mass measurement capabilities through the acquisition of weighing standards, including mass standards supporting verification activities up to two tonnes.

These resources support inspections and verification of weighing instruments used in commercial transactions, including those associated with retail trade, fisheries, and copra purchasing.

What we learned:

Reliable weighing standards are necessary to verify the accuracy of commercial weighing instruments. However, effective service delivery also depends on proper storage, maintenance, suitable working facilities, trained officers, and appropriate procedures for handling and transporting standards.

Continued investment in these areas will help improve the reliability and sustainability of weighing instrument verification services.

5. Development of Thermometer Calibration Capability

What we did:

Through PACER Plus support, Kiribati is developing its capacity to calibrate thermometers locally. The project includes the procurement of specialised temperature calibration equipment and technical training for Metrology Division officers.

In 2026, officers undertook a work attachment with the National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology (NISIT) in Papua New Guinea. The programme provided practical exposure to thermometer calibration, temperature baths, dry-block equipment, measurement uncertainty, calibration certificates, and laboratory quality management systems.

The initiative is intended to establish a foundation for local temperature calibration services supporting sectors such as health, fisheries, and laboratory testing.

What we learned:

Developing a calibration service requires more than purchasing equipment. Technical training, suitable facilities, documented procedures, quality management, and reliable measurement traceability are equally important.

The work attachment also demonstrated the value of regional cooperation in building technical capacity and providing access to specialised knowledge that may not yet be available locally.

Overall Lessons and Future Priorities

The major projects undertaken to date have demonstrated that strengthening Kiribati's metrology system requires a coordinated approach involving legislation, infrastructure, technical expertise, industry engagement, and international cooperation.

The key lessons learned are:

1. **Legislation must be supported by implementation capacity:** Inspectors need clear procedures, appropriate training, and adequate resources to enforce the law effectively.
2. **Equipment and technical expertise must develop together:** Measurement standards are most effective when officers have the skills and facilities needed to use and maintain them.
3. **Industry awareness encourages compliance:** Businesses need clear information about their responsibilities and the importance of accurate measurements.
4. **Regional cooperation accelerates capacity development:** Training and work attachments with established metrology institutions provide valuable practical experience.
5. **Infrastructure requires long-term planning:** Laboratories and storage facilities must be suitable, secure, and sustainable.
6. **Metrology supports wider economic development:** Accurate measurements contribute to consumer protection, fair trade, reliable product quality, and the competitiveness of Kiribati's industries.

Moving forward, the Metrology Division will continue to strengthen implementation of the Metrology Act 2021 and its Regulations, expand verification and calibration capabilities, improve infrastructure, and develop partnerships with regional and international

organisations. These efforts will contribute to the Government's Kiribati 20-Year Vision (KV20) and the continued development of the National Quality Infrastructure in support of trade, consumer protection, and sustainable economic growth.

Protecting consumers

Consumer protection is a core responsibility of the Metrology Division. Accurate measurement is essential to ensure that consumers receive the correct quantity of goods and that businesses charge fairly for the products they sell. The Division protects consumers by inspecting and verifying measuring instruments used in commercial transactions, particularly fuel dispensers and weighing scales. These activities help identify inaccurate or non-compliant instruments that could result in consumers receiving less than the quantity they have paid for. The Division also monitors measurement practices in retail stores, fisheries, copra purchasing, and other commercial activities where the quantity or weight of goods determines the price paid. Where non-compliance is identified, the Division can take appropriate action in accordance with the applicable legislation. With the commencement of the Metrology Regulations in 2026, the Division is working to strengthen public awareness of measurement requirements and improve compliance among traders and instrument owners. Awareness activities and guidance materials will help consumers understand the importance of accurate measurements and encourage businesses to meet their legal obligations. The Division's consumer protection work also contributes to greater transparency in commercial transactions, fair competition among businesses, and public confidence in the marketplace.

Key consumer protection activities include:

- Inspecting fuel dispensers to ensure that consumers receive the correct quantity of fuel.
- Verifying weighing scales used in retail businesses, fisheries, and copra trading.
- Identifying and addressing non-compliant measuring instruments.
- Educating traders about their responsibilities under the Metrology Act 2021 and its Regulations.
- Raising public awareness about the importance of accurate measurements and fair trade.
- Strengthening compliance monitoring and enforcement as implementation of the new legislation progresses.

Through these activities, the Division aims to reduce measurement-related disputes, prevent unfair commercial practices, and promote a fairer marketplace for consumers and businesses throughout Kiribati.

SECTION 3 – Future focus

New initiatives planned (next 1-2 years)

Over the next one to two years, the Metrology Division plans to strengthen the implementation of the Metrology Act 2021 and its associated Regulations, improve national measurement infrastructure, and expand technical capabilities to support trade, consumer protection, and economic development. These initiatives align with the Government's Kiribati 20-Year Vision (KV20) and its commitment to strengthening the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI).

Implementation of the Metrology Act 2021 and Regulations

Following the commencement of the Metrology Regulations in 2026, the Division will focus on implementing the legal framework through stakeholder awareness, compliance monitoring, inspection activities, and the development of practical enforcement procedures. Planned activities include educating traders and instrument owners about their legal obligations, developing guidance materials, reviewing inspection procedures, and strengthening enforcement arrangements to address non-compliance. The Division will also work towards improving the practical application of inspectors' powers and ensuring consistent implementation of the legislation.

Establishment of Thermometer Calibration Services

With support from the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus), the Division is progressing the procurement of specialised thermometer calibration equipment and the development of technical expertise. Over the next two years, the priority will be to complete the equipment procurement, undertake the necessary training, establish suitable operating procedures, and progressively introduce local thermometer calibration services. The proposed service is expected to support sectors such as health, fisheries, laboratories, and other industries that depend on reliable temperature measurements.

Improvement of Metrology Laboratory and Storage Facilities

The Division plans to improve facilities for storing measurement standards and conducting verification and testing activities. This includes identifying suitable space for equipment storage and laboratory operations, addressing electricity and environmental requirements, and establishing appropriate arrangements to protect measurement standards.

Improved facilities will support the effective use of existing equipment and provide a foundation for expanding local metrology services.

Expansion of Verification and Inspection Activities

The Division intends to strengthen regular inspections and verification of measuring instruments used in commercial transactions. Priority areas include fuel dispensers, weighing scales, weighbridges, and measuring instruments used in fisheries, copra trading, retail businesses, and other relevant industries. The Division will also seek to improve inspection records, monitoring procedures, and follow-up activities to ensure that identified non-compliance is addressed appropriately.

Industry Awareness and Stakeholder Engagement

The Division plans to increase engagement with businesses, traders, government agencies, and industry stakeholders to improve understanding of the Metrology Act 2021 and its Regulations.

Awareness activities will explain the importance of accurate measurement, the responsibilities of instrument owners, verification requirements, and the consequences of using non-compliant measuring instruments.

These activities will support a more effective transition to the new regulatory framework and encourage voluntary compliance.

Strengthening Technical Capacity and Regional Cooperation

The Division will continue to pursue training opportunities, technical work attachments, and cooperation with regional and international metrology organisations.

Building on the recent work attachment with the National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology (NISIT) in Papua New Guinea, the Division aims to strengthen officers' practical skills in calibration, verification, laboratory procedures, and quality management.

Further cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Legal Metrology Forum (APLMF), national metrology institutions, and technical assistance programmes will be important for developing local expertise and accessing specialised technical support.

1.7 Development of Measurement Traceability and Quality Management

As Kiribati expands its measurement capabilities, the Division will work towards improving the traceability of measurement standards to recognised national or international standards.

This will involve identifying calibration requirements for reference standards, maintaining equipment records, developing standard operating procedures, and progressively strengthening quality management practices.

These improvements will help increase confidence in measurement results and support the future development of reliable calibration and verification services.

Emerging issues – challenges and opportunities

Kiribati is making progress in strengthening its national metrology system through legislative reform, equipment procurement, technical training, and regional cooperation. However, several challenges remain, alongside significant opportunities to develop a more sustainable and effective metrology infrastructure.

Key Challenges

a. Limited Technical and Financial Resources

Developing and maintaining a national metrology system requires sustained investment in equipment, laboratory facilities, technical training, maintenance, and operational activities. As a small island developing state, Kiribati faces challenges in securing sufficient resources to establish and maintain comprehensive metrology services.

b. Limited Laboratory Infrastructure

Suitable facilities are needed to store measurement standards safely and conduct calibration and verification activities under appropriate conditions. Constraints relating to space,

electricity, environmental control, and equipment storage can affect the development and operation of metrology services.

c. Shortage of Specialised Technical Expertise

Metrology requires specialised knowledge in measurement science, instrument verification, calibration, uncertainty evaluation, and quality management. Developing and retaining this expertise remains a challenge, particularly when advanced training and specialised services must be accessed overseas.

d. Implementation of the New Legal Framework

Although the Metrology Act 2021 and its associated Regulations provide an updated legal foundation, effective implementation requires clear procedures, trained inspectors, adequate resources, and awareness among businesses and instrument owners. Some businesses may have limited understanding of the new requirements. Continued education and engagement will therefore be necessary to improve compliance and support consistent enforcement.

e. Access to Overseas Calibration Services

Kiribati currently depends on external institutions for certain specialised calibration services and technical support. Overseas services can involve significant transportation costs, longer turnaround times, and logistical difficulties associated with the country's geographical isolation.

f. Geographic Dispersion and Inspection Logistics

Kiribati's widely dispersed islands create additional challenges for conducting inspections, transporting equipment, and providing metrology services beyond Tarawa. Travel costs, equipment transportation, and limited staffing can affect the frequency and coverage of inspection activities.

g. Measurement Needs Associated with International Trade

Businesses involved in fisheries, copra, and other export-related activities require reliable measurements to support quality assurance, commercial transactions, and compliance with relevant market requirements.

Strengthening metrology capabilities to meet these needs will require continued investment and closer cooperation between the Division, industry stakeholders, and other relevant technical institutions.

Emerging Opportunities

a. Strengthening the National Quality Infrastructure

The Government's commitment to the Kiribati 20-Year Vision (KV20) provides an opportunity to strengthen metrology as an essential component of the National Quality Infrastructure. Improved measurement capabilities can support trade, consumer protection, industrial development, and confidence in the quality of goods and services.

b. Development of Local Thermometer Calibration Services

The ongoing thermometer calibration initiative supported through PACER Plus provides an opportunity to establish local technical capabilities and reduce dependence on overseas services for selected temperature measurements. Once the equipment, training, facilities, and procedures are in place, the service could benefit the health sector, fisheries, laboratories, and other organisations requiring reliable temperature measurements.

c. Regional and International Technical Cooperation

Partnerships with regional and international metrology institutions provide opportunities to access specialised training, technical advice, equipment support, and knowledge-sharing activities. Continued engagement with APLMF, NISIT, and other appropriate technical partners can help Kiribati develop its technical expertise and progressively strengthen its measurement infrastructure.

d. Greater Industry Participation

The implementation of the Metrology Act 2021 and its Regulations provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships with traders, fuel suppliers, fisheries operators, copra buyers, and other businesses. Through consultation and awareness activities, the Division can encourage businesses to take greater responsibility for maintaining compliant measuring instruments and ensuring accurate measurements.

e. Improved Consumer Confidence and Fair Trade

Strengthened inspection and verification activities can help reduce measurement-related disputes, protect consumers against inaccurate measurements, and promote fair competition among businesses. Improved confidence in commercial measurements will also support transparency and trust between businesses, consumers, and government regulators.

f. Development of Sustainable Measurement Services

As Kiribati acquires additional equipment and develops local technical expertise, there is an opportunity to progressively expand its range of verification and calibration services. Careful planning, appropriate cost recovery arrangements where authorised, regular equipment maintenance, and continued technical cooperation will be important for ensuring that these services remain sustainable.

Overall outlook

Over the next one to two years, Kiribati's main priority will be to translate recent legislative, infrastructure, and capacity-building developments into effective and sustainable metrology services. The successful implementation of the Metrology Act 2021 and its Regulations, establishment of thermometer calibration capabilities, improvement of laboratory facilities, and expansion of inspection activities will be important milestones. Although financial constraints, limited technical resources, and geographical challenges remain, continued government commitment and regional cooperation provide opportunities to strengthen Kiribati's metrology system. By addressing these challenges and making effective use of available technical assistance, Kiribati aims to develop a more reliable national metrology

infrastructure that supports fair trade, protects consumers, and contributes to the country's long-term economic development.