



# Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP)

## Supporting SMEs to sustainably integrate into global markets.

Global trade is growingly embedded within value chains and is increasingly governed by quality and standards requirements. The GQSP addresses challenges faced by exporters from developing countries, in particular SMEs, to meet and prove conformity with those requirements.

### Rationale

Despite the opportunities induced by trade liberalization and the efforts made by developing countries to strengthen integration into the world trade system, exporters from many developing and middle-income countries have not been able to substantially increase their access to global markets. A major reason is that the reduction of tariff measures to facilitate global trade coincided with an increased use of non-tariff measures in the forms of technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, standards, market requirements, and conformity assessment procedures, amongst others to ensure consumer safety.

Particularly SMEs from developing and middle-income countries face substantial challenges to meet and prove conformity with these market entry requirements, thus face technical barriers to trade that hinder their ability to access markets. This is due to information asymmetries, or lack of physical and human capacities required. In order to gain and maintain access to international trade and benefit from global markets, standards compliance and proof of conformity are essential all along the value chain. Many developing countries, however, suffer from a weak Quality Infrastructure System - i.e. a combination of initiatives, institutions (standardization, metrology and accreditation), organizations, activities and people, necessary to ensure the quality and safety of products and services entering the market - due to the lack of expertise and awareness of the role of quality infrastructure and services for international trade.

### Objectives and activities

To strengthen the Quality Infrastructure System aiming to support sustainable integration into global markets, SECO and UNIDO have been cooperating on providing technical assistance for over 15 years and have decided to take their cooperation to the next level: a programmatic approach. Until now, joint projects on standards compliance have been conducted in different countries with limited cross-linkages between them to capitalize experiences and overall knowledge. Henceforth, SECO and UNIDO want to achieve a more comprehensive impact by consolidating interventions on trade

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SECO country/region

Global

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Executing agency

UNIDO

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Duration

2017-2022

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Total budget

CHF 18,150,000

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SECO contribution

CHF 18,150,000

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standards compliance within one tool, adding the benefit of a global component facilitating synergies and enhancing coherence among the interventions.

The objectives of the GQSP are i) to strengthen the National Quality Infrastructure institutions and Service providers to offer services demanded by SMEs at market price; ii) to support SMEs to use available quality services to produce goods and services in line with international market requirements; iii) to support SMEs and institutions to embed the need for quality at individual, institutional and policy level to ensure sustainability of the quality system.



### **Governance Structure of the Global Quality and Standards Programme**

The objectives are achieved through two components: *Global Knowledge Management* and *country projects*. The Global Knowledge Management is a strategic and transversal component with the objective to generate and disseminate knowledge from research and past endeavours, which can be used to tackle quality and standards related challenges. This knowledge will be globally disseminated to country projects and to the general public through an online platform hosted by UNIDO – the Knowledge Hub.

A Steering Committee of the Programme comprising UNIDO and SECO is established and meets twice a year. Its main role is to provide strategic guidance and to monitor progress towards established objectives and outputs set out in the Programme. Country Project Steering Committees comprising of all relevant stakeholders at country level are responsible for taking strategic decisions of the country project and discussing specificities regarding the implementation of the country project.

Country projects will address standard compliance challenges in a holistic and tailor-made manner in emblematic sectors with demonstrated export potential.

Beneficiary countries: Colombia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Ukraine and Vietnam.

### **Further information and contact details**

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