



Quality and Standards Program in Ghana

Strengthening the quality and standards compliance capacity in Ghana to facilitate market access for small and medium-sized enterprises in the cashew, oil palm and cocoa value chains

Exporters from Ghana, in particular small and medium-sized enterprise (SMEs) struggle to meet conformity standards for market entry. The Quality and Standards Program in Ghana (GQSP) – implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) – addresses these challenges by ensuring that the Ghanaian's quality infrastructure system and conformity assessment services are enhanced.

Rationale

Despite the opportunities induced by trade liberalisation and the efforts made by developing countries to strengthen integration into the world trade system, Ghana has been rather slow in accessing global markets. One major reason is that exporters from Ghana, in particular SMEs, face substantial challenges to meet and prove conformity with standards, technical regulations and market requirements.

Since the late 1990's international trade and its negotiations have significantly shifted from tariffs to non-tariff barriers to trade (NTBs), which are very diverse and difficult to quantify. NTBs are not new to trade. However, globalised trade has seen a proliferation of these as a response to increased demand for safety and quality of products, as well as increasing public concern for social, environmental and sustainability issues. This reduction of tariff levels coinciding with an increase in NTBs has proven to be a challenge for Ghanaian SMEs to access global markets.

Objectives and activities

The objective of GQSP is to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access in Ghana for SMEs in the cashew, oil palm and cocoa value chains. In order to achieve the objective, the program will pursue three outcomes, thus responding to the main compliance challenges identified for the competitiveness of these value chains. These three outcomes are namely:

1. **Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System is enhanced:** Strengthening the technical competences of the Quality Infrastructure (QI) at the institutional level by standardization (e.g. management of relevant standards in the selected value chains) and metrology (e.g. delivery of viscometer, ensuring traceability of measurement, etc.). The aim is also to strengthen the technical competence of the

Country/region

Ghana

Executing agency

UNIDO

Duration

2019 - 2023

Total budget

CHF 17'350'000

SECO contribution for Ghana

CHF 1'500'000



conformity assessment service providers and institutions via testing, inspections and certifications.

2. **SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations is enhanced:** Improving of compliance capacity through specialised training, capacity building and preparation for certification, strengthening of cluster networks and quality consortia as well as relevant support institutions. In order to support SMEs along the value chain, a pilot application of blockchain technology will be launched to improve traceability along the cocoa value chain.
3. **Awareness for quality is enhanced:** Promoting a culture for quality by ensuring support in the oil palm and cashew industry through the delivery of awareness and training programs, by up-scaling knowledge dissemination on best practices and guidelines, and providing advice for informed policy decisions on standards compliance and support for policy development. The creation of a Quality Infrastructure Map to serve as a directory of laboratories and is also planned.

The Embassy of Switzerland in Ghana takes part in the GQSP Steering Committee biannual meetings jointly organised by UNIDO, SECO and GoG, involving all program partners (Ministry of Trade and Industries, Ghana Standards Authority, Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana Cocoa Board Quality Control Company, Export Promotion Authority) to exchange and discuss the results and future directions of the program.

Achievements

At time of writing, GQSP is yet at the early stage of implementation. The Trade Capacity Building program (TCB), the preceding program to GQSP, has however already significantly contributed to the competitiveness of private sector production during its two phases, which ran between 2007-2011 and 2013-2018 respectively. TCB upgraded five public institutions by obtaining international accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 (testing activities), three institutions accreditation to ISO/IEC17020 (inspection activities) and one institution accreditation to ISO/IEC170065 (product certification activities). International Experts have been to Ghana to train a total of seventeen National Experts to assist the selected industries and eighteen companies have applied to sign on to be assisted by the program. The GQSP will be implemented and achieve its results based on the strong foundations laid by the TCB.

Further information and contact details

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