



UNITED NATIONS  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER  
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO



# GO SP

GLOBAL QUALITY  
AND STANDARDS PROGRAMME

TRANSFORMING TRADE

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR BETTER LIVES



# NAVIGATING CHANGE

The world is changing faster than ever due to climate change, the rapid pace of digitalization, and the global outbreak of COVID-19 requiring extraordinary efforts to build back better. In these unprecedented times, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) guide all global, regional, and national development endeavors until the year 2030. The breadth and scope of the SDGs reflect the complexity and scale of our modern challenges.

While overcoming present challenges requires concerted efforts, international trade provides one pathway to improve livelihoods through economic expansion and poverty reduction. Countries open to international trade are likely to grow faster, innovate, improve productivity, and provide their populations with higher incomes and increased opportunities.

Global trade is growingly embedded within value chains and is increasingly governed by quality and standards requirements, such as the rules established by the World Trade Organization (WTO). Due to their mandatory nature, these technical regulations can become technical barriers to trade (TBT) that prevent or hinder the flow of goods and

services between nations. In these complex times, as due diligence along supply/value chains has become even more important and demanded by consumers, standards that uphold both the quality and the sustainability of methods of production can ensure fair working conditions for men and women. In turn, this can help developing countries unlock new markets.

To successfully compete in export markets, countries must adhere to these ever more stringent market requirements regarding product quality, safety, labor, health, and environmental considerations. These include compliance with trade and sustainability standards, testing methods and metrological practices, all prerequisites for international trade participation. Digitalization provides the means for countries to better adhere to market requirements.

Quality and standards are powerful tools that can contribute to addressing many global challenges, particularly climate change, the biggest of them all. As countries strive to meet modern challenges, setting up a quality infrastructure system (QIS) is one of the key steps that they can take on the path forward to developing a competitive and export-oriented economy as a basis for prosperity, health, and well-being.

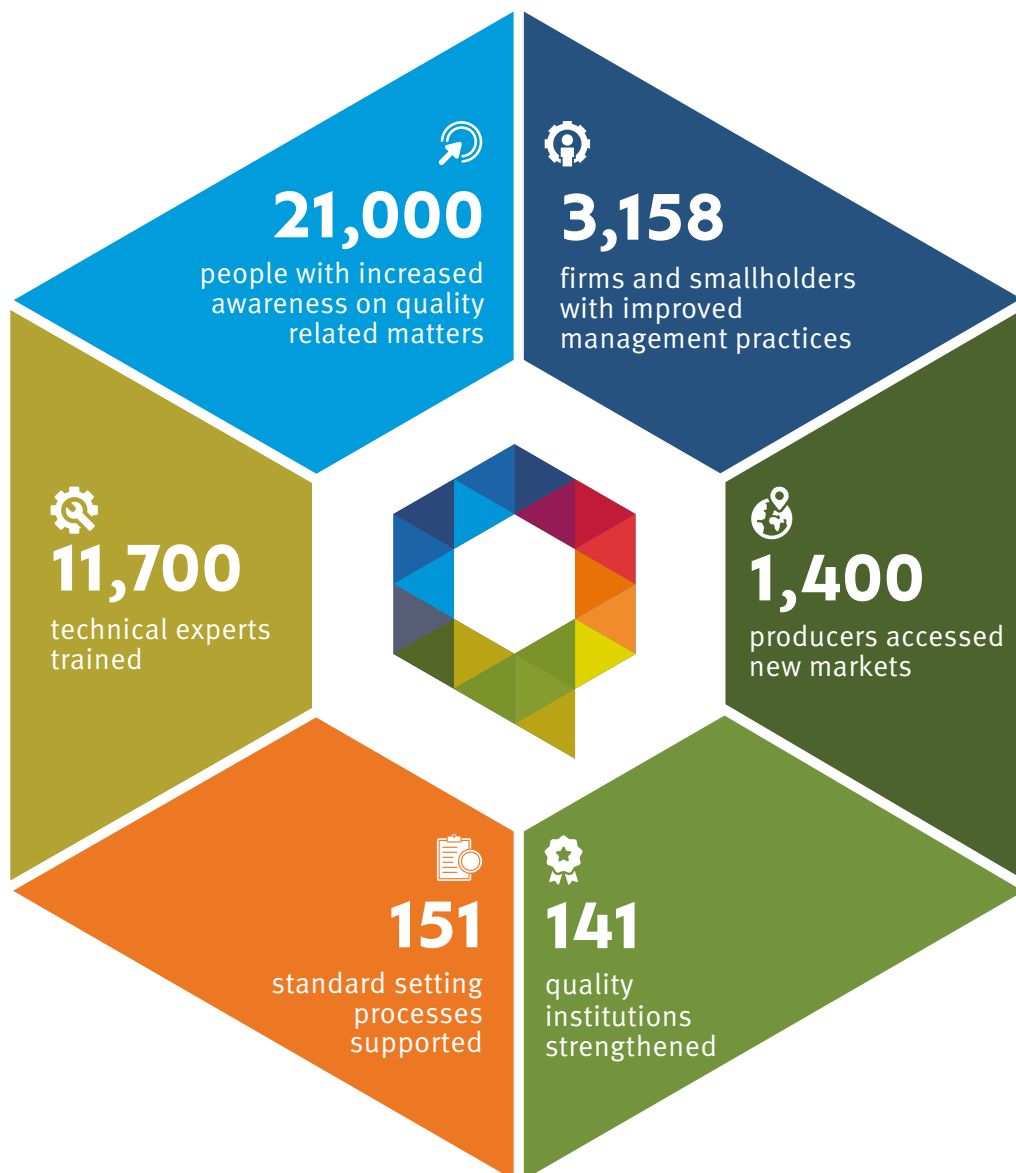




# INTRODUCING THE GLOBAL QUALITY AND STANDARDS PROGRAMME

For more than 20 years, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Government of Switzerland through its State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) have been supporting partner countries to increase their competitiveness through quality and compliance with standards, resulting in an extremely active partnership. Given the continued and growing relevance of standards compliance, and the solid and positive track-record of cooperation projects, SECO and UNIDO decided to continue their efforts within the programmatic approach of the **Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP)**.

The first phase of the GQSP was implemented from 2017–2023 as the outcome of more than 15 years of successful cooperation between UNIDO and SECO specifically around trade capacity development. The overall objective of the GQSP is to strengthen quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by working in selected value chains in partner countries. Some of the major achievements from the first phase of the GQSP include:





# FOCUS AREAS

In its second phase, the GQSP elevates its focused approach on trade to encompass topics of global relevance and aims at making a positive contribution to *sustainable trade, climate resilience, women empowerment*, while also driving *digital transformation*. A strong focus on global knowledge adds value by elaborating transversal solutions to common challenges through the development of global public goods.



The widespread adoption of standards and best practices can positively affect various aspects of life. This includes promoting more sustainable and environmentally friendly industrial practices by enhancing resource efficiency, supporting circular economy business models, and utilizing renewable energy sources, while ensuring that workers are treated fairly, thus meeting the increased demand for due-diligence along supply chains. By supporting its target countries in strengthening their quality systems, and their adoption of international as well as voluntary sustainability standards, the GQSP contributes to sustainable trade.



**SUSTAINABLE  
TRADE**



**GENDER  
MAINSTREAMING**



The GQSP actively works to bridge the gender gap as demonstrated by its promotion of women in many areas. In its advocacy of participatory governance structures for national quality frameworks, the GQSP contributes to the women's empowerment cross-cutting theme of economic governance. Establishing an appropriate quality policy to guide the QIS can lead to increased prosperity, providing more opportunities for men and women across social groups. In addition, the GQSP aims to foster the role of women in target value chain by enabling them to proactively shape the sector, contributing to enhanced quality of production and trade.

Digital transformation is affecting all spheres of life and quality and standards are no exception. Quality infrastructure service delivery is transforming and will significantly change. In the future, the QIS will have also have to adjust to keep pace with technological acceleration to ensure it remains relevant and meet the needs of the market, producers, and consumers. Ensuring and proving quality will be essential for the adoption and acceptance of new technologies and a requirement for small producers to meet market requirements. The potential to innovate is no longer an option but has become a necessity, also in quality infrastructure and production, particularly in view of market access. The GQSP helps its target countries leverage the opportunities presented in this new digital age.



## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



## CLIMATE RESILIENCE



Protecting and nurturing the environment is vital for human well-being and survival. To achieve this, we must adopt a new economic development approach that prioritizes environmental sustainability. Standards have a crucial role to play in this, particularly in the implementation of policies and actions for sustainable resource use and ecosystem protection. Quality infrastructure institutions and services are also essential for promoting sustainable consumption and production. This is in terms of measurement capabilities, sharing best practices, supporting management, and monitoring, reporting, and verifying compliance, which the GQSP supports.



## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE

To effectively overcome quality related obstacles, it is essential for a country to analyze its national quality infrastructure from a broader perspective to identify bottlenecks and to more accurately pinpoint challenges. Against this backdrop, the GQSP develops cross-cutting, transversal solutions to respond to the shared challenges faced by different countries. These include a unique set of resources that have become fundamental tools for countries on their quality infrastructure journeys. Strategic partnerships, such as with the International Network on Quality Infrastructure (INetQI), ensure alignment with international best practice and promote sustainable development.





## A TRULY GLOBAL INITIATIVE

As a large scale programme, the GQSP supports industries in achieving greater international competitiveness through strengthening their compliance capacity regarding quality and standards, thus facilitating market access for SMEs. This subsequently increases their exports and integration into value chains. With the increased complexity of the world, the second phase of the GQSP supports tackling the pressing global issues previously alluded to, including sustainable trade and climate change.

The second phase of the programme targets 11 countries spanning over four continents, including Albania, Colombia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Indonesia, Moldova, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Ukraine, and Vietnam. Following UNIDO's systemic approach, the overall programme objective will be achieved through the following areas of intervention:



## ENHANCING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Strengthening of key institutions and relevant public–private support institutions to provide state-of-the-art (including digital) services through capacity building, use of best practices, use of new technologies, digital transformation, skills development, and implementation of management systems to ensure quality and international recognition of their services.



## STRENGTHENING PRODUCERS' COMPLIANCE

Helping companies to implement and conform with standards, ensuring they understand and can meet market requirements. This includes providing training on how to use new, clean, and smart technologies. Overall, the goal is to enhance the companies' capabilities, enabling them to produce better products and compete more effectively in global markets.



## CREATING A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Promoting the importance of quality and standards by spreading information and knowledge, especially about how they can shape a sustainable future. This includes the development of a favorable environment, built on strong policies. Essentially, it's all about making sure everyone understands why quality matters and helping to create an environment where high standards are valued and pursued.



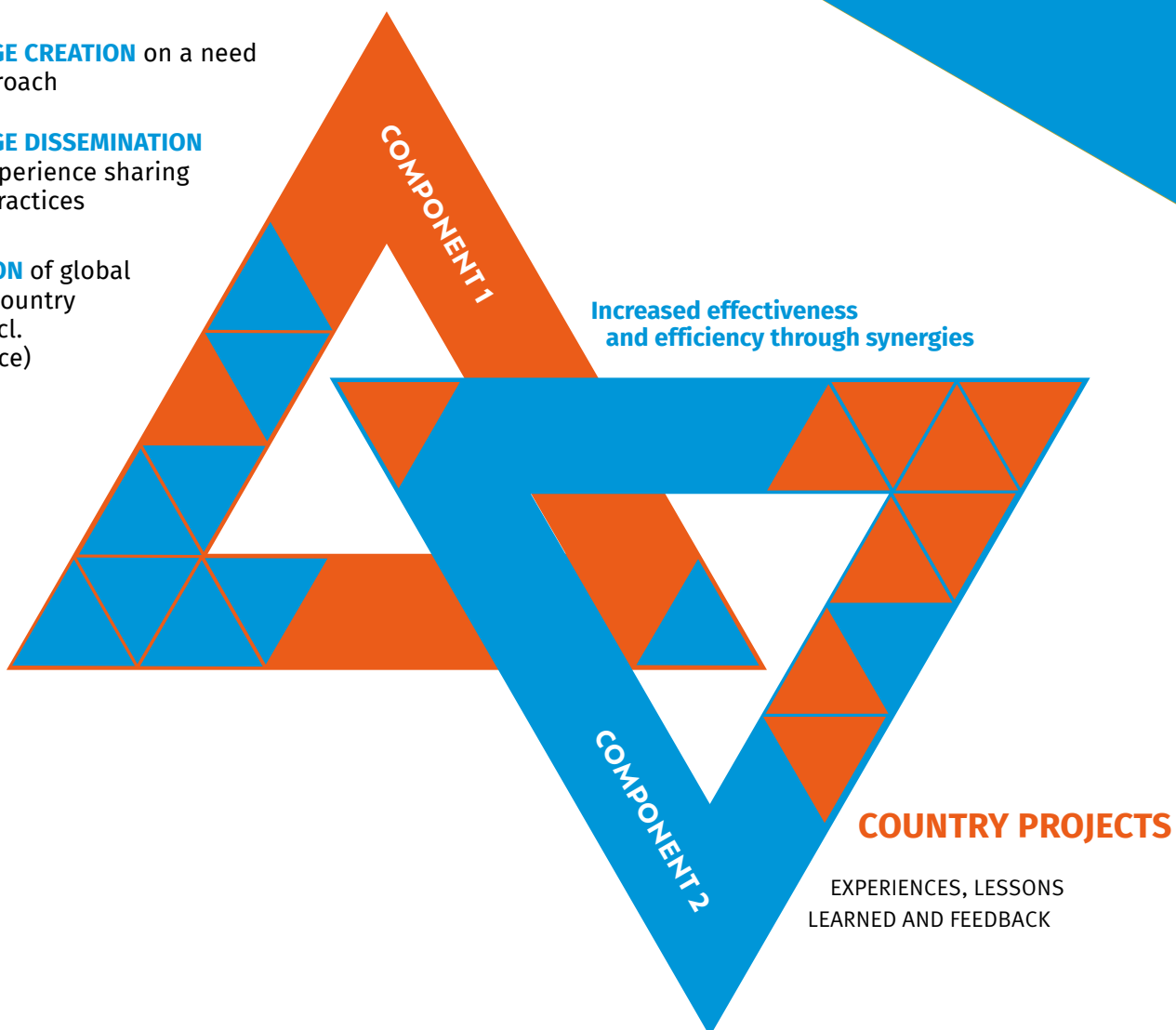


## GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

**KNOWLEDGE CREATION** on a need based approach

**KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION** through experience sharing and best practices

**APPLICATION** of global tools in a country context (incl. maintenance)







## GLOBAL

The GQSP does things in a special way. It brings together all its work on quality and standards into one large-scale program. The global component connects all actors and adds efficiency and exploits synergies. It helps different countries learn from each other and share what they know. This way, everyone can benefit from the best practices and lessons learned.



## COUNTRY

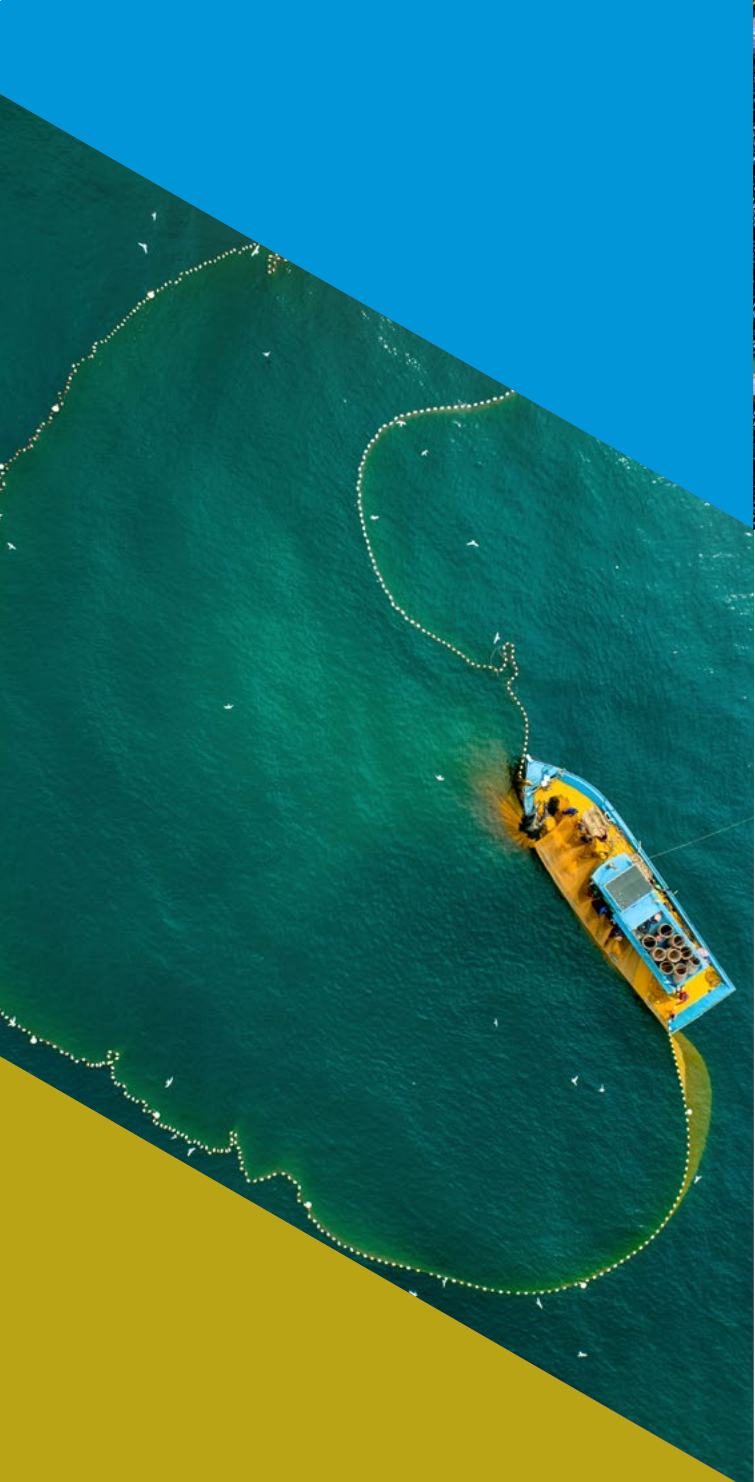
Country-level interventions address compliance challenges in a holistic, yet tailor-made manner, providing technical support to quality infrastructure institutions and strengthen private sector capacities to produce better.



## VALUE CHAIN

Interventions at country level focus on specific value chains to provide targeted technical support to overcome compliance challenges and facilitate sustainable trade and market access for specific products.

Through the global knowledge management and country-level interventions components, all aligned to the three main areas of intervention (described above), the GQSP contributes to many key conditions and transformational goals, resulting in greater international competitiveness, increased exports, sustainable trade, and the achievement of the SDGs.



# GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

In line with its efforts to assist countries on their quality infrastructure journeys, the QOSP places special emphasis on sustainable stakeholder engagement, awareness raising and advocacy. It also emphasizes related dissemination activities in promotion of the tools, publications and other knowledge from research and past endeavors generated globally, which can help a broad range of stakeholders address quality and standards related challenges. These tools, often developed and piloted at the country level, are harmonized and promoted globally through an interactive online platform hosted by UNIDO, the [Knowledge Hub](#). These resources are global public goods that are free of charge.

The knowledge, tools, and methodologies available (and those under development) assist with assessing the status, identifying gaps, and thus facilitating related improvement of relevant institutions, producers, and other stakeholders.



## The resources:



provide pertinent information for policymakers to facilitate policy and decision-making



support quality infrastructure institutions and conformity assessment bodies (CABs) in assessing and strengthening their capacity to provide competent services in line with market needs



help producers enhance their compliance capacity and access global markets



create a sound understanding of quality and standards as a driver for sustainable trade and development

To create synergies, the QOSP also partners with other international networks (e.g. INetQI) and organizations such as ISO, IEC, ITU, UNFSS, BIPM, OIML, ILAC, IAF.

From the global knowledge management perspective of the QOSP, the net effects directly benefit SMEs in QOSP target countries in that producers receive the requisite knowledge to support the enhancement of their capacity to comply with standards created and disseminated, while also considering pressing global developments.





# GQSP COUNTRY PROJECTS

**COSTA RICA** 

**COLOMBIA** 

**PERU** 



The following 11 countries have been chosen for targeted interventions within the second phase of the QSP based on country needs in one or a limited number of specific sectors, focusing on strategic value chains with high export potential and competitiveness.





## ALBANIA



In Albania, the GQSP aims to enhance the national quality infrastructure and strengthen the compliance capacity of SMEs, with focus on medicinal and aromatic plants, as well as fruits and vegetables. The overarching goal of the initiative is to align Albania's quality infrastructure and related services to the needs of the national production and potential export, supporting the country's efforts of accessing the European Union.



## COLOMBIA



The project supports quality and standards in the phytotherapeutic value chain to promote Colombia's integration into subnational, regional and multilateral trade systems by strengthening the National Quality Subsystem (SICAL), and will seek to increase and improve the capacities of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to comply with market requirements and engage in trade.



## INDONESIA



In Indonesia, the project supports two value chains related to fisheries aquaculture and seaweed, by strengthening small-scale producers in their capacity to comply with technical regulations and international market requirements, with a strong focus on sustainability.



## MOLDOVA



To increase access to and trade with the European market, Moldovan producers need to achieve and prove a higher level of conformity. To this end, the GQSP focuses on enhancing the capacity of export-oriented enterprises to comply with market requirements. These efforts will focus on poultry products, meat, and eggs.



## SOUTH AFRICA



In South Africa, the GQSP strengthens the quality and standards compliance capacity of small producers of essential and vegetable oils destined for food, health, and cosmetic export markets. The project also focuses on SMEs' responsiveness to the effects of rising natural disasters and increasing energy shortages by introducing smart farming technologies.



## UKRAINE



The overall objective of the project is to promote Ukraine's economic development through the country's integration into regional and global trade, by strengthening and digitalizing the national quality infrastructure system serving the berries and nuts value chains and by increasing SMEs' trade competitiveness.



## COSTA RICA



Traceability has become a mandatory quality requirement in the most demanding international markets. Ensuring traceability in the coffee value chain is crucial to keeping markets open, as demonstrated by the case of Costa Rican coffee and its success in the European market. The QOSP aims to enhance traceability in Costa Rica's coffee value chain by implementing innovative solutions.



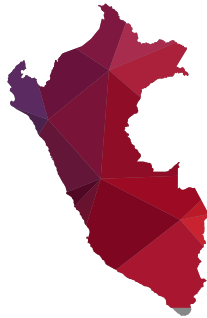
## GEORGIA



The QOSP focuses on strengthening pesticide management in the fruits and vegetables value chains, one of the main reasons hindering Georgian products to be sold internationally. The QOSP will enhance the technical competence and sustainability of the conformity assessment bodies (laboratories) and enhance awareness and capacity of private producers, particularly MSMEs to comply.



## PERU



The overall objective of the project in Peru is to contribute to the productive and competitive strengthening of exports in Peru's coffee and cocoa value chains by improving their capacity to comply with standards, technical regulations and market requirements, and the implementation of quality infrastructure services, towards more sustainable, inclusive and climate change resilient production systems.



## PHILIPPINES



The project aims to provide policy support and technical advisory services to the Philippine Government, particularly focusing on policymaking bodies. It will involve capacity building and knowledge enhancement on national quality infrastructure for relevant stakeholders.



## VIETNAM



In Vietnam, the QOSP supports tropical fruit producers in the Mekong River Delta and Central Highlands to comply with technical regulations and international market requirements in view of strengthening their trade capacity. The QOSP enhances the technical competence and sustainability of the quality infrastructure system to serve the needs of production and export and creates a culture for quality to enable access to high-quality markets.





UNITED NATIONS  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Directorate of Technical Cooperation and  
Sustainable Industrial Development (TCS)

Division of MSME Competitiveness,  
Quality and Job Creation (TCS/SME)

Vienna International Centre,

P.O. Box 300, 1400 Vienna, Austria

[gqsp@unido.org](mailto:gqsp@unido.org)

[hub.unido.org](http://hub.unido.org)

[www.unido.org](http://www.unido.org)