



**UNIDO** UNITED NATIONS  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

**“UNIDO is strengthening the enabling environment for exporters to gain global recognition for certified products, particularly spices. These actions collectively strengthen Sri Lanka’s overall position in the regional and EU export markets.”**

Geethanjali Ranawaka, Director General, National Intellectual Property Office

## Strengthening Sri Lanka’s Trade Competitiveness in Regional and EU Markets

The EU-Sri Lanka Trade Related Assistance project, funded by the European Union (EU), aims to increase the competitiveness of Sri Lankan small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in regional and EU markets to support inclusive, trade-led growth. The project focuses on export strategy, trade policy and facilitation, national quality infrastructure (NQI) and value chains in the spices. UNIDO facilitates the strengthening of NQI services to meet quality and sanitary and phytosanitary standards requirements and enhances the value chain performance of SMEs that depend on these services. Specific attention is given to enhancing export compliance along the spices and processed food value chains.

### UNIDO’S APPROACH

International trade relationships are vested in a system of standards, codes, and agreements to ensure consistent rigor is applied in the production of goods. To effectuate this rigor, NQI services, which encompass standardization, measurement, testing, accreditation, and certification, must be in place. UNIDO has been working with Sri Lankan NQI institutions to facilitate the strengthening of NQI services, especially those underpinning export-oriented sectors, like spices and processed foods. Enhanced international recognition of Sri Lankan NQI institutions enables the country to leverage the reinstatement of preferential access to the EU granted by the Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP), and giving Sri Lankan exports a real opportunity to rebound.

### IMPACT

Within the framework of the National Export Strategy, UNIDO spearheaded the

formulation of NQI Strategy (NQI-S), a document that paves the way for achieving international recognition of Sri Lanka’s NQI system through the implementation of a National Quality Policy (NQP). UNIDO is working with the Sri Lanka Standards Institution (SLSI) to establish the National Quality Council (NQC) as the apex policymaking body to be housed in the Office of the President to effect better coordination and cooperation among NQI actors. Beyond the strengthening of the legal and institutional frameworks for quality, UNIDO is supporting SLSI on revising 28 and adopting 20 standards, preparing three Sri Lankan Standard (SLS) mark schemes to gain accreditation by SLAB for product certification, and upgrading its microbiology and metrology laboratories.

Other NQI institutions receiving technical assistance under the project include the Measurement Units, Standards and Services Department (MUSSD) and the Sri Lanka

Accreditation Body (SLAB). For MUSSD, UNIDO is upskilling laboratory staff and upgrading laboratories for mass, pressure and temperature to prepare MUSSD for peer evaluation. For SLAB, 13 trainings for 175 assessors have been delivered on ISO 17024 (personnel certification), ISO 17065 (certifying bodies), ISO 17025 (testing and calibration), ISO 17043 (proficiency testing), and ISO 17021 (bodies providing audit and certification of management systems). These trainings have also been delivered to over 500 assessors from private and public conformity assessment bodies.

### WAY FORWARD

These collective interventions ultimately place Sri Lanka on an accelerated transition path from a lower-middle income country to a more competitive, sustainable, and inclusive upper-middle income country through a quality-led growth model for exports.

### AT A GLANCE

<b>Project title:</b>	<b>Increasing SME Trade Competitiveness in Regional and EU Markets</b>
<b>Thematic area:</b>	Trade Competitiveness
<b>Donor:</b>	European Union
<b>Project counterpart:</b>	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
<b>Co-implementing partner:</b>	International Trade Centre
<b>Budget:</b>	EUR 8,000,000
<b>Duration:</b>	01 November 2016 – 31 October 2020