



PAGE 3: B. ABOUT YOU

Q1: Respondent details

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Q2: Country or Customs territory

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Q3: Organization

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International Organization: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

PAGE 4: C. ABOUT YOUR CASE STORY

Q4: Title of case story

Strengthening the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) in Nigeria to increase the competitiveness of Nigeria's goods and services on the domestic, regional and global markets

Q5: Case story focus

Trade Facilitation.

Q6: Case story abstract

Nigeria has lacked an internationally recognized quality infrastructure which would ensure the safety, integrity and marketability of goods and services and remove technical barriers to local, regional and international trade. To address this, the National Quality Infrastructure Project (NQIP) for Nigeria was launched in 2013. The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by UNIDO in close cooperation with the Federal Government of Nigeria.

As this Case Study shows, the NQIP contributes to infrastructure upgrading and enhancement of the investment climate in the non-oil sectors by supporting the development of national quality infrastructure and regulations. The measures are aimed at improving the quality of Nigerian products and services and reducing certification costs, to increase the economic competitiveness on the domestic, regional and international markets and, at the same time, leading to new investment and employment opportunities. Herewith, the project contributes significantly towards the achievement of SDGs in Nigeria.

Q7: Who provided funding?

Multilateral organization,
Other (please specify)
Multilateral Organization (European Union)

Q8: Project/Programme type

Single country

Q9: Your text case story

The Nigerian economy has long been facing challenges brought on by its overdependence on oil revenues. The country's budget deficit has been expanding, while its population has been growing, together with the demand of Nigerian consumers for high quality goods and services which could not be met domestically. At the same time, Nigeria has struggled to increase its exports, with products and services often being rejected due to low quality or non-conformity with international standards. This can be exemplified by the ongoing import ban on Nigerian dried beans imposed by the European Union.

Hence, the lack of an internationally recognized quality infrastructure able to ensure safety, integrity and marketability of goods and services, thus removing technical barriers to local, regional and international trade, has represented a major obstacle to Nigeria's competitiveness and ability to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Strengthening the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) and building a quality culture are particularly crucial for reaching the objectives of SDG 9 on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation. Furthermore, a robust NQI will also make a significant contribution towards the creation of new jobs and the alleviation of poverty, feeding directly into the SDGs 1 and 8.

Effective participation in modern trading demands a certain quality infrastructure which is understood to be the totality of the institutional framework (public and private) required to establish and implement standardization, metrology (scientific, industrial and legal), accreditation and Conformity Assessment (CA) services (inspection, testing and product and system certification) necessary to provide acceptable evidence that products and services meet defined requirements, be it demanded by authorities or the market place.

To address the infrastructure shortcomings faced by Nigeria, the National Quality Infrastructure Project (NQIP) for Nigeria was launched in 2013. The project is funded by the European Union and implemented by UNIDO in close cooperation with the Federal Government of Nigeria. Based on five components, NQIP was designed to achieve five major outcomes:

- i) an enabling institutional and legal framework guided by a National Quality Policy (NQP)
- ii) an internationally recognized National Accreditation Body (NAB)
- iii) a National Metrology Institute (NMI) accredited for its key services
- iv) Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) within the private sector, and
- v) enhanced Consumer Protection capacities to raise awareness and promote quality

Over the past four years, significant progress has been made towards achieving the project objectives. In particular, NQIP has assisted with the development of a national policy on quality standards which provides the framework for the effective operation of national quality control bodies, gives guidance to private sector operators and guarantees the principles of safety and protection for consumers. The implementation of the policy will enable Nigerian manufacturers and companies to increase their regional and global exports and contribute towards enhancing the "Made in Nigeria" image on local markets. At the same time, this will improve the international viewpoint of Nigeria as a preferred destination for investment and for situating integrated global business operations in the country.

Within the framework of NQIP, technical assistance has also been provided towards the creation of domestic quality institutions, such as the Nigerian National Accreditation Service (NiNAS) and the National Metrology Institute of Nigeria (NMI). As a result, for the first time ever, Nigeria was able to take part in the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) General Assembly in 2016 and received recognition of its own domestic accreditation body, NiNAS.

Another focus of the NQIP has been the enhancement of the capacity of national laboratories. Furthermore, the project has carried out a laboratory mapping exercise to identify the existing testing and calibration services in the non-oil sector. As a result, an innovative online database of national testing and calibration laboratories was launched in 2015 and upgraded in 2016, enhancing significantly the visibility and brand recognition of Nigerian laboratories.

In addition to that, the project has had an impact on creating new professional qualifications and job opportunities. For example, relevant training programmes have been carried out, equipping hundreds of national staff with the technical capacities needed to undertake quality assurance tasks. To-date, over 300 professionals are qualified to perform tasks under ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) and ISO 22001 (Food Safety Standards). With the help of these professionals, nine local companies are already able to perform certification for businesses. Furthermore, the institutions created within the framework of the project will offer new employment opportunities.

NQIP has focused on diffusing ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 22001 among the OPS members. In this respect, an increased number of certifications have been witnessed in the country. Furthermore, the enhancement of national

increased number of certifications have been witnessed in the country. Furthermore, the enhancement of national quality institutions has had a positive impact on cutting the cost of accreditation and certification services, making them more accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This trend is expected to continue in order to satisfy the need of Nigerian enterprises to access international markets for export purposes and the need to diversify the economy from oil and gas.

Other achievements include the development of standard operating procedures, so-called Conduits of Excellence, in order to achieve zero export rejection on Nigerian agro-products, in particular dried beans. The Conduits of Excellence will also be applied to the value chains of other commodities and services. This will enable Nigerian manufacturers to improve the quality and value of their goods and services, and subsequently enable them to become more competitive on the domestic and international markets.

Finally, it should be mentioned that NQIP has been ensuring inclusiveness, for example by gender mainstreaming across all of the project's components. The National Quality Policy is gender sensitive and fosters integration of GEEW objectives and networks within the NQI. The aim was to specifically bring about the mandatory inclusion of women in technical and certification committees and to ensure that crisis handling procedures incorporate mitigating measures for most vulnerable groups, including women producers. A gender policy was also developed for the newly created NiNAS and applied in the recruitment process of NiNAS staff. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming was ensured during laboratory trainings. For example, the ISO17025 laboratory training of 193 participants comprised 86 (45%) women and 107 (55%) men. Of the 53 candidates identified as suitable for becoming accreditation assessors, 27 (51%) were women and 26 (49%) men.

Overall, the NQIP is making a significant contribution to infrastructure upgrading in Nigeria. The measures being implemented are contributing to the improvement of the quality of Nigerian products and services and reduction of certification costs, which is resulting in an increased economic competitiveness of Nigerian goods and services on the domestic, regional and international markets, job creation and enhancement the investment climate in the non-oil sectors.

Q10: Lessons learnt

It is crucial to involve local institutions and stakeholders in the development process. If there is close cooperation with existing local institutions from the outset of the project, it is possible to move the process forward quickly and efficiently. Furthermore, it is essential to develop a close cooperation with other local and international organizations working towards similar objectives and try to integrate the existing approaches.
