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OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND INTERNAL OVERSIGHT

Independent mid-term evaluation

Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP)

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Mr Urs Zollinger, International Evaluation Consultant (Team Leader)

Mr Michael Peet, Quality Infrastructure Expert (Team Member)

Abbreviations and acronyms

BIPM	International Bureau of Weights and Measures
C1, C2, C3	Programme components of the GQSP
C4Q	Culture for Quality
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CHF	Swiss Francs
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
EUR	Euro
GQSP	Global Quality and Standards Programme
HQ	Headquarters
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
INetQI	International Network on Quality Infrastructure
ISID	Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LabNet	Laboratory Network
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METAS	Federal Institute of Metrology (Switzerland)
NAB	National Accreditation Body
NMI	National Metrology Institute
NQI	National Quality Infrastructure
NSB	National Standards Body
NTM	Non-tariff measures
OIML	International Organization of Legal Metrology
PM	Programme / Project Manager
PMU	Programme / Project Management Unit
ProDoc	Project document
PSC	Project support costs
QI	Quality Infrastructure
QI4TF	Quality Infrastructure for Trade Facilitation
QIDI	Quality Infrastructure Development Index
QP	Quality Policy
RBM	Results Based Management
SAEOPA	South African Essential Oil Producers Association
SAQI	South African Quality Institute
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SECO	Swiss Secretariat of Economic Affairs
SIPPO	Swiss Import promotion Organization
SMART	Fish Sustainable Market Access through Responsible Trading of Fish (Indonesia)
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SNV	Swiss Association for Standardization
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TC	Technical Cooperation

TCB	Trade Capacity Building
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSCCI	Trade Standards Compliance Capacity Indices
TSCR	Trade Standards Compliance Report
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
US	United States
VC	Value Chain(s)
WTO	World Trade Organization

Glossary of evaluation-related terms

Term	Definition
Baseline	The situation, prior to an intervention, against which progress can be assessed.
Coherence	The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa.
Effect	Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
Impact	Positive and negative, intended and non-intended, directly and indirectly, long term effects produced by a development intervention.
Indicator	Quantitative or qualitative factors that provide a means to measure the changes caused by an intervention.
Lessons learned	Generalizations based on evaluation experiences that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations.
Logframe (logical framework approach)	Management tool used to facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of an intervention. It involves identifying strategic elements (activities, outputs, outcome, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and assumptions that may affect success or failure. Based on RBM (results-based management) principles.
Outcome	The likely or achieved (short-term and/or medium-term) effects of an intervention's outputs.
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services, which result from an intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donor's policies.
Risks	Factors, normally outside the scope of an intervention, which may affect the achievement of an intervention's objectives.
Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from an intervention, after the development assistance has been completed.
Target groups	The specific individuals or organizations for whose benefit an intervention is undertaken.

Executive summary

Introduction

The Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP) was formulated in 2017 as the outcome of a long-standing cooperation between SECO and UNIDO. The overall objective of the GQSP is to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access for SMEs by working in selected value chains in the partner countries. The total budget of the GQSP is EUR 15.9 (2020).

The GQSP has three expected outcomes: (1) Technical competence of the National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced, (2) SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced, and (3) awareness for quality is enhanced. The three programme outcomes are achieved through three components: (1) global knowledge management, (2) country projects, and (3) programme management. Eight countries have been selected for country projects, based on SECO priority countries and UNIDO country assessments (Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, South Africa, Ukraine, Vietnam). In addition, special measure interventions, which are smaller, have been explored in several other countries.

About the evaluation

The main purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to learn from the 3 years that the programme has been running, i.e., from December 2017 – November 2020. The main objective of the evaluation is to assess the GQSP's programmatic approach. In particular, this mid-term evaluation assessed:

- the global knowledge management;
- progress of the country project portfolio;
- the synergies created and used between country projects; and
- the programme management.

The main data collection methods were oral semi-structured interviews, written structured interviews, a focus group discussion, the review of documents and websites and an assessment of the UNIDO knowledge hub. The analysis of the GQSP's theory of change was an important analytical method used for this evaluation. A stakeholder sampling was conducted based on a prior stakeholder mapping. Due to COVID-19, this evaluation was conducted office/home-based due to the restrictions that prevented travel.

Findings

Summary Finding 1: The overall intervention logic of the GQSP is valid. The three outcomes at the levels of quality infrastructure, SMEs and quality awareness are at the heart of the GQSP. This *system approach* constitutes the fundamental logic of the GQSP. A shortcoming of the theory of change is that it is limited to the intervention logic at the country level and does not include the global knowledge management. Also, the interplay between the two components (global and country level) is not included in the theory of change which constitutes a central component of the programme approach.

Summary Finding 2: The GQSP is seen as highly relevant. The GQSP has several comparative advantages. These include the recognition of UNIDO's knowledge and experience in the development of Quality Infrastructure (QI), the inclusive nature of in-country governance structures that ensure that GQSP interventions are aligned with host government needs and complementary to previous and current interventions from other development agencies.

Summary Finding 3: After a relatively slow start, most country projects are advancing steadily or are picking up speed. The country project in Kyrgyzstan, however, appears to be struggling. Aggregated

quantitative results of the country project portfolio are not systematically made available and a comparison with targets is not possible at this stage. However, a beneficiary analysis shows some promising quantitative results in terms of numbers of beneficiaries. As of now, direct support to SMEs and the promotion of quality culture appear to be less prominent compared with support provided to the national quality infrastructure.

Summary Finding 4: The use of a holistic approach that marries the QI related needs of a particular country value chain with a set of relevant public good QI related tools that are developed using broad expert consultations, and then piloted within the GQSP context, has been adopted to help ensure that each country project can access best available QI support when they are in a position to do so.

Summary Finding 5: The global knowledge management is by and large doing the right things. Most global tools will – once completed - be very useful, also to the GQSP. The quality of the tools is also expected to meet expectations. The online hub has gained even more relevance for the GQSP during COVID-19, in particular the online training and webinars attract a lot of GQSP targeted country participants. Still, the awareness of the global tools amongst GQSP stakeholders is limited and the language of the tools for GQSP purposes is an issue, as many beneficiaries do not speak English.

Summary Finding 6: The development of public good tools and publications by UNIDO in support of the GQSP is widely supported and encouraged by other international actors. The GQSP is also providing valuable practical experience and insights for UNIDO to ensure that the global tools and publications are peer reviewed, coherent and refined using contracted experts together with inputs from other QI knowledgeable international organisations. UNIDO were also largely responsible for reviving and utilising a global cooperation of international QI organisations, INetQI.

Summary Finding 7: Noting that the global tools are not exclusively developed for the GQSP, the added value of the global component to the GQSP is that it allows for the development of fundamental concepts which can be road tested and – once finalised – also applied as part of the country projects. Another potential added value of the global programme is the possibility to share experiences and information between partner countries through the global platform. Both potential added values have yet to be fully harvested.

Summary Finding 8: The piloting of global tools at the country level is a major contribution from the country projects to the global programme. All countries are encouraged to contribute to the global programme but it is recognised that their ability to do so varies significantly, given that they are at very different stages of implementation.

Summary Finding 9: Collaboration and synergies that are directly related to supporting and strengthening country project implementation activities are still limited. Given the longer term nature of some of the interventions this is to be expected and may in part be due to the different value chains, and language barriers. Some countries are only now in the position to start with project implementation. In-country synergies between SECO-funded projects were noted and appreciated by stakeholders.

Summary Finding 10: The harmonized framework – the same approach with the three key outcomes - has facilitated the planning process. Although the country project documents have many similarities, they are also quite different, in particular with regard to the logical framework and the theory of change. The preparation and approval process for country project documents is not much faster compared to stand-alone projects and coordination is quite time-consuming.

Summary Finding 11: There is no aggregated overview of progress towards indicator targets. This is not only due to the lack of available data but mainly because of the limited alignment of outputs and

indicators. It is unclear which indicators are global KPIs. Given the different value chains and the different timelines of the country projects, the question also arises as to how meaningful it is to aggregate indicators in the first place.

Summary Finding 12: Budgets vary greatly among GQSP country projects. Some countries received considerably less resources than hoped for. Regional earmarking by SECO guides the funds allocation to countries. The financial flexibility in shifting resources among country projects is – while possible in theory - very limited once a project document has been signed with a government. The programme approach allows for more efficient resource mobilisation for country projects.

Summary Finding 13: The rapid and substantial response to COVID-19 by the global GQSP team is widely acknowledged and praised by stakeholders. All country projects relied on the support and tools received from the GQSP team in Vienna. Country projects had to adjust their way of operations. A small minority is of the view that the GQSP response to the pandemic was insufficient, showing limited flexibility in contributing substantially to joint efforts led by governments or the UN to cope with the pandemic.

Summary Finding 14: Gender equality and environmental protection are important components of the GQSP. However, in the planning and reporting documents at the global level, both dimensions are not adequately reflected. Overall objectives and targets for gender equality and environment protection are missing and are therefore not reported on.

Summary Finding 15: The assessment of the likelihood and sustainability of transformational change is only partially possible because of insufficient data and an incomplete theory of change. Considering major uncertainties, there is a likelihood that the GQSP will contribute to enhanced export (impact) over time. If exports increase due to enhanced quality, it seems plausible that SMEs will continue to adhere to the enhanced quality standards in order to sustain export (sustainability).

Conclusions

The GQSP is highly relevant. UNIDO is well positioned to support national quality infrastructure initiatives aimed at developing and strengthening SME capacity to meet quality and standards requirements. The sector specific value chain approach is widely supported. In short, the GQSP is doing the right thing in the right way. Assessing the GQSP's *programme approach* reveals a mixed picture. Compared to stand-alone projects, the GQSP shows progress on a number of dimensions which constitute a programme. However, rather than one programme the GQSP could also be seen as a compilation of projects in the common area of quality and standards with a global QI knowledge development and implementation component. The global knowledge products are the strongest element of the programme approach and as such an important added value of the programme. Country projects are at very different stages of implementation. Some are advancing well and making considerable progress. Some country projects are – for several reasons - under time related pressure. COVID-19 has caused a slowdown in the implementation of country projects to some extent but not as dramatically as might have been expected.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen the **programme approach**. This should include the following dimensions:

- Promote greater synergies (see recommendation 2);
- Better promote the global knowledge hub (see recommendation 3);
- Strengthen the GQSP theory of change (see recommendation 7);
- Make the process of planning and approval more flexible (see recommendation 8);
- Revised and simplify the logical framework and reporting (see recommendation 9);
- Consider multi-donor funding (see recommendation 10).

2. Promote **greater synergies** in addressing QI conformance or compliance capacity building needs including the provision of fit-for-purpose conformity assessment capacity.

3. Expedite the finalisation of the current suite of **global tools** and better promote the global tools and the online knowledge hub. Invest more in translating key global tools in the languages of GQSP countries.

4. Continue to ensure QI **public good thought leadership**, the development and deployment of QI best practices, especially through the GQSP, through the continuation of the active support of UNIDO to the INetQI and their interactions and interventions with similar global QI partners.

5. At the heart of the GQSP is a systemic approach at three levels: National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) institutions and service providers, SMEs and quality culture. This report found an emphasis on the first level with comparatively less activities for SMEs and quality culture. Ensure that all three elements receive the necessary support in order for the **system approach** to deliver optimal results.

6. Consider a **non-cost extension** for those country projects that were most affected by COVID-19. Consider also a **second phase of the GQSP**, i.e., for the global component and selected country projects in particular for those country projects with no predecessor projects. Decisions should be made based on case-by-case in-depth review of country activities.

7. Revise and adapt the GQSP **theory of change** to better reflect the different levels (global and country level, component 1 and 2) and the interplay between the different levels.

8. Make the process of **planning** and **approval leaner**, more flexible and adaptable by considering country projects as “country activities” of the GQSP programme rather than stand-alone projects; by empowering the GQSP programme manager to appraise and approve country activities as part of the GQSP programme and by introducing a phased approach to the resource allocation within the programme, including to country activities, thereby reviewing funds allocation periodically.

9. Simplify the **logical framework and reporting**.

10. Prepare a discussion paper on **financial resource** which includes reflections on a reasonable minimum budget for a QI country “project” and on the option of a multi-donor programme.

11. Better reflect the GQSP’s contribution to **gender equality** and **environmental protection** in planning and reporting.

1. Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

Purpose

The main purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to learn from the 3 years that the programme has been running, i.e., 1 December 2017 – November 2020. An intended outcome is to generate recommendations, including the possible adjustments that may be required in order to achieve the programme objectives.

Main objective

The main objective of the evaluation is to assess the GQSP's programmatic approach.

Subject and scope

The GQSP has three expected outcomes:

1. Outcome 1: Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced.
2. Outcome 2: SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced.
3. Outcome 3: Awareness for quality is enhanced. Advocacy, up-scaling of knowledge dissemination, and advice for informed policy decisions on standards compliance and support for policy development.

The three programme outcomes are achieved through three components:

1. Global knowledge management (component 1)
2. Country projects (component 2)
3. Programme management (component 3)

The mid-term evaluation covered all three components of the GQSP and all three outcome dimensions. It focused on the GQSP's programme approach (compared to traditional technical cooperation with independent country projects). In particular, the mid-term evaluation assessed:

- the Global Knowledge Management (component 1)
- progress of the country project portfolio (component 2) and identify key success factors;
- the synergies created and used between country projects (component 2), in particular those quality infrastructure elements¹ within selected country projects that [could / should] be shared with other country projects and addressed at the programme (C1) level; and
- the programme management (component 3).

While the mid-term evaluation covered all country projects, the more advanced country projects received greater attention as compared with those country projects that started more recently due to the availability of more information that could be assessed. The more advanced country projects are South Africa (starting date Sept 2018), Colombia (Apr 2019), Ghana (Aug 2019) and Indonesia (July 2019).

¹ A large part of the country projects is focused on developing appropriate policies and providing support to strengthen standardization, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment bodies. The learning and synergies from these generic country project components is an important dimension of the GQSP.

Evaluation questions

Based on the TOR for the mid-term evaluation and the exchange with the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (IED), the GQSP HQ team and the donor (SECO), the evaluation team composed a set of evaluation questions (Table 1). The evaluation questions have been arranged to correspond to the relevant evaluation subjects and evaluation criteria.

Table 1: Evaluation subjects, evaluation criteria and evaluation questions

Evaluation subjects and evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions
<p>1. Programme design and theory of change [component 1 and 2] > relevance, coherence</p>	<p>a) Is the programme design and the theory of change adequate to strengthen the capacity of partner countries to comply with quality regulations and conform with quality standards?</p> <p>b) Have the right assumptions, pre-conditions and impact drivers been identified?</p>
<p>2. Global Knowledge Management [component 1] > relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency</p> <p>i. Knowledge creation and transfer</p> <p>ii. Skills and competence development</p> <p>iii. Visibility and advocacy</p>	<p>a) Is the global knowledge management doing the right things?²</p> <p>b) Is the global knowledge management coherent with other international efforts?</p> <p>c) What are the main results of the global knowledge management so far?</p> <p>d) What is the quality and usefulness of the global knowledge management products? Are the products unique and demanded?</p> <p>e) Is the global knowledge management on track in terms of delivery of planned outputs?</p> <p>f) What was the GQSP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>
<p>3. Country projects, programme approach and synergies [component 2 and 1] > relevance, effectiveness, coherence</p> <p>i. National Quality Infrastructure</p> <p>ii. SME compliance</p> <p>iii. Awareness for quality</p>	<p>a) Are the country projects doing the right things?</p> <p>b) Are the country projects coherent with other national efforts?</p> <p>c) What is the progress of the country project portfolio?³</p> <p>d) What are the key factors that determine progress - or lack thereof – at the country level?</p> <p>e) Are the country projects adding value to the global knowledge management?</p> <p>f) Is the global knowledge management adding value to the individual country projects?⁴</p> <p>g) What are the synergies between the different country projects?</p>

² Includes two dimensions: Is global knowledge management answering to needs identified in country projects? Are global management tools answering to needs of a global audience, beyond country projects?

³ The progress of country projects was looked at not in terms of results (outcomes, impact), but only to provide an overview of the overall programme and its status of implementation.

⁴ This question includes: Are the tools developed in the global knowledge management being used effectively at country level? How do country projects benefit from the programmatic approach?

<p>4. Programme management [component 3] > efficiency</p> <p>i. Streamlining of procedures ii. Monitoring and reporting iii. Use of resources</p>	<p>a) To what extent does the programme approach streamline the planning and approval process⁵ of country projects?⁶</p> <p>b) To what extent does the programme approach streamline the monitoring and reporting process?⁷</p> <p>c) To what extent does the programme approach allow for flexibility in shifting resources among countries?⁸</p>
<p>5. Likelihood of long-lasting transformational change [component 1 and 2] > impact and sustainability</p>	<p>a) Is the GQSP likely to achieve expected higher-level results?⁹</p> <p>b) How likely is it that after completion of the programme, the results will remain?</p>

UNIDO has identified gender equality and environmental protection as cross-cutting themes. The evaluation addressed – according to the UNIDO evaluation policy - these two dimensions as cross-cutting themes where relevant.

2. Description of the GQSP

Background

Global trade is increasingly embedded within value chains, influenced by new technologies and is increasingly predicated by conformity with quality and standard requirements. Despite the opportunities offered 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 still struggle to meet market requirements and thus substantially increase their access to global markets.

Exporters from developing countries, in particular Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), face substantial challenges to meet and prove conformity with market entry requirements, and other Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) that hinder their ability to compete. Import rejection rates in major global markets highlight systemic deficiencies in many developing countries in terms of conformity with requirements. This is especially true for middle-income countries, which account for the bulk of import rejections in major markets.

Such rejections result in financial losses for the producers and can seriously damage the reputation of their home country, in both cases affecting their competitiveness. These situations can be overcome with better quality products, which have been tested, inspected and, if possible, certified, through an internationally recognized accredited conformity assessment body (CAB).

In order to gain and maintain access to international trade and benefit from global markets, compliance with standards through proof of conformity are essential. Many countries recognise the need to establish an effective, efficient and internationally recognized Quality Infrastructure System (QIS), so that firms can assess and verify the conformity of their products against requirements. Thus, QI becomes an issue of importance for industry, regulators and trade negotiators, with implications at macro, meso and micro levels. Such implications include the need to match the actual demand for

⁵ The UNIDO approval process is beyond the scope of influence of the GQSP. The GQSP has to work with the given UNIDO framework.

⁶ This question includes: How do country projects benefit from the programmatic approach?

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Awareness for quality enhanced, technical competence & sustainability of NQIS enhanced, SME compliance capacity enhanced, SME market access enhanced.

QI related services and support with the current QI capacity, capability and availability of a particular country. Arriving at a realistic and defendable demand for national QI services is not a trivial exercise given the many barriers enterprises, including SMEs, often face. Constraints faced by the national QI institutions can also be a major contributor in this regard.

UNIDO-SECO Cooperation

SECO and UNIDO have been cooperating on providing trade-related technical assistance for over 15 years, supporting partner countries to increase their international competitiveness through stronger National Quality Infrastructure System and compliance with international standards. The Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP) consolidates UNIDO-SECO interventions on quality and standards compliance within one programme, adding the benefit of a global component facilitating synergies and enhancing coherence among the interventions.

In the past, joint projects on standards compliance have been conducted in different countries with no formal cross-linkages between them to capitalize on QI experiences of others and increase overall knowledge. SECO and UNIDO wanted to achieve a more comprehensive impact by implementing a coherent programmatic approach. The GQSP is the first programme of its kind developed and implemented to achieve higher impact at a programme level.

GQSP overview

The GQSP was formulated in 2017 as a result of a long standing cooperation between SECO and UNIDO. UNIDO and Switzerland have signed a Letter of Agreement at the opening of UNIDO's 17th Session of the General Conference to further strengthen their strategic partnership in the field of trade and competitiveness to facilitate inclusive and sustainable development in partner countries.

The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity in SECO partner countries to facilitate market access for SME by working in emblematic value chains per country. The total budget of the GQSP is CHF 17,349,455 (incl. 13% support costs), equal to € 14,956,426. Additional CHF 800,000 have been added to the country project in Colombia at the end of 2020. The total budget is now CHF 18.15m (EUR 15.85). The SECO contribution is provided in CHF, but GQSP projects are implemented in EUR (Table 2).

Table 2: GQSP fact sheet

Project title	Global Quality and Standards Programme, GQSP
UNIDO project No. and/or ID	170032
Region	Global
Countries	Colombia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, South Africa, Ukraine, and Vietnam
Actual implementation start date	01.12.2017
Actual implementation end date	30.11.2022
Implementing agency	UNIDO
Donor(s):	Switzerland, State Secretariat of Economic Affairs (SECO)
Total project allotment	EUR 14,956,426 equal to CHF 17,349,455 (incl. 13% Programme Support Costs) adjusted: CHF 18.15m (EUR 15.85).

Source: Project document (2017); latest data provided.

This programme supports countries to align the demand for and supply of quality services required to prove and verify the quality of products, through:

- 1) Strengthening the technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System,
- 2) Enhancing SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations, and

- 3) Raising awareness for quality through advocacy and knowledge dissemination.

The programme is structured around three components, one of global knowledge management (C1), one on country projects (C2) and one on programme management, monitoring and evaluation (C3).

Eight countries have been selected for country projects under the component 2, based on SECO priority countries and UNIDO country assessments (Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, South Africa, Ukraine, Vietnam). All country projects are expected to address the three outcomes of the programme and are structured accordingly.

In addition to these full-fledged country projects, the possibility of special measure interventions (under Component 2) has been explored in six countries, Georgia, Costa Rica, Philippines, Bolivia, Albania and Guatemala. Project proposals for Costa Rica and Georgia have been approved and implementation is expected to start during the third quarter 2020 (Georgia) and first quarter of 2021 (Costa Rica). Project proposals for Philippines and Albania are being developed. Table 3 below provides a summary of countries, starting dates, project budgets and value chains selected for support.

Project objective

The overall objective of the GQSP is to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access for SME. The Programme will pursue three outcomes, thus responding to the main compliance challenges identified for developing countries:

- **Outcome 1:** Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced. Institutional strengthening of key institutions and relevant public private support institutions through capacity building, use of best practices, skills development, and implementation of management systems to ensure quality and international recognition of their services.
- **Outcome 2:** SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced. Improving of compliance capacity through specialized training, capacity building and preparation for certification, strengthening of cluster networks and quality consortia as well as relevant support institutions.
- **Outcome 3:** Awareness for quality is enhanced. Advocacy, up-scaling of knowledge dissemination, and advice for informed policy decisions on standards compliance and support for policy development.

The three programme outcomes are achieved through three components:

- 1) Global Knowledge Management (Component 1: C1)
- 2) Country Projects (Component 2: C2)
- 3) A third component (Component 3: C3), relating to programme management and coordination, is considered in reporting and budget structure. The graph below illustrates the interrelation between the two technical components of the GQSP.

Global Knowledge Management (C1)

C1 is a strategic and transversal component with the objective to generate and disseminate knowledge gained from research and experience accumulated from previous endeavours, which can be used to tackle quality and standards related challenges. This knowledge is globally disseminated to country projects within the C2 and to the general public through an online platform hosted by UNIDO – the Knowledge Hub. C1 has a direct feedback link with C2 by responding to the common needs in line with the three outcomes of the programme. C1 supports development of skills and

competences, and provides visibility and advocacy of the tools produced. It is a catalyst to achieve greater effectiveness, while optimizing efficiency in the use of resources.

The benefits of C1 go beyond the GQSP framework and serve as a useful global public good for future quality and standard related programmes and to strengthen the cooperation with other organizations working within this field.

Country Projects (C2)

C2 addresses country-specific standards and quality compliance issues by implementing tailor made interventions for:

- Type 1: Priority country projects (3-4 years) which address standard compliance challenges in a holistic and tailor-made manner and intervene on all three outcome levels, giving priority according to country needs in one or a limited number of specific sectors, focused on strategic value chains.
- Type 2: Special measures (1-2 years) consist of short term strategic activities in the area of standards compliance and quality. It is limited in scope and focus on targeted issues, not necessarily intervening on all three outcome-levels.

In both types, coordination with existing projects – thematic or country – is actively promoted, to avoid overlaps and create synergies.

Table 3: GQSP Country projects and special measures

Country	Starting Date	SECO contribution (EUR)*	Duration	Value Chain(s)
Type 1: Priority country projects				
Colombia	Apr 2019	2,700,535	44 months	♣ Chemicals
Ghana	Aug 2019	1,316,000	40 months	♣ Cocoa ♣ Cashew ♣ Oil palm
Indonesia	July 2019	1,539,000	36 months	♣ Fish ♣ Seaweed ♣ Shrimp
Kyrgyzstan	Oct 2019	864,500	36 months	♣ Fruits
Peru	Jan 2019	2,225,000	48 months	♣ Cocoa ♣ Coffee
South Africa	Sept 2018	1,378,000	42 months	♣ Essential and vegetable oils
Ukraine	Sept 2019	880,000	36 months	♣ Wood
Vietnam	March 2020	880,000	30 months	♣ Mango
Type 2: Special measures				
Costa Rica	Q1 2021	320,000	24 months	♣ Beef
Georgia	Q3 2020	339,000	24 months	♣ Fruits & vegetables
Philippines	Being developed			
Albania	Being developed			

Source: GQSP project document (2017), latest data.

Programme Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation (C3)

C3 of the GQSP was introduced to reflect activities related to project coordination, including monitoring, reporting and evaluation, as well as activities related to overall programme visibility and communication.

Expected Results

The following are, in brief, some of the expected results of the project/programme.

Global Knowledge Management

Outcome 1: Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced.

- Global issues and trends on standards compliance are identified, analysed and disseminated.
- Good practices on Quality Infrastructure Systems shared.
- Global tools, methodologies and procedures developed.
- Competences and skills enhanced through e-learning.

Outcome 2: SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced.

- Knowledge to support SME in enhancing their capacity to comply with standards created and disseminated.
- Competences and skills of SME enhanced through e-learning.
- Lessons learned from country projects identified, analysed and disseminated.

Outcome 3: Awareness for quality is enhanced.

- Advice for informed policy decision making on standards compliance and support for policy development provided.
- Activities to raise quality awareness developed.

Country Projects

Outcome 1: Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced.

- In-depth analysis of the capacity of the QI institutions and service providers conducted and action plan prepared.
- Technical competence of the QI at the institutional level strengthened.

Outcome 2: SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced.

- In-depth analysis/assessment of the relevant market requirements conducted and action plan prepared.
- Technical assistance in the form of advice to SME to enhance capacity to comply with standards provided.
- Targeted training to SME to enhance capacity to comply with standards provided.
- Clusters among VC actors promoted.

Outcome 3: Awareness for quality is enhanced.

- Advice for informed policy decision making on standards compliance and support for policy development provided.
- Activities to raise quality awareness developed.

3. Evaluation methodology and limitations

Evaluation approach and main source of evidence

Due to COVID-19, the evaluation was conducted in line with the corresponding UNIDO guidance and rules. These prioritize the health and safety of all parties involved. Given the current circumstances and travel limitations, physical field visits were not possible. Interviews with stakeholders were held virtually. The consultants could also not travel to UNIDO in Vienna. The evaluation was therefore conducted entirely as a remote exercise.

As part of the inception phase, the evaluation team conducted a stakeholder mapping. The mapping revealed, that the GQSP has many beneficiaries and stakeholders. While this can be a challenge for the evaluation, it was considered an important asset and a valuable source of information by the evaluation team. Consequently, the main approach for this evaluation was qualitative with a focus on beneficiaries and stakeholders as key informants. This was in line with the participative nature of this mid-term evaluation.

Data collection methods

The main data collection methods were oral semi-structured interviews using online tools (e.g., Skype, Zoom). Interviews are a well-established and recognised methodology to collect primary qualitative data. The main disadvantage of interview is that they are time consuming. Therefore and in order to expand the outreach to stakeholders, written structured interviews using questionnaires were also used. Interviews and questionnaires were based on different sets of questions depending on the stakeholder category defined during the inception phase (Table 4 below).

In order to further strengthen the participatory nature of this mid-term evaluation, a focus group discussion took place with members of the GQSP team at HQ using the zoom video-meeting tool.

Primary data collection from stakeholders was supplemented by reviewing and analysing secondary data, i.e., GQSP documents and websites (Annex 4). In addition, the quality infrastructure expert in the evaluation team conducted a quality assessment of the UNIDO knowledge hub including the online training, tools, publications, and the recorded global policy dialogue.

A detailed account of the data collection sources and data collection methods is provided in the evaluation framework (Annex 5).

Data analysis

The evaluation subjects, evaluation criteria and evaluation questions as outlined in the evaluation framework provided the analytical framework of this evaluation.

The analysis of the GQSP's theory of change, as stated in the original programme document, was an important analytical method used for this evaluation.

Qualitative content analysis of interview notes and questionnaires was an important analytical tool. In addition, qualitative content analysis of documents were conducted, including comparative analyses of different country project documents. Several qualitative content analysis tables have been prepared and are included in the evaluation report.

The data collection and analysis process is visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Evaluation process

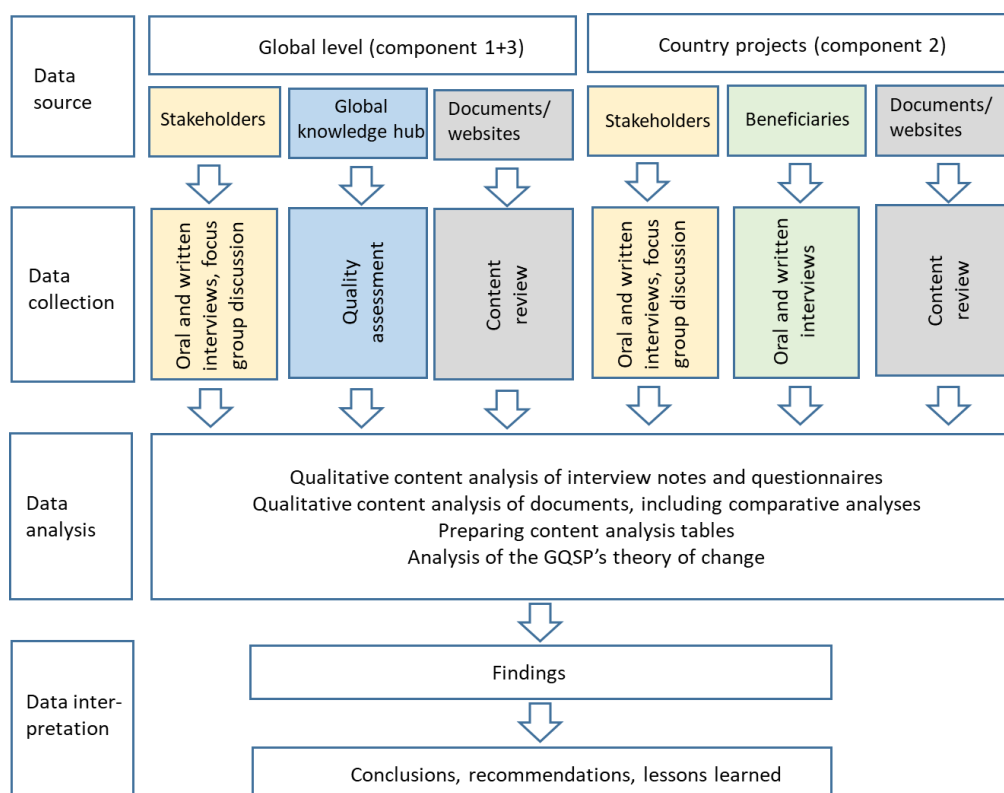


Figure: Evaluation team.

Geographical focus and stakeholder sampling

The country projects are at different stages of implementation. While some country projects are more advanced (e.g., South Africa started in September 2018), others have started only recently (e.g., Vietnam started in March 2020). In order to have sufficient data to assess, the evaluation team focused on three of the four more advanced country projects. The evaluation team selected the country projects in Ghana, Indonesia and South Africa. All three country projects address value chains in the agro-industry which may also offer the potential for some synergies¹⁰, in addition to the generic country project components like the support to quality and standardization policies as well as the support to accreditation, metrology and standard institutions and conformity assessment bodies. For each of the three countries, interviews with different stakeholders were conducted. The other five country projects were also covered using written questionnaires instead of interviews. Project staff of all eight country projects were interviewed orally.

Based on the stakeholder mapping, the evaluation team conducted a stakeholder sampling (Table 4).

¹⁰ The country project in Colombia is also advanced. However the value chain “chemicals” is unique among the country projects and the evaluation team was of the view that this offers limited synergies.

Table 4: Stakeholder sampling for interviews and questionnaires: plan/actual

	Stakeholder categories	Number of oral interviews	Number of written interviews (questionnaire)	Total number of beneficiaries/stakeholders
Beneficiaries	Governments	3 (C2*) / 3	5 (C2) / 1	8 / 4
	Quality infrastructure institutions	3 (C2*) / 2	5 (C2) / 3	8 / 5
	Quality infrastructure services	3 (C2*) / 3	5 (C2) / 0	8 / 3
	Value chain associations (incl. SMEs)	3 (C2*) / 3	5 (C2) / 2	8 / 5
	International working groups/expert groups	2 (G) / 2	2 (G) / 1	4 / 3
Programme stakeholders	Donor Government, Switzerland, SECO	2 (G) / 3 3 (C2*) / 5	5 (C2) / 4	10 / 12
	GQSP team ¹	4 (G) / 7 8 (C2+C2*) / 8	--	12 / 15
	UNIDO representative (not GQSP team)	3 (C2*) / 3	--	3 / 3
	International partner organizations (e.g., ISO)	2 (G) / 5	2 (G) / 0	4 / 5
Total		36 / 44	29 / 11	65 / 55
Total country level (C2* + C2)				51 / 37
Total global level				14 / 18
(C2*) = at country level: Ghana, Indonesia and South Africa (C2) = at country level: Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Ukraine, Vietnam (G) = global level, headquarters ¹ In addition to bilateral interviews, there was a focus group discussion with members of the GQSP team.				

Table: Evaluation team.

It was important to carefully select from each stakeholder category a reasonable sample to interact with. Since the focus of the evaluation was on the GQSP programme approach (rather than an in-depth assessments of country projects) the emphasis was on stakeholders that have a good understanding of the GQSP and its global dimension. A purposive sampling¹¹ within each stakeholder category for interviews and questionnaires was undertaken based on stakeholder potential as informants. The selection process was informed by the extent and duration of their engagement with the GQSP.

In total, the evaluation team interacted with 55 beneficiaries or stakeholders (plan 65). While more people participated in interviews (44) than planned (36), less questionnaires (11) were received than planned (29). Of the 55 informants, 37 were based at project country level, while 18 informants were based at headquarters of UNIDO, SECO or international organizations. The detailed list of informants can be found in Annex 3.

Limitations

¹¹ or meaningful selection

Due to COVID-19, this evaluation was conducted home/office-based without any travel possibilities. Interviews and discussions were conducted virtually (phone, Skype, Zoom) which may have affected the richness of the interaction between the evaluator and the informants. Experience suggests that the use of network technology can only provide a partial answer to the dilemma of distance. The human element in data collection techniques cannot be underestimated. In order to mitigate this partially, interview partners were asked to turn on the camera if possible. Almost all interviews were conducted with the camera on.

It was anticipated that COVID-19 could affect the availability of stakeholders for interviews, as they may be coping with pressing professional or private challenges. However, this was not the case. More people participated in interviews than originally planned. It appeared that people had more time to participate in interviews when compared to pre-COVID times.

The response rate related to the questionnaires was 38%, which is somewhat lower than expected (50%). However, questionnaires usually have a lower response rate compared to interviews. The questionnaires provided beneficiaries and stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute, if they so wished.

In summary, the evaluation team is satisfied with the amount of data collected, given the variety of data sources utilized. Where the evidence base is limited, this is clearly identified in the report.

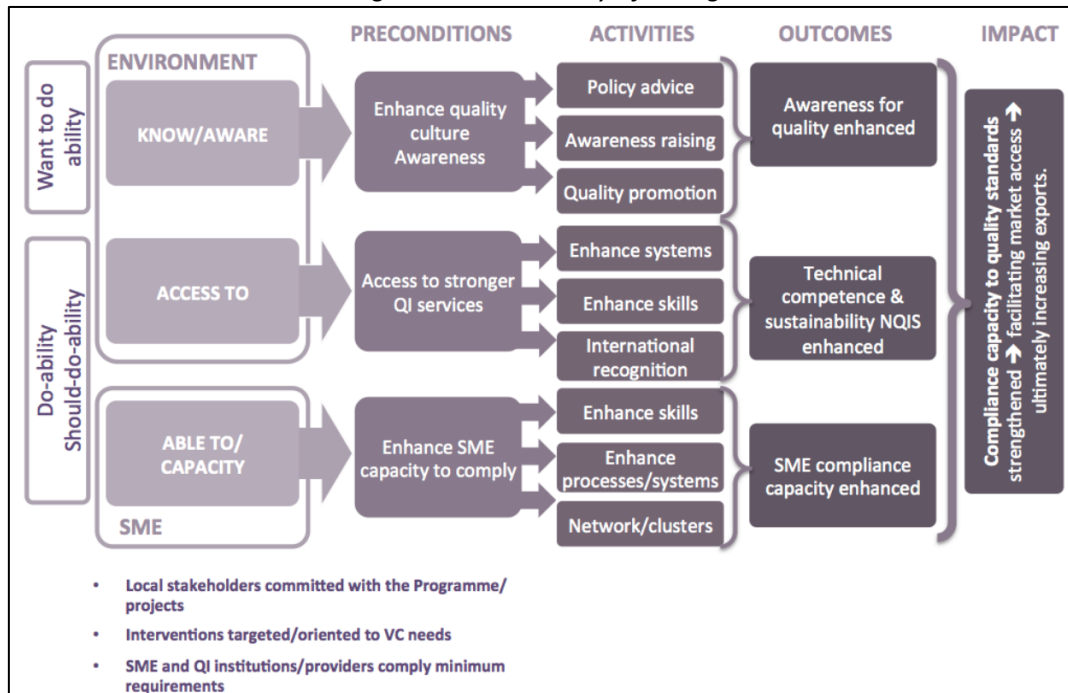
4. Findings

4.1 GQSP theory of change (relevance)

Summary Finding 1: The overall intervention logic of the GQSP is valid. The three outcomes at the levels of quality infrastructure, SMEs and quality awareness are at the heart of the GQSP. This system approach constitutes the fundamental logic of the GQSP. A shortcoming of the theory of change is that it is limited to the intervention logic at the country level and does not include the global knowledge management including the development of global public goods. Also, the interplay between the two components (global and country level) is not included in the theory of change which constitutes a central component of the programme approach. From a methodological point of view, the theory of change has several weaknesses.

The theory of change for the GQSP was introduced in the original project document. It consists of a narrative and a visual (Figure 2). The ultimate objective is to increase exports (impact level) by strengthening the quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access for SMEs. In order to achieve this, three expected outcomes are defined at the level of the national quality infrastructure, at the level of SMEs and at the level of awareness for quality. So, the pathway to impact can be phrased as follows: If the national quality infrastructure system is strengthened and the SME quality compliance capacity enhanced (“do-ability”) and the quality awareness enhanced (“want-to-do ability”), then SMEs become more competitive and ultimately exports are enhanced.

Figure 2: GQSP theory of change



Source: GQSP Project Document, 2017, p. 18.

The focus group discussion with the GQSP project managers in Vienna confirmed the overall intervention logic as still valid. The three outcomes are seen at the heart of the GQSP. This *system approach* at different levels constitutes the fundamental logic of the GQSP.

The project managers also agreed that there are major assumptions behind the logic for the three outcomes to lead to the expected impact as enhanced export depends on many factors of which the three outcomes are just a few.¹² These underlying assumptions are not explained in the theory of change. It was also debated if export is a too narrow focus, as the type of export may also matter or as the three outcomes may also lead to enhanced domestic sales. However, the focus on export was justified by the mandate of both UNIDO and SECO.

The participants in the focus group discussion agreed that the main missing element in the theory of change is component 1 of the GQSP and the interrelation with component 2 as it is visualised in another figure in the project document (Figure 3). The theory of change in the original project document reflects the intervention logic at the country level and does not include the global knowledge management including the development of global public goods (UNIDO's normative, analytical and research function). This has been recognised and the global team developed a ToC of the Global Programme which was finalized during the evaluation (i.e., December 2020).¹³

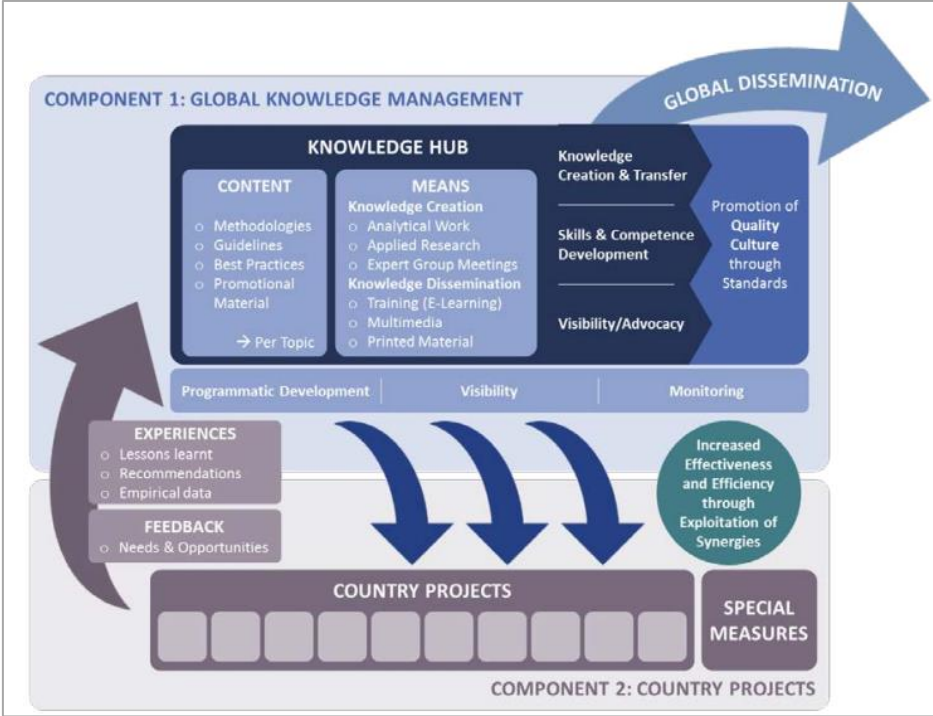
The evaluation team is of the view, that it is a major weakness of the theory of change that the interplay between the two components (global and country level) is not included as this constitutes the central element of the programme approach. The interplay is reflected to some extent in the original programme document. For example, under 2.1.3. it is stated that "*Lessons learned from country projects (and from the Programme overall) is one of the major sources of synergies generated through Component 1.*" (p. 22). However, the fact that the interplay between country and global

¹² Examples for possible assumptions: SMEs have access to finance, SMEs have export capacity, continued global demand for goods of value chain, etc.

¹³ The new and additional ToC for the Global Programme was shared with the evaluation team towards the end of the evaluation (after the data collection phase). A short assessment has been added in Annex 1.

level is not reflected in the theory of change raises the question whether or not it is conceptually sufficiently clear as to how the two levels should interact in a systematic way or if the interplay is more ad-hoc in nature. The lack of a standardized mechanism was emphasized by many.

Figure 3: Framework of Component 1 and interrelation with Component 2



Source: GQSP Project Document, 2017, p. 13.

The evaluation team reviewed the theory of change also from a methodological point of view (Annex 1). From this point of view, the GQSP theory of change has several weaknesses, as key elements are either missing or unclear.

4.2 Country projects (relevance, effectiveness, coherence)

4.2.a Relevance and coherence of country projects

Summary Finding 2: The GQSP is seen as highly relevant. The GQSP has several comparative advantages. These include the recognition of UNIDO’s knowledge and experience in the development of Quality Infrastructure (QI), the inclusive nature of in-country governance structures that ensured that GQSP interventions were aligned with host government needs and complementary to previous and current interventions from other development agencies. The lack in most cases of project duplication and overlap could be attributed to the specialised technical nature of projects related to QI and the acknowledgement of UNIDO’s particular expertise in this area.

Stakeholders from seven country projects¹⁴ provided feedback either through virtual interviews or the provision of responses to questionnaires. The seven countries are targeting different value chains and are at different stages of implementation. Some (i.e., Colombia, Ghana and Indonesia) are building on and benefiting from previous interventions prior to the creation of the GQSP. These country projects have naturally progressed further.

¹⁴ In the case of the eight country project, Kyrgyzstan, only one interview with the Senior National Project Assistant was realized.

The responses gathered from 37 country stakeholders have been used to assess relevance and coherence of the country level projects. These inputs are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Stakeholder perspectives on the relevance and coherence of six GQSP country projects

Country and Value Chain(s)		Summarised stakeholder inputs
Colombia Chemicals	Relevance	The accelerated translation and adoption of 27 international standards for products such as disinfectants, gloves, and protective clothing, was a key intervention to help locally address the current global health crisis.
		There is strong commitment to the agreed outcomes which are relevant for companies and consumers.
		The online tools provided allowed a 600 attendee course in Chemical Metrology.
	Coherence	Although there are cooperation programmes focused on improving the QI in other sectors such as cocoa, dairy and automotive, these have a more limited scope. GQSP's approach is a differentiating feature.
		The GQSP actively seeks to find synergies between it and other SECO -funded projects such as SIPPO and Colombia+Competitiva.
		Participation in international standardization activities related to priority issues for the Chemical Value Chain has increased.
		The GQSP is managed so that it is coherent with other national efforts and duplication of activities is either avoided or appropriately integrated.
Ghana Cashew, Oil Palm, Cosmetics and Cocoa	Relevance	The GQSP has pioneered a "standards based" approach to quality that replaces the more informal way of doing things used previously.
		The awareness of the need for quality products is definitely increasing.
		A review of the membership of the relevant Technical Committees of the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) standards processes related to the targeted value chains has been completed. New participants have joined to help ensure that on-the-ground issues are better addressed in new standards being developed for the Palm oil and Cocoa sectors.
		Expert technical support for the GSA pesticide residue and food safety laboratories is helping them address urgent and very sophisticated testing capacity needs. These activities will also seek internationally recognised accreditation in due course.
	Coherence	GQSP interventions build on a previous project funded by SECO and benefit from the QI expertise that GQSP now delivers.
		The alignment with Government priorities, synergies with the main drivers in the palm oil sector and the onboarding of the various ministries involved encourages maximum traction.
		The steering committee, populated with influential members, has helped ensure visibility and that no unnecessary overlaps occur.
		The GQSP selected value chain work is being coordinated with that supported by another donor related to other value chains including cassava, mango and pineapple.

		The need for appropriate and ongoing interaction between laboratory professionals at national and within GQSP countries needs to be more actively addressed.
Indonesia Fish and Seaweed	Relevance	GQSP has helped strengthen the technical capacity in 47 laboratories around the country in areas including method validation.
		GQSP is assisting in the implementation of quality systems required for the SMEs to be certified which will allow for increased income.
		The modular approach that has been adopted will facilitate expansion of similar activities to other parts of the country.
		Virtual training related to Good Agricultural Practice for over 700 farmers was appreciated but farmers still need on-site visits.
		Additional standards are needed to improve the quality of Fish and Fishery products
	Coherence	GQSP has helped ensure alignment and that assigned responsibilities match the skills and mandates of the various QI organisations.
	There are no other such programmes addressing the needs in this area.	
Peru Cocoa and Coffee	Relevance	Training programmes for standards IOS/IEC 17025, ISO/IEC 17065, ISO/IEC 17020 have enhanced the knowledge of personnel who will drive the accreditation processes of laboratories, inspection bodies, and product certification bodies in the coffee and cocoa value chains.
		Coffee and cocoa cooperatives have agreed to an evaluation to determine gaps versus QI needs. At a later stage some cooperatives will be assisted to improve the quality of their export products.
		Although it helps to know that there is an intention to improve QI, in almost 3 years, little has changed on the ground.
	Coherence	The co-implementation of the project with the quality authority of Peru (INACAL) allows for capacity building and empowers INACAL.
		The GQSP specifically targets the QI aspects related to the coffee and cocoa value chains, so no other endeavours have been identified which duplicate these objectives.
		The project has interacted with several other institutions active in QI for the selected value chains. Action has also been taken to secure participation of prospective cooperatives and laboratories to participate in preliminary gap and needs evaluations.
		It is noted that there is an Inter-American Development Bank project that aims to also strengthen QI elements in Peru together with INACal. It is important that overlaps and duplications are avoided.
Ukraine Wood	Relevance	The budget does not allow sufficient impact on the extremely old, soviet based quality and standard system.
		The project is at a very early stage (just completed inception phase).
	Coherence	There is a good cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and Trade (signed MoU) as well as with the sectoral business associations.
South Africa	Relevance	The GQSP has helped change the thinking and approach of SMEs in this sector towards the need for quality.

Essential and vegetable oils		Government support for this sector has changed from a reactive “wait and see how we might help” to one of assisting this initiative from its inception.
		GQSP has brought structure and efficacy to the industry and helped a local association, SAEOPA, to grow its paying membership base and develop export support services to SMEs.
		The development of 3 new national standards as part of a target of 4 over the life time of the project is a major achievement and allows for the dissemination of good practice and provides the necessary platform for building quality assurance systems.
		No commercial laboratory is willing to seek accreditation for the relevant product quality tests for essential oils due to small sample volumes. The use of university laboratories is also problematic due to the need for urgent results.
	Coherence	The development under GQSP and ongoing meetings of the national quality forum has helped ensure national QI awareness and appropriate coherence.
		The GQSP, SIPPO and ABioSA are all members of the bio trade stakeholder forum which has helped ensure national value chain coherence.
		The synergistic partnership between GQSP, SIPPO and ABioSA, all funded by SECO, has ensured maximum synergies and joint benefits across all elements of the value chain.
		The strengthening of SAEOPA has included the development of a strong advocacy and facilitation role with Government departments and agencies.
Vietnam Mango	Relevance	The project is responding to the needs of the Government of Vietnam, and focused on sustainable exports from the mango value chain by improving standards and the QI.
		Too early to say as the Vietnam Project only started in mid-2020.
	Coherence	It is important to coordinate with other donor-funded programs in the country and continually align the project activities with the long-term goals of the sector to secure local ownership and ensure sustainability.
		There needs to be a joint knowledge hub for all partners within the project to make follow up easier.

Table: Evaluation team, based on information provided by country stakeholders via interview and questionnaires.

In evaluating how well the programme has performed so far in terms of relevance, it is clear from the various responses that the GSQP country level activities are utilising the accumulated QI knowledge and experience of UNIDO to relevantly address the specific QI challenges related to each of the targeted value chains. This is noteworthy and a significant departure from previous QI strengthening projects which previously tended to build technical capacity and capability in laboratories, inspection bodies and certification bodies “in a fragmented and piecemeal manner, frequently in ministry/organizational silos” based on addressing a particular crisis at a particular point in time¹⁵. The adoption of a value chain approach to strengthening QI is increasingly considered as best

¹⁵ See paragraph 3.2, page 17, Quality Policy, Guiding principles, UNIDO, Vienna, Austria, 2018.

practice¹⁶ given that such interventions can be more tightly focused on addressing very specific conformity assessment needs and the associated technical QI capacity building.

The focus on developing appropriate product related standards using relevant local expertise to support different value chains has been commended by several stakeholders. An inherent problem with the current group of very diverse value chains is that the associated and very specific QI knowledge and technical understanding contained in such standards will only, in most instances, be transferable during future interventions targeting similar value chains with similar QI needs and technical problems.

The availability of an appropriate product standard is only the beginning of addressing a value chain's QI related needs. The need to prove conformity against such standards is also vital¹⁷. A QI related problem that has already arisen in one of the countries is that the volume of testing required to support the chosen value chain is not considered sufficient to justify the cost of achieving and maintaining the accreditation required to ensure that such product related test results are internationally recognised. Although this problem is not peculiar to the GQSP, it does serve to highlight the inherent complexities associated with managing projects from a country perspective.

Although coherence between QI activities within the specific country value chain context at the generic level appears to have been successfully addressed to ensure that activities do not overlap, there was little evidence of technical coherence and cooperation for similar conformity assessment activities between countries within the programme. One laboratory respondent highlighted this need and strongly recommended that it be addressed in future. Addressing technical coherence in an appropriate manner across countries rather than using the old case by case, country silo, approach could unlock significant benefits in terms of expedited technical capacity building across the GQSP and help ensure future sustainability.

4.2.b Progress of country projects (portfolio assessment)

Summary Finding 3: After a relatively slow start, most country projects are advancing steadily or are picking up speed. The country project in Kyrgyzstan, however, appears to be struggling. Aggregated quantitative results of the country project portfolio are not systematically made available and a comparison with targets is not possible at this stage. However, a beneficiary analysis shows some promising quantitative results in terms of numbers of beneficiaries. As of now, direct support to SMEs (outcome 2) and the promotion of quality culture (outcome 3) appear to be less prominent compared with support provided to the national quality infrastructure (outcome 1).

By Nov 2020, eight country projects had been formulated and were under implementation. In addition, two special measures have been formulated. The special measures in Georgia started in the third quarter of 2020. Costa Rica is expected to start in the first quarter of 2021. One additional special measure is being formulated in the Philippines.

The duration of the projects varies significantly (Figure 4). The project in Peru has a duration of 48 months, the project in Vietnam has 30 months. The special measures have a duration of 24 months. The duration of the country projects varies from the duration of the overall GQSP (1.11.2017-31.10.2022). By November 2020, 37 months of the total of 60 months has elapsed (62%).

¹⁶ See paragraph 1.8, page 22, Leveraging the impact of Business Environment Reform: The Contribution of Quality Infrastructure, Lessons from Practice, The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development, May 2015.

¹⁷ See paragraph 4.2. pages 48, 49 and table 1, Rebooting Quality Infrastructure for a Sustainable Future, UNIDO, Vienna, Austria, 2020.

Figure 4: Country project durations, incl. countries with special measures

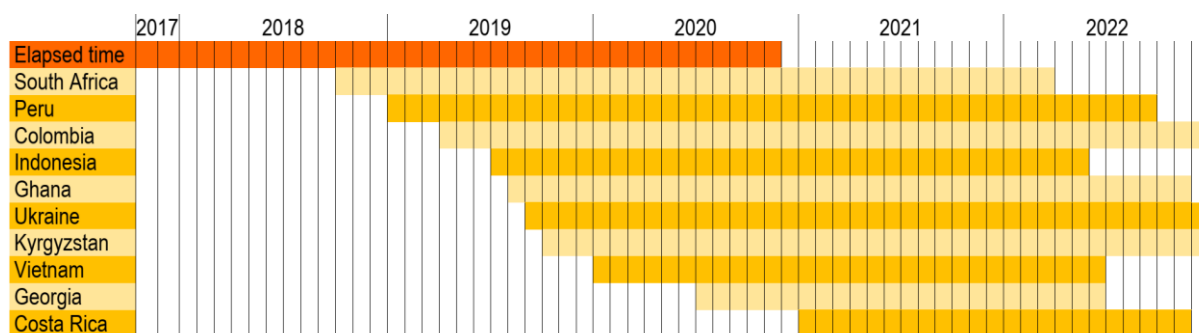


Figure: Evaluation team, based on project documents, Nov. 2020.

The country projects are at different stages of implementation (Figures 5). In terms of project duration between 37% (Vietnam) and 62% (South Africa) of the project duration has elapsed (Nov. 2020). In terms of expenditures, the differences are more significant. While the project in South Africa has spent 50% of the budget (Nov. 2020), the country project in Kyrgyzstan has only spent 13%.

Figure 5: Progress of country projects (time and budget)

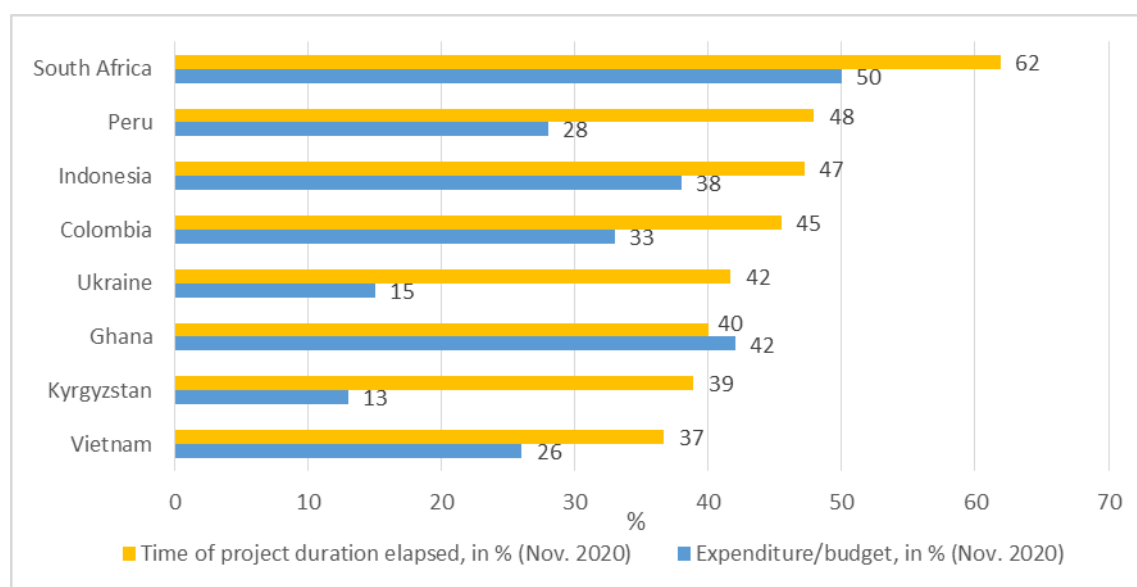


Figure: Evaluation team, based on project documents and UNIDO Open data platform, Nov. 2020.

The GQSP Mid-year Report 2020 provides a comprehensive narrative on the situation in each country. Results of the Mid-year Report were presented to the 5th Steering Committee Meeting on 15 September 2020. The Power Point Presentation provides an accessible account of progress of each country project, including achievements, challenges and mitigation measures. Together, the Mid-year Report and the PPP for the Steering Committee provide a detailed progress update which shows good progress in Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia and South Africa. Reporting on Peru, Ukraine and Vietnam shows that the implementation has only started recently and that the project in Kyrgyzstan is facing several challenges.

Stakeholder views are another source to assess progress in implementing country projects. The country projects in Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia and South Africa are seen as being largely on track by various stakeholders. Based on the good absorption capacity of the project in Colombia, SECO intends to increase the project budget by CHF 800,000. The country projects in Ukraine, Peru and

Vietnam are viewed as partly behind schedule, although all three countries appear to be picking up speed. The country project in Kyrgyzstan appears to be struggling. Coincidentally, no beneficiary in Kyrgyzstan was willing to participate in this evaluation. Particularly challenging is the fact that the project has reportedly no CTA at the moment. Apparently, the Government has expressed the preference to work with UNIDO HQ directly, without a project coordinator in the country.¹⁸

Based on the Mid-year report 2020, the UNIDO Open data platform and stakeholder interviews and questionnaires the evaluation team rates the country projects in terms of likelihood to achieve expected results by the end of the individual project cycles (Figure 6). While this is not a scientific measure, it is intended as a management tool to identify issues that require attention.

Assessing the likelihood of achieving results *by country projects* is one way to assess the GQSP project portfolio. Another approach is to assess progress towards *aggregated results* of the entire GQSP project portfolio. The logical framework at the global level was last updated for the Annual Report 2019. The logical framework presents under Component 2 (country projects) aggregated numbers, including information from Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia and South Africa. However, the numbers provided do not allow for an easy reading in terms of whether or not the projects are overall on track to achieve targets. For example, the indicators for the three outcomes under component 2 were at that time still at zero.¹⁹

Figure 6: Likelihood to achieve expected results by end of project duration, by country projects

GQSP country projects									
	Colombia	Ghana	Indonesia	Kyrgyzstan	Peru	South Africa	Ukraine	Vietnam	
									On track to achieve expected results by end of project duration
									Delayed, project will probably still achieve most results by end of project duration
									Delayed, project will probably not achieve expected results by end of project duration

Figure: Evaluation team, based on Mid-year report 2020, UNIDO Open data platform and stakeholder interviews/questionnaires.

¹⁸ The GQSP team presented the challenges encountered during the inception phase at the first Steering Committee meeting (SCM) in November 2020, prompting all parties to give their assurances that all efforts will be invested to expedite the project implementation. These challenges included finding a conducive and decentralized implementation mechanism with counterpart institutions that does not require extensive hierarchical approvals, relatively more severe impact of COVID-19 in Kyrgyzstan, and political uncertainties resulting from the annulled parliamentary elections of October 2020. The actual implementation of the project started only after the SCM, and GQSP team is yet to report quantities results against the baselines and targets. Delays during the inception phase resulted in subsequent delays for technical assistance to SMEs. This coincided with the start of the winter season in Kyrgyzstan when majority of fruit SMEs are inactive. GQSP team is expected to launch the Technical Assistance Programme under Outcome 2 in Q1 of 2021. UNIDO and SECO emphasized in the last SCM that the project design requires a CTA, which was accepted by the counterparts. The vacancy for a new project CTA was launched in December 2020, and UNIDO is currently evaluating the applications.

¹⁹ GQSP, Annual Report 2019, p. 72, 74, 77.

The GQSP Mid-year Report 2020 does not include an updated logical framework and no reporting on indicators. Achievements are not aggregated and compared with aggregated targets, which makes it difficult to know whether or not the GQSP project portfolio as a whole is on track.

In this regard, the GQSP South Africa Mid-Year Report (July 2020) is a good example of progress reporting. The “assessment of the project progress” shows targets achieved in percentage.²⁰

A somewhat aggregated view on the country project portfolio provides the beneficiary analysis conducted for this evaluation (Table 6).

Table 6: Beneficiary analysis, country projects and countries with special measures

Outcomes	Beneficiary categories	Number of beneficiaries reached by Component 2
Outcome 1: Quality Infrastructure	Quality infrastructure institutions	10 National Standards Bodies (NSBs) 9 National Metrology Institutes (NMIs) 10 National Accreditations Bodies (NABs)
	Quality infrastructure services	43 Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) directly supported (300 identified) 7000* people trained (QI and CABs)
Outcome 2: SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	88 SME directly supported 5315* people trained (SMEs)
Outcome 3: Culture of Quality	Individuals	7915* people attending awareness raising events
* incl. secondary stakeholders (not directly / exclusively associated with the GQSP): this includes individuals that participated in an activity of the GQSP, this may be training, awareness raising events, meetings, conferences, etc. these people have benefited in one way or the other from the programme, but may not be engaged on a regular basis with GQSP activities. Because of COVID-19 many meetings, events and webinars have been held online in 2020. GQSP has conducted a number of online webinars at global and country level open for everyone. This has increased the outreach significantly, which explains the relatively high numbers of secondary stakeholders.		

Table: Evaluation team, based on data provided by GQSP team, Nov. 2020.

Data provided to the evaluation team shows that to date now almost 30 quality infrastructure institutions and 43 conformity assessment bodies and about 7'000 individuals from these institutions are benefitting from the GQSP at country level. Moreover, 88 SMEs were directly supported while over 5,000 peoples from SMEs are being trained. Finally, almost 8,000 individuals benefit from the awareness raising events. As these figures are not compared with targets, it is not possible to state whether they indicate that the country project portfolio is on track to achieve set targets. For instance, the 88 SMEs that have directly benefitted may be below target when comparing with the target for the indicator “SME that apply core elements of SOPs that are relevant to the relevant QMS standards” is set at 2,442 by 2022.²¹

²⁰ GQSP, South Africa Mid-Year Report, July 2020, p. 19-23.

²¹ GQSP, Annual Report 2019, p. 75.

The GQSP has conducted a comparative analysis²² which provides a valuable compilation of technical activities. It reveals (Table 7) that of the 65 recorded activities 44 (68%) are related to quality infrastructure (outcome 1) while 11 activities (17%) are targeting SMEs (outcome 2) and 10 activities (15%) are related to quality awareness (outcome 3).

The comparative analysis also calculated the funds allocation to the three outcomes. It found that in total, 36% of the funds in all the GQSP country projects are allocated to Outcome 1, and 35% allocated to Outcome 2. Only 11% of the funds are allocated to Outcome 3, and 19% allocated to management. Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Peru and Ukraine allocated most of their funds towards Outcome 1. Colombia, Indonesia, South Africa and Vietnam allocated most of their funds to Outcome 2.²³ However, it was never the intention to allocate resources equally to the three outcomes in all countries.

Overall, the comparative analysis suggests, that direct support to SMEs (outcome 2) and the promotion of quality culture (outcome 3) appears to be less prominent compared with support provided to the national quality infrastructure (outcome 1).

Table 7: Compilation of activities by country projects and type of activity

Type of activity		Colombia	Ghana	Indonesia	Kyrgyzstan	Peru	South Africa	Ukraine	Vietnam	Total
Activities related to standardization and/or national standards bodies (NSBs)	The development, revision, adoption and dissemination of relevant standards for the selected VCs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			44
	The harmonization of national standards with international standards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	The alignment of the VC/industry with market requirements, i.e., quality standards and technical regulations			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Involvement in standardization activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Activities related to metrology	Inter-laboratory comparisons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
	Traceability				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
	Certified reference materials (CRM), new calibration and measurement capabilities (CMC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
	Capacity building			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Activities related to accreditation	Accreditation to ISO 17025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Accreditation recognition/training of assessors			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Activities related to conformity assessment	Testing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	?	?	?	?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	?	?	
	Inspection		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
	Certification		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Support in standards compliance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	

²² GQSP Comparative Analysis Report, UNIDO, January 2020.

²³ GQSP Comparative Analysis Report, UNIDO, January 2020, p. 10.

Activities related to SMEs	Support in certification requests	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Quality management		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
	Standards and quality-related standard operating procedures (SOPs)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Activities related to quality awareness	Roundtables and/or public-private dialogue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10
	Knowledge dissemination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		11	7	12	7	8	5	10	5	65

Table: Evaluation team, based on GQSP Comparative Analysis Report, UNIDO, January 2020; and additional data received during the evaluation.

4.2.c Success factors related to country projects

Summary Finding 4: The use of an holistic approach that marries the QI related needs of a particular country value chain with a set of relevant public good QI related tools that are developed using broad expert consultations, and then piloted within the GQSP context, has been adopted to help ensure that each country project can access best available QI support when they are in a position to do so.

The overall objective of the GQSP is to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access for SMEs. The Programme is focused on three outcomes that intend to respond to the main compliance challenges identified for developing countries. Under the umbrella of the programme, country-specific interventions are intended to address compliance challenges in a holistic, yet tailor-made manner, providing technical support to quality infrastructure institutions and strengthen private sector capacities in target countries. The inputs provided by country level responses identified the following main strengths and main challenges related to working under the GQSP (Table 8).

Table 8: Main strengths and challenges related to working under the GQSP

Main Strengths of the GQSP from a country level perspective	Main Challenges of the GQSP from a country level perspective
Value chain, not QI institution demand, driven	The appropriate selection of common value chains could promote greater efficacy and accelerate progress in implementation
Possibility of generating peer learning between countries including the use of value chain specific product standards	Limited / no access to other partners within the programme
Global QI concepts are being translated into public good information and tools for the benefit of all	Lack of awareness / optimal use of the QI tools and publications available and their intended use in some instances
Promotes greater understanding of common SME needs by NQI institutions	Timeframes are too short and funding limited for the types of significant changes required
Use of QI knowledgeable project staff in UNIDO and the availability of a network of experts	Limited absorption capacity of national counterparts and an associated risk of dependency on external experts
Access to a common pool of QI information, publications and training	Delays in mobilisation of government contributions and project approval processes
A sound communications strategy	Awareness creation needs to be followed by appropriate in depth interventions and support.

Access to a common QI platform and the availability of virtual training in QI related topics	Language can be a barrier to the transfer of information and knowledge
Training and support in innovative use of new technology such as the leveraging of virtual platforms to continue delivering services and “smart glasses” for laboratory experts to perform remote assessments	The need to prioritise activities in response to the diverse expectations of various stakeholders

Table: Evaluation team, based on data provided by country level responders

When asked how the GQSP has enhanced their ability to share knowledge and address issues with other country partners within the programme, several stakeholders identified this as an area that needed improvement. It was acknowledged that the programme was already sharing QI related documents that could be used as a reference as they contained issues that are common to other NQI systems and institutions. The use of countries to pilot global tools has already begun and it is expected that the lessons learnt through such exercises will be used to inform other countries where they are intended to be deployed in future. At least two respondents noted that there was limited or no access to other partners including technical peers within the programme. It should however be mentioned that there were excellent levels of cooperation between two countries (South Africa and Ghana) that had led to significant reductions in time taken to implement particular activities in spite of being involved in different value chains. The successes related to this close cooperation should be further investigated, identified and the appropriate commonalities shared between the rest of the country members as a further benefit of the programme.

4.3 Global knowledge tools and knowledge hub (relevance, effectiveness, coherence)

4.3.a GQSP tools and Global Knowledge Hub – Progress, Quality and Usefulness

Summary Finding 5: The global knowledge management is by and large doing the right things. Most global tools will – once completed - be very useful, also to the GQSP. The quality of the tools is also expected to meet expectations. The online hub has gained even more relevance for the GQSP during COVID-19, in particular the online training and webinars attract a lot of GQSP targeted country participants. Still, the awareness of the global tools amongst GQSP stakeholders is limited and the language of the tools for GQSP purposes is an issue, as many beneficiaries (e.g., farmers) do not speak English.

The intention of the various tools is to work together to better address particular QI needs using the different insights and information they each can specifically provide. The evaluation team is of the view, based on the various responses received, that an appreciation of how they might be used together in supporting and shaping activities “on the ground” is currently very limited amongst the various stakeholders.

A summary assessment of the global tools according to progress, quality and usefulness is provided in Table 9. The assessment is based on stakeholder responses and the view of the quality expert of the evaluation team.

By Nov 2020, seven global tools are in the process of development (**red**), pilot testing (**yellow**), or implementation (**green**) indicating their current stage of progress.

The quality is assessed as either below expectations (**red**), meeting expectations (**yellow**) or exceeding expectations (**green**).

Usefulness is assessed as either not considered useful (red), somewhat useful (yellow) and very useful (green).

The tools have been grouped according to their intended audience, namely policy makers, QI institutions and / or conformity assessment bodies (CABs) or Small / Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Table 9: Assessment of GQSP global tools

Intended Audience	Tools	Out-come	Reach / Pilot activities	Progress	Quality	Usefulness
Tools for Policy Makers	Quality Infrastructure for Sustainable Development Index (QI4SD)	1	All GQSP countries	Red	Yellow	Green
	Rejection Analysis	1 / 3	All GQSP countries	Yellow	Yellow	Green
	Quality Policy Guiding Methodology	3	GQSP Global	Green	Green	Green
Tools for QI institutions & CABs	Laboratory Network	1	All GQSP countries	Green	Yellow	Yellow
	Quality along the Value Chain (QI4VC)	2	Peru, Ghana	Red	Yellow	Green
Tools for QI institutions/SMEs	Quality Management Online Training	2	Promotion in all GQSP countries	Green	Green	Green
	Culture for Quality (C4Q)	3	South Africa, Ghana	Yellow	Green	Yellow

Table: Evaluation team, based on responses and own evaluation.

A. Tools for Policy Makers

1. Quality Infrastructure for Sustainable Development Index (QI4SD)

The tool is currently in the initial phase. It is based on a framework provided by a recent UNIDO publication²⁴ that promotes the need for the quality infrastructure (QI) to be revisited and more tightly aligned to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). The tool is intended to provide a scoreboard, using suitable statistics and data analysis, to link the initiation / further development of a QI to the achievement of the UN sustainable development goals (UN SDGs). The three pillars being People, Planet and Prosperity. The subject matter expert confirmed that the theoretical framework has been developed. The associated data collection is planned to commence early in 2021 using the countries within the GQSP in the first instance. This fully aligns with the progress as stated in the GQSP mid-year report²⁵.

The evaluation team is of the view that the availability of the tool will provide valuable insights to national decision makers. It should also assist in fostering cross ministry discussions and alignment of decisions related to future QI related capacity building. A more cohesive national approach to QI development is also the goal of creating a National Quality Policy. The availability of the data this tool provides would therefore greatly assist in the motivation, creation and focused implementation of an

²⁴ Rebooting Quality Infrastructure for a Sustainable Future, UNIDO, Vienna, Austria, 2020.

²⁵ See paragraph 4.1.2.1 of the GQSP, mid-year report 2020 published in August 2020.

appropriate and sustainable quality policy and implementation strategy to guide QI development and strengthening. As an independent source of trusted QI related data, the tool would be invaluable in the monitoring and evaluation of the many NQP related initiatives that are currently underway around the world. As many of these are partly or fully funded by donors, the availability of such a scoreboard provides a useful basis of comparison between these various efforts. An overview of related NQP / NQI achievements in the various countries is another important dimension that is currently lacking.

II. Rejection Analysis

The tool intends to provide data that will help focus the QI in addressing foreign market compliance (Technical Regulations) and conformance (Standards) issues in a more effective and efficient manner. The selection of particular value chains in the various GQSP countries can be equated to a bottom up approach to address QI needs. This tool provides specific top down insights to assist in identifying the challenges related to particular export markets that a suitable QI could assist in addressing. Its importance was stressed by one stakeholder who highlighted their frustration in being unable to understand trending issues related to global trade barriers.

After accessing the online tool to assess quality and usefulness, South Africa was selected by the evaluation team due to the progress already made there as part of the GQSP. Data was presented for the country profile indicators and related food safety and logistics performance index charts. No information however appeared in the Unit Rejection Rate graphs, even after entering “alle” as the product focus. As citrus is a major export earner and also often the subject of trade related tensions, it was interesting to see after entering this in the Aggregate reasons for rejection product line, the tool indicated an equal rejection rate due to pesticide residue and bacterial contamination. Each were recorded as 1000 rejections. It could not be determined how accurate this result was. It was also noted that the data base links to 2018 data. If the tool is to be used to focus efforts to address critical compliance or conformance issues, the age of the data used is crucial. It is assumed that the 2018 data set is the latest available.

The countries of Ghana and Indonesia were also selected and data for these countries was available for the country profile indicators and related food safety and logistics performance index charts. Again, no information for either country was reflected in the Unit Rejection Rate graphs, even after entering “alle” as the product focus. Several product focus areas were also entered in the “Aggregate reasons for rejection” part of the tool but yielded no result. This may be due to an incorrect selection of the product category for the particular country or due to the current stage of development of the tool. It should be noted that the tool is currently a beta version and therefore might not provide full data on all indicators.

It was noted by the responsible UNIDO project manager that the tool is intended to replace a previous document²⁶ that for various reasons was only published twice, the last time in 2015. The document published in 2015 motivated 3 measures of trade standards compliance capacity namely: (1) Import rejection analysis, (2) Corporate Buyers compliance confidence and (3) Measures of trade standards compliance capacity. The document also provides very comprehensive explanations to motivate their inclusion in the report and what can be concluded from the data collected and analysed. In the web version accessed little by way of additional explanation and analysis was available. It is acknowledged that the tool as evaluated was identified as a beta version and such enhancements may be intended as part of future phases of the tool, which in the opinion of the evaluation team would also greatly enhance its usefulness.

²⁶ See Meeting Standards, Winning Markets – Trade Standards Compliance 2015, jointly published by UNIDO, Norad and the Institute of Development Studies.

III. Quality Policy Guiding Methodology

There are three UNIDO publications that were published as global public good in 2018 related to quality policy. These are 'Quality Policy – Guiding Principles'; 'Quality Policy – Practical Tool' and 'Quality Policy – Technical Guide'. Together, this set of documents aims to support policy makers and their associated Quality Infrastructure (QI) practitioners and to design and develop robust, holistic, and demand-driven QI systems.

An associated training course²⁷ is divided into 6 modules, each with a set of learning objectives and is available in English. The training guides the learner on using the methodology and tools to develop/consolidate a national quality policy. In parallel the learner is also expected to disseminate the knowledge about the contents of the training course locally, through awareness workshops/seminars and stakeholder consultation workshops. The four main technical modules (2 to 5) contain a series of exercises, consisting of yes/no questions to help participants self-assess their progress and understanding of the topics presented. At the end of the course, there is a final examination, to help participants pinpoint topics they have assimilated well or less well, so that they can go back to the topics to complete the learning. An evaluation of the use of these tools related training courses in Indonesia produced the following results:

- **Indonesia**

The work in Indonesia intends to build on previous interventions for strengthening the fish and fisheries value chains. The inception report²⁸ notes that some government institutions are beginning to discuss the need for a quality policy, there is not a common position yet in this regard. The responses to the evaluation similarly reflected this diversity of opinion, one responder in fact specifically mentioned their knowledge and use of the QP practical guide, QP technical guide, and QP guiding principles. Given that there is at least some expressed interest, it may be of interest to see who is currently making use of the Quality Policy training course and which institutions they represent as a precursor to more actively promoting the need for such a policy.

The evaluation team is of the view that in spite of the limited uptake in some GQSP country projects, this set of QP related publications and tools have already been recognized and are in use as trusted reference documents by a variety of country and regional policy makers and technical assistance agencies. The availability of training courses assist regional and country level policy makers to understand the need for such a policy and begin to develop an appropriate solution is a unique service offering under the GQSP and will serve to further encourage the recognition and use of these tools in NQP related initiatives.

B. Tools for QI institutions & CABs

I. Laboratory Network

The Labnet database was developed to provide information on services offered by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), calibration, testing, certification, and inspection, to assist in addressing the needs for conformity assessment. Individual CABs are required to enter information into the database by responding to a series of questions. They would be responsible to periodically maintain their information.

In the case of South Africa, there is currently just one Labnet entry – a non-accredited foreign certification body. Given the long history of internationally recognised laboratory accreditation in

²⁷ See <https://hub.unido.org/training-modules-quality-policy>

²⁸ See paragraph 4.1.2., Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP) Indonesia, Inception Report Indonesia, March 2020.

South Africa, this result was surprising²⁹. The information provided for this one entry is also very rudimentary and unlikely to assist someone looking to procure such services in an informed way. In discussions about this disparity with South African stakeholders, they were reluctant to enter their information into this database given that the local accreditation body (SANAS) already maintains such a database which is freely accessible on their website³⁰.

Nineteen of the Twenty Four CABs listed for Ghana are accredited. Fourteen of these CABs are from the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA). One of these is a metrology laboratory accredited for Mass, Balance, Temperature, Pressure, Humidity and Volume metrology. GSA also offers non-accredited metrology services in many other fields (e.g., High frequency electrical DC and low frequency electrical, Dimensional, Flow, Force, Speed and velocity, Time and frequency and Viscosity). The Labnet database does not clearly identify that these parameters are not accredited.

Each organisation is responsible for entering their own data. In doing so they answer a question "Has the laboratory been accredited in any scopes" using a simple yes / no answer. The evaluation team is of the view that this could lead to unnecessary confusion and misunderstanding, especially if the ultimate goal is to promote accredited tests as a vehicle to overcome technical barriers to trade.

According to the information provided on Labnet, the inspection activities at GSA are accredited for the scope of Fish and Fishery Products. They also perform inspection in the fields of Engineering, Agriculture, Food, Manufactured products and Building and construction. Textiles, and Fuel and Petroleum Products. Again, the evaluation team is of the view that the use of the simple question "Has the Inspection Body been accredited in any Scopes?" which is answered with a yes, could lead to misunderstanding. The evaluation team is also of the view that some of the other information contained in the entry covering inspection appears to be over elaborate for a typical potential user of such services.

According to one interviewee in Indonesia, over 100 laboratory personnel joined a webinar to learn more about Labnet. Although awareness had been created the same responder felt that more in depth follow up was now required. Some stakeholders expressed reservations regarding the need for such a tool given the focus of GQSP to encourage CABs to be accredited. They noted that each accreditation body who is a member of the mutual recognition arrangements of either the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) or the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) is obliged to maintain an accurate database of their accredited CABs. These records also contain detailed scopes for each accredited CAB specifying exactly what standards and / or parameters they are accredited for. This independent source of information is regularly maintained by the accreditation bodies and therefore sustainable.

II. Quality along the Value Chain (QI4VC)

According to the mid-year report³¹ this tool is being developed under the GQSP project in Peru in collaboration with GQSP Ghana. Feedback obtained from stakeholders in Peru, confirmed that aspects of, and concepts from, the QI4VC methodology were used not only in the design of the project, but also for the identification of the selected value chains and particular areas that needed QI interventions. Two analytical studies were then used to validate the QI gaps for these selected

²⁹ According to the 2018 / 2019 annual report of South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) there are 1698 accredited CABs including 203 Calibration Laboratories, 414 Chemical, Microbiological, Mechanical and Physical testing laboratories, 248 Inspection Bodies, 56 Certification Bodies, 2 providers of Certified Reference Materials (CRMs) and 10 providers of Proficiency Testing (PT).

³⁰ See the database of CABs at www.sanas.co.za.

³¹ See paragraph 4.1.2.4 of the GQSP, mid-year report 2020 published in August 2020.

chains. The studies identified the capabilities and gaps of the local QI institutions serving the selected value chains as compared to those needed to address the quality requirements of the EU and USA for coffee and cocoa products.

The evaluation team is of the view that the value chain approach to the development and strengthening of country appropriate QI will not only ensure the most effective use of resources but may also allow for more immediate benefits to be realised than was previously possible. The resultant increase in foreign earnings that should accrue would also encourage further investments in the selected and possibly other strategic value chains. The benefit of adopting a programme approach under the GQSP could also encourage the selection of similar value chains in the future, and where circumstances allow, which would accelerate learning and lead to the achievement of even faster results.

C. Tools for SMEs

I. Online Training

There have been many negative and unintended consequences as a result of COVID-19. A major plus has been the uptake in electronic service delivery including online training. One responder noted that attendance of their organisations technical staff at training interventions was problematic prior to the pandemic. With the various lock downs and such staff now often working from home, they are now much more available to make use of such opportunities. The same responder noted that as soon as these staff return to office, they will probably become too busy again.

Another response noted that the online training provided through GQSP had greatly assisted them in the design and implementation of new technical standardization processes. They also noted the creation of new capacities in the professionals they interacted with both the national and regional level. Yet another was grateful that their personnel had not only been able to attend e-learning courses on good laboratory practices, but were now actively applying their newly acquired knowledge. An area of improvement was highlighted by yet another response who noted that although they were promoting the use of online courses offered by UNIDO through the GQSP, they currently had no way to ascertain how many of the people they interacted with had actually made use of them.

II. Culture for Quality (C4Q)

This tool is still under development after initial development in South Africa in the essential oil value chain. The pilot exercise was also used to develop a step-by step guide based on the lessons learnt. The training of local assessors was undertaken and these were joined by 2 candidates from Ghana. The stakeholders contacted in South Africa felt that they had benefited from participating in this pilot exercise. This was also confirmed by one of the two international experts involved in the development of the tool, who noted that a lot of the work envisaged for the development and piloting of the tool has now been completed. This has included the insertion of so called “lie detector” measures to ensure the integrity of the responses received which is essential as the tool is rolled out. The refined beta version has already been further tested in Ghana in the cocoa value chain. The use of a series of 7 live workshops initially, one for each principle of quality addressed by the tool, to explain the concepts and introduce the tool is intended to be replaced by a set of recorded workshops. This will allow for greater access by users. A senior QI representative in Ghana, by way of example, was aware of the tool due to a presentation made by a representative of UNIDO head office the day before the interview took place, but could offer no further insights. In contrast, an SME stakeholder in Ghana appeared to be much better informed. They were of the opinion that

the appreciation of the need for quality amongst his peers was increasing. He also expressed the hope that this would translate into an improvement in demand for his products.

According to the subject matter expert, there is still work required regarding the scoring of responses. They have recommended the use of benchmarking using at least two companies with a known quality culture to see how these relate to the responses received using the tool. According to them, this would allow the determination of a more definitive scoring methodology. The same expert noted that presently the tool is limited to a descriptive outcome rather than the production of a reliable score. The evaluation team is of the view that this is an innovative tool and that the experts involved are aware of the current pitfalls related to the tool and are working hard to address these in a systematic and responsible way. Once this work is completed the usefulness of the tool is expected to increase hence the current yellow indicator.

D. Global Knowledge Hub

The Knowledge Hub Online Platform is seen by some as a powerful tool to spread state of the art knowledge in many key QI related topics such as quality infrastructure, trade and e-commerce. An appreciation of material being also available in Spanish was also expressed. In response to questions related to the Knowledge Hub, many responders mentioned the series of webinars that they had been able to access and participate in. One stakeholder noted their importance as a provider of information but questioned the lack of a capacity building framework behind them. The same responder also felt that the topics appeared to be disjointed and was unable to link them to achieving a particular purpose. He suggested that an improvement would be provide critical analysis of the contents of the various webinars, to change them from “a collection of presentations to a brief synthesis and associated recommendations”.

Other responses indicated a need for a joint knowledge hub for all partners of the project to make it easier to follow up. At least one GQSP country lamented the lack of accessibility to other partners within the programme. Another agreed that knowledge sharing could be strengthened within the programme but that countries would need to be at the same stage of development and share a need to address similar technical issues. Language was also mentioned as a potential problem in achieving closer programme communication and use of the global tools. In many countries, beneficiaries (e.g., farmers) do not speak English. In spite of such challenges, several stakeholders would like to encourage UNIDO to facilitate further exchanges as part of the global reach of GQSP, and as a feature that could be better exploited by all GQSP partner countries. It was noted that some countries were already in the second phase and therefore were in a position to share experiences with other countries.

In addition to the specific comments for each tool that have already been highlighted, several more general comments were made. These ranged from no awareness or use of the tools, some knowledge but no use, and some use but the appreciation that this could be more optimal. One responder went as far as to state that although the tools provided by the GQSP were relevant for addressing a country's priority needs, more should be done to promote them by national counterparts. They also noted that most partners they interacted with had no access to these tools. Another stated that despite not personally using the tools, they appeared to be closely linked to addressing the needs of the country projects and specifically mentioned the Quality Infrastructure Development Index, Rejection Analysis and LabNet in this regard.

4.3.b Coordination at international level

Summary Finding 6: The development of public good tools and publications by UNIDO in support of the GQSP is widely supported and encouraged by other international actors. The GQSP is also providing valuable practical experience and insights for UNIDO to ensure that the global tools and publications are peer reviewed, coherent and refined using contracted experts together with inputs from other QI knowledgeable international organisations. UNIDO were also largely responsible for reviving and utilising a global cooperation of international QI organisations, INetQI.

UNIDO is a member of the International Network on Quality Infrastructure (INetQI) together with a number of other international organizations (Table 10). A strong relationship with other international QI organizations, will assist the GQSP to better understand and adapt to global QI trends. UNIDO has played a leading role in encouraging the active involvement of INetQI in the development and review of GQSP tools and publications. It is crucial that such INetQI participation in GQSP work, especially related to products from the global management component continues. By way of illustration, after an in-depth review of many interventions related to the development of a Quality Policy (QP), INetQI members assisted UNIDO in identifying a set of guiding principles³² which were then published jointly by INetQI / UNIDO.

Table 10: The International Network on Quality and Infrastructure (INetQI)

<p>Responding to the challenges of globalization, trade and sustainable development, fourteen international organizations have agreed to enhance their cooperation in promoting the understanding, value and acceptance of QI and providing guidance and support for its effective implementation and integration worldwide as part of the International Network on Quality Infrastructure (INetQI). These organizations currently are the:</p>	
<p>BIPM - Bureau International des Poids et Mesures IAF - International Accreditation Forum IEC - International Electrotechnical Commission IIOC - Independent International Organisation for Certification ILAC - International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation IQNET - International Certification Network ISO - International Standards Organization</p>	<p>ITC - International Trade Centre ITU - International Telecommunication Union OIML - International Organization of Legal Metrology UNECE - United Nations Economic Cooperation for Europe UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization WBG - World Bank Group WTO - World Trade Organization</p>

Source: <https://www.inetqi.net>

A deputy director of OIML, acknowledged the experience of UNIDO in QI projects, their access to a wide range of QI knowledgeable people and a good network of contacts in various QI related institutions. He noted that prior to INetQI, the interactions between the various international QI partners was limited to making presentations at each other's or similar events with limited interaction between such events. He appreciated the effort of UNIDO to underpin and support INetQI. In his opinion this has definitely increased international QI knowledge sharing and also encouraged joint activities between members. He was also appreciative of the ongoing bi-lateral work items that UNIDO and OIML are undertaking including an eLearning module. He did express a concern related to timing and time allocation for activities, based on previous experience. He noted instances where there was a lot of activity due to the sudden availability of funding including very tight deadlines. He felt that sometimes this led to an undue rush to complete the work and also assumed that contract experts would be available, often at short notice.

³² See Quality Policy Guiding Principles, iNetQI / UNIDO, Vienna, Austria 2018

The Director of capacity building at the International Standards Organization (ISO) highlighted the SDG focus of the ISO Action Plan and felt there were good synergies from working together with the GQSP.³³ The ISO fully supports the global knowledge component of the GQSP, specifically mentioning the value of the GQSP diagnostic tools, as public goods, to ensure that country interventions focus on the correct priorities. They highlighted the commitment of the ISO secretariat in helping review all of the previous GQSP publications and looked forward to continuing to assist in the future. They highlighted projects that GQSP and ISO were undertaking together that included a eLearning module entitled good Standardisation practice and specific in country support to the national standards body in Peru. ISO is keen to continue working together on the strengthening and expansion of digital platforms and eLearning as they are of the opinion that these are critical to future QI capacity building.

The Vice Chair of the developing country committee of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) was very appreciative of the availability of public documents given that many of the members of her committee are not members of the GQSP but have similar needs. She stressed the need to continue to promote the development of a culture of quality in many countries and appreciated the many GQSP publications that assisted in this regard. She also stated that while there are often elements of a QI in place in a particular country, they are many times uncoordinated so are unable to ensure maximum benefit accrues from development and strengthening interventions. She also noted the availability of a World Bank QI toolkit and wondered how they supported each other? She felt that as UNIDO and the World Bank were members of the INetQI, this should assist in providing direction as to which set of tools would be the best option for a particular situation. She also noted that knowledge sharing was critical as in her experience, countries were not always willing to share valuable QI related information with one another. This was a strength that the GQSP should exploit through its programme approach.

4.4 Programme approach and synergies between global and country levels (relevance, effectiveness)

4.4.a Added value of global programme to country projects

Summary Finding 7: Noting that the global tools are not exclusively developed for the GQSP, the added value of the global component to the GQSP is that it allows for the development of fundamental concepts which can be road tested and – once finalised – also applied as part of the country projects. Another potential added value of the global programme is the possibility to share experiences and information between partner countries through the global platform. Both potential added values have yet to be fully harvested.

An important added value of the GQSP to country projects is the different approach it takes in the development and strengthening of QI. Governments, especially in developing countries, rely heavily

³³ Although the previous Joint Committee for Developing Countries in Metrology, Standards and Accreditation (JCDCMAS) had a clear focus on the coordination of QI capacity building activities amongst its international Metrology, Standards and Accreditation membership, its successor INetQI, with its expanded membership, in his opinion was still trying to agree on its ultimate mission. On a related topic, the evaluation team notes the recent addition to the INetQI membership of two bodies representing two different groupings of commercially competing members representing just one area of conformity assessment (certification). This is a concern given that there is no similar representation for laboratories, a much larger group of conformity assessment practitioners, nor inspection bodies. Care will be needed to ensure that narrow commercial considerations do not predominate future interactions. ISO are very keen to continue cooperating with the other partners in INetQI and trust that it would evolve into using a more structured approach that included a framework of cooperation to assist in future planning of joint activities.

on the advice of their public funded organisations who have been mandated to deliver such services. Although this may appear to be “demand driven”, it generally results in a long list of equipment needs and training based on aspirations at a particular point in time. Such requests normally go far beyond the budget of a particular intervention, and can be driven by just one of the QI organisations leading to a narrow focus and potential for the unnecessary duplication of local capacity.

The GQSP uses an “approach driven” methodology. It focuses on harmonizing interventions and activities at three levels: 1) QI related policy level, 2) appropriate publicly available tools, and 3) country level implementation. While many technical assistance programmes focus on level 3, the GQSP is multidimensional given its support of higher level 1 and 2 activities aimed at researching, developing and road testing global QI public goods. The systemic and integrated approach of the GQSP has contributed to its credibility in providing direct assistance to SMEs and laboratories while creating opportunities to gain valuable across country experience, including lessons learnt, that in turn can inform public policy, regulatory and/or institutional development discussions at the regional and country level.

The global component of GQSP should therefore be seen as an incubator / laboratory for the development and pilot testing of public good QI deliverables including normative documents and tools. The added value of all three levels being addressed by the GQSP is that this approach allows the development and evaluation of fundamental concepts. Subsequent piloting and road testing can then occur at the country level to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose and allow for appropriately refinements or enhancements to be made before making them more widely available for use in other countries and future projects. Stakeholders mention that the GQSP is much more than just technical assistance focused on quality and standards. The GQSP also considers productivity and competitiveness issues and seeks to positively influence national policy decisions.

Many stakeholders recognise that UNIDO has acquired valuable expertise in delivering a combination of QI capacity building interventions for addressing particular value chain needs while simultaneously also attending to the wider quality culture issues. UNIDO, as a member of the UN family, has the credibility required to ensure that the tools and guidance publications developed as public goods by the GQSP are internationally acknowledged as best practice. This is further enhanced by the leading role UNIDO has played in the International Network on Quality Infrastructure (INetQI). It has used the interaction with the other international QI members of INetQI to ensure best possible inputs are received related to the global knowledge tools but has also encouraged greater coordination of international QI related efforts. This type of pro-active interaction and high level feedback is not usually possible when working solely at addressing country level QI issues. Such projects normally rely on the local QI organizations who may or may not be individual members of these same international QI organisations.

Several stakeholders noted the synergies being achieved in the development of new tools and methodologies. For example, the quality policy guiding methodology was taken as a basis to develop the laboratory policy guidance document. The same methodology is intended to serve as the basis for the development of the Good Governance for Quality Infrastructure tool. Another example given was that the development of the online LabNet and Rejection Analysis tools were initiated in parallel using the same IT development team. This has allowed the use of similar approaches and software where appropriate to do so. A related development due to the current global pandemic is the move to offering more tools and training online which allows them to be accessed when convenient and independent of the various time zones of the GQSP country level projects.

The ISO has published a Good Standardization Practice (GSP) document³⁴. This is highly relevant for the National Standards Bodies in countries that work together under the GQSP. As a result of the increased demand for online tools and trainings as mentioned in the previous paragraph, ISO and UNIDO collaborated to develop a joint online tool for the GSP. The methodology and online content is now being developed in collaboration with ISO and will be hosted on the Knowledge Hub. Once available, the training will serve as a first introduction and can be followed by on-site capacity building, as required. Through the Knowledge Hub the tool will be available to all GQSP countries. On a standards related issue, stakeholders noted that being part of the GQSP expedited their development of standards to address COVID-19 such as alcohol based sanitizers and reusable face masks – single use were expensive and not readily available. This was achieved in record time compared to having to do this as a stand-alone country project given that much of the initial work had already been done.

An important advantage of a multi-country programme such as GQSP, according to many stakeholders is the ability to share experiences and information between partner countries. Lessons learnt offer a valuable source of insight to improve and expedite the implementation of other country projects. Certain stakeholders would like to encourage UNIDO to facilitate such exchanges of information and experience between GQSP participant countries. From their perspective, the GQSP has to date not achieved the level of the sharing of knowledge and experience between countries in the programme that had been expected.

Stakeholders noted that the global tools are being developed in parallel to country projects which in the words of one participant is *“a bit chaotic, ideally the tools would be developed first”*. This sentiment was also echoed by a country level stakeholder who was of the opinion that *“one of the main problems is that global tools are not aligned with implementation of country projects, so country projects can contribute to global tools but they cannot yet benefit”*. Another participant highlighted *“that there are tensions between the global and country level, the more advanced and larger country projects see less added value compared the smaller and new countries which appreciate being part of larger programme”*.

Many stakeholders acknowledged that smaller country projects have relatively more to gain being part of a larger programme, including the access to a set of specialised QI global tools and publications. Stakeholders also highlighted the need to appropriately cater for the language differences between the different GQSP country projects. Given that many of the tools are still either in development or being piloted, it is not possible at this stage to evaluate the intention to use them in all country projects and if the initial resistance from some quarters will eventually be overcome.

An advantage of the GQSP approach is the many synergies that can be obtained from the availability of technically strong and qualified team members at the national level who can assist one another in addressing issues beyond the boundaries of their immediate deployment. More than one stakeholder mentioned a strength of the GQSP as *“a very good platform to find trainers and experts”*. The access to, and targeted use of, a much larger pool of technical expertise that can be deployed across the programme is considered a key value adding component. Given the relatively limited supply of such knowledgeable resources and the inherent uncertainties related to their availability when used in a more ad-hoc and shorter term manner, this advantage can be significant.

The current wide variety of the selected value chains limit the immediate possibilities to interact at the technical conformity assessment level where often the deepest QI related challenges lay. Lessons learnt in two or more countries as they confront such challenges and exploit similarities would provide a valuable opportunity to not only gather useful information but also determine what could

³⁴ See <https://www.iso.org/publication/PUB100440.html>

be usefully applied to address similar issues elsewhere. In the current scenario, insights gained would normally be specific to a particular country project and therefore may not be applicable to similar value chains which are added to the programme in future phases. This aspect is important given that the aggregation of knowledge at the global level was also mentioned as a value added activity that would also allow even further country level project refinement as the programme goes forward. Many stakeholders stressed that achieving tangible impacts in addressing QI related needs is a long term endeavour and well beyond the 5 year timeline of the current programme funding.

4.4.b Added value of country projects to global programme

Summary Finding 8: The piloting of global tools at the country level is a major contribution from the country projects to the global programme. All countries are encouraged to contribute to the global programme but it is recognised that their ability to do so varies significantly, given that they are at very different stages of implementation. Some are already at an advanced stage and in a position to contribute knowledge and experience to the global programme. Other countries are at a much earlier stage of implementation and cannot be expected to contribute any on-the-ground added value at this stage.

Given the feedback gathered from the country projects that are in a position to share knowledge and experience, they are all willing to do so. The enthusiasm and experience of the respective Project Managers and country level technical advisors was evident and has no doubt played a significant role in creating this type of learning and sharing environment.

The focus group discussion with the GQSP project managers in Vienna acknowledged that currently the country projects are contributing more to development of the global level than the global level tools contribution to addressing country level needs. Such contributions have included the translation of some of the online tools into local languages.

While the use of an approach driven methodology for the GQSP has already been addressed in 4.4 a, there is an inherent risk in deployment of the global tools at the country level if the associated staff and stakeholders are not convinced as to their role or efficacy. The case of LabNet in South Africa is offered as an example where a tool developed globally has achieved little traction at the country level.

In some cases, tools have been, or are being developed, within one of the GQSP country projects. The Culture for Quality (C4Q) tool was developed in close cooperation with the country projects in South Africa and Ghana. Similarly, the tool on Quality along the Value Chain is being developed within the country projects in Peru and Ghana. According to UNIDO, this also served to speed up the development process in times when other country level activities were not progressing according to schedule. The evaluation team noted that the same project manager was responsible for the development of these tools as well as for overseeing activities in the three countries mentioned. The evaluation team have a concern that such an approach could unintentionally create silos where the project manager for both a particular tool and for a certain group of countries would naturally favour their countries as candidates for piloting the tool. If the intention is to use their own country projects to iron out initial teething problems and then use the country projects under the responsibility of their colleagues for further refining, this would be less of a concern. Given the level of development of the tools, this aspect can only be evaluated at a later stage in the evolution of the GQSP.

The evaluation team are aware of the current intention to validate the QI4SD index tool at country level and trust that the comments in the previous paragraph concerning unintentional bias in the selection of countries will be taken into consideration. The use of national experts from the country

projects in leading the piloting of the QI4SD index is welcomed noting the concern of some stakeholders that “UNIDO’s technical expertise creates a risk of undue dependence on the GQSP’s technical assistance by national counterparts”.

The evaluation team also noted that the QI4SD tool is to be validated in Switzerland, “as a country with a QI system to be benchmarked against”. There are many other countries that could also be used in this respect. To ensure transparency as a UN programme, it might be useful to develop a suitable set of GQSP criteria against which decisions are made on which countries are used as references as other tools be developed and have a similar need. The preferred composition of the decision makers for such cases should also be determined and included.

4.4.c Synergies between country projects

Summary Finding 9: Collaboration and synergies that are directly related to supporting and strengthening country project implementation activities are still limited. Given the longer term nature of some of the interventions this is to be expected and may in part be due to the different value chains and language barriers. Some countries are only now in the position to start with project implementation. In-country synergies between SECO-funded projects were noted and appreciated by stakeholders.

Two separate synergies but potentially mutually supportive were identified during the evaluation. The first set of potential synergies focus on cooperation between GQSP countries with either similar value chains or as a means to expedite knowledge related to QI and other challenges they face. Most of the collaborations found are between countries in the same region (using the same language).

Examples include:

- Ghana and Peru – Share a common cocoa value chain which should encourage sharing of experiences at a very technical level such as the sort of standards required and inputs related to the technical content and associated conformity assessment needs. It was stressed that the level of implementation is very different and this is an important factor in such activities. It was also mentioned that it could be a disadvantage if projects were to share a common timeline. The on the ground situation including ability to absorb information and appropriately utilise it to address QI issues are rarely the same. This needs to be actively considered as the GQSP expands.
- South Africa and Ghana – Have both assisted in the piloting of the C4Q tool and delegates from both countries have been trained together as assessors for the tool. Their cooperation has been greatly enhanced to them sharing a common language.
- Peru and Colombia – have shared knowledge and experience in terms of flexible scope in accreditation and virtual accreditation site visits.
- Peru learned from Colombia regarding their experiences in addressing COVID-19, but also mentioned that more opportunities for sharing of experience would be welcome.
- Ukraine benefitted from the country project in Ghana in the wood sector (previous phase).
- There are some early discussion between Indonesia and Vietnam (e.g., around the use of theory of change).

The second grouping uses the common source of donor funding to encourage close in-country cooperation between various interventions. Examples provided by various stakeholders are:

- Colombian stakeholders highlighted the efforts under the GQSP by UNIDO to identify and follow up on synergies between the programme and other SECO-funded projects in that country such as SIPPO and Colombia + Competitiva. Not only did this enhance the visibility of Swiss cooperation in the country but also contributed to achieving a far more effective and overall

impact for these SECO funded projects than would have been possible if they continued to be managed as separate activities.

- In Ghana, the GQSP is one of multiple ongoing technical assistance projects in the area of quality and standards. Synergies were actively sought as appropriate with these other ongoing activities to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity of intervention outcomes. The GQSP coordinates its activities with those of the SECO-funded ComCashew and SWAPP II projects. This has resulted in joint organisation and use of technical experts and related capacity building activities where it is appropriate to do so.
- In South Africa two other SECO funded initiatives are complimenting the GQSP value chain focused QI work together with the South African Essential Oil Producers Association. These are the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) capacity development initiative (ABioSA) and the Swiss Import Promotion Programme (SIPPO). The three country level managers of these three activities have developed an excellent working relationship and agreed on a common set of priorities. They continuously communicate and support each other to achieve their respective outcomes in a mutually supportive way.

4.5 Programme management (efficiency)

4.5.a Planning and steering

Summary Finding 10: The harmonized framework – the same approach with the three key outcomes - has facilitated the planning process. Although the country project documents have many similarities, they are also quite different, in particular with regard to the logical framework and the theory of change. The preparation and approval process for country project documents is not much faster compared to stand-alone projects and coordination is quite time-consuming.

The UNIDO Project Managers (PMs) consider the planning process for the country projects within the context of the overall GQSP as advantageous. The harmonized approach with the three outcomes at the level of the NQI, SME and quality awareness is seen as providing a frame of reference which greatly facilitates the planning of country projects. It allows for selecting from a standardised service package. At the same time, the framework – according to PMs - allows for sufficient flexibility to adapt to specific country contexts and in particular to the different value chains. The country project flexibility is seen as very important by many stakeholders. However, several PMs and CTAs see the global timeline as constraining country projects. The fact that all projects have to be completed by November 2022 without the option of extension puts quite some pressure on some country projects.

While there is the global programme document, each country project still had to prepare a project document and had to go through the full UNIDO Executive board approval process.³⁵ A brief comparative analysis (by the evaluation team) of the project documents for the country projects in Ghana, South Africa and Indonesia revealed that the documents follow by and large the same structure. Also the inception reports for the three country projects have a very similar structure.

The comparison of the logical frameworks of the country projects in Ghana, South Africa, Indonesia and the global logical framework shows similarities but also significant differences (Annex 2). At the *outcome level*, the three logical frameworks are fully aligned with the global framework. With regard to the *indicators at the outcome level*, the alignment is only partial. The alignment at the *output level* is limited. A comparison of the various *theories of change* shows that no standard approach was used. First, different terminologies were used (e.g., “theory of change”, “change process”, “interventions logic”). Second, the visualisation are quite different (Table 11). And in the country

³⁵ GQSP Comparative Analysis, 2020, p. 4.

project document for Ghana there is no theory of change. However, all theories have the three outcomes and a shared impact in common.

Table 11: Comparison of GQSP theories of change

<p>GQSP Global</p> <p>Source: Project Document, 2017</p>	<p>Figure 3. Theory of Change for GQSP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local stakeholders committed with the Programme/ projects Interventions targeted/oriented to VC needs SME and QJ institutions/providers comply minimum requirements
<p>GQSP South Africa</p> <p>Source: Project Document, August 2018</p>	<p>Figure 7 Change Process</p>
<p>GQSP Indonesia</p> <p>Source: Inception Report, March 2020</p>	<p>Figure 9: Interventions Logic and Expected</p>
<p>GQSP Ghana</p>	<p>No use of theory of change</p>

Table: Evaluation Team, based on GQSP documents.

Views among stakeholders regarding the time needed to develop of the country project documents including approval vary significantly. Some stakeholders (both at HQ and country level) are of the view that the duration was shorter compared to stand-alone UNIDO projects. Others are of the view that it took a long time for project development and approval and that the country projects are no different in this regard compared to stand-alone UNIDO projects. Similar to stand-alone-projects, project approval depends on governments and some negotiations take more time than others. The fact that the country projects are part of a global programme does not appear to have changed that. Overall, it appears that currently the preparation and approval process is not any faster as compared to stand-alone projects. This is because the global programme is an agreement between UNIDO and SECO only. The country projects need to be endorsed and approved by the country project governments. The global programme document provides a framework but does not contain sufficient information to operate at country level without further defining the interventions.

Steering

At the global level, the GQSP has established a steering committee with representatives from UNIDO and SECO. The steering committee meets twice a year. This steering mechanism is seen as working well by stakeholders.

Steering committees are also established for each country project. They are highly appreciated by stakeholders. Some stress that the steering committees are one of the GQSP's real strengths as they strengthen the ownership of the projects and facilitate the flow of information.

The interaction between UNIDO and SECO – beyond the steering committee – is appreciated by both partners. The interaction goes beyond pure monitoring and involves valuable substantive discussions also on technical issues. Overall, communication between the two partners is considered satisfactory, although communication could be enhanced between steering committee meetings.³⁶

UNIDO has also established internal coordination meetings. Two kind of meetings can be distinguished: (1) internal coordination meetings with UNIDO HQ team, and (2) extended GQSP team meetings, including UNIDO HQ team and country teams. These meetings serve to strengthen exchange between the country projects, share experiences and identify synergies, but also to present topics of common interest and discuss the development of global tools. While considered by some as time-consuming, they are also seen as beneficial by the PMs and the CTAs.

4.5.b Reporting

Summary Finding 11: There is no aggregated overview of progress towards indicator targets. This is not only due to the lack of available data but mainly because of the limited alignment of outputs and indicators. Although the GQSP Annual Report 2019 and the GQSP Mid-year Report 2020 provide a comprehensive and streamlined overview of the progress both at the global as well as at the country levels, it is unclear which indicators are global KPIs. Given the different value chains and the different timelines of the country projects, the question also arises as to how meaningful it is to aggregate indicators in the first place.

The GQSP has designed a rather elaborate reporting system. At the global level, there is the GQSP Annual Report and the GQSP Mid-Year Report. To provide inputs from the country projects, a template is being used (GQSP Annual Report – Country Inputs – template). The annual report includes an updated logical framework providing data on progress towards achieving targets.

³⁶ The communication between SECO and the GQSP Ghana appears to be a challenge, characterised by very slow response time on UNIDO's side. It has apparently been raised many times without any improvement.

At the country level, the projects have their own reporting tools, in particular the country progress reports which adhere to a common reporting template. The country progress reports are far more comprehensive as compared to the inputs provided to the global annual report. The intention is, according to the GQSP team, that the global report only provides a summary of country progress. More comprehensive information about the country projects can be found in the respective country reports.

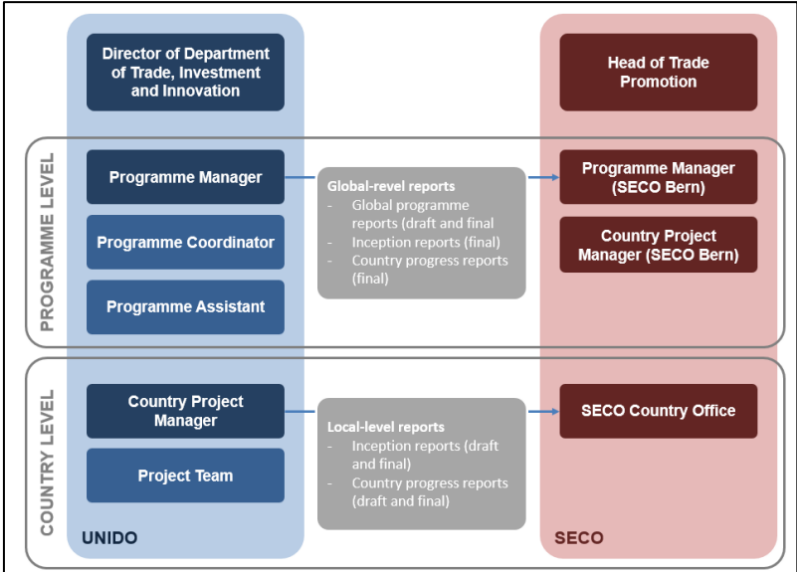
PMs and CTAs appreciate the common reporting templates as they apparently facilitate reporting. At the same time it was stressed that there is quite an investment in time required for such reporting.

The monitoring and reporting system is formulated in a document³⁷ and the use of the different reports between UNIDO and SECO is defined and visualized (Figure 7).

The GQSP Annual Report 2019 and the GQSP Mid-year Report 2020 provide a comprehensive and streamlined overview of the progress both at the global level (component 1) as well as at the country project levels (component 2). The narrative is highly informative. The reports are supplemented by comprehensive power point presentations to the steering committee (global level).³⁸

While the information provided related to each of the country projects in the GQSP Annual Report 2019 and the GQSP Mid-year Report 2020 follows the same structure for each country, the data is presented by country and not further aggregated. In contrast, the information in the Comparative Analysis Report 2020 is presented in a more aggregated manner by technical activities (e.g., activities related to accreditation). This provides an interesting perspective on the GQSP as a programme (see Table 7 in chapter 4.2.b).

Figure 7: Global and local levels reports



Source: GQSP, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), Global-level and local-level reports

In spite of the comprehensive reporting, an easily accessible overview of progress towards achieving targets as defined in the logical framework is lacking. The reporting in the global Annual Report 2019 on the logical framework and the indicators and targets is not – or not yet – suitably informative. This is partly because some of the country projects are only starting implementation now. As a consequence, data on progress towards achieving targets is not available and the corresponding cells in the table are either “0” or “n/a”. In some cases, even the baselines are not yet available. The lack

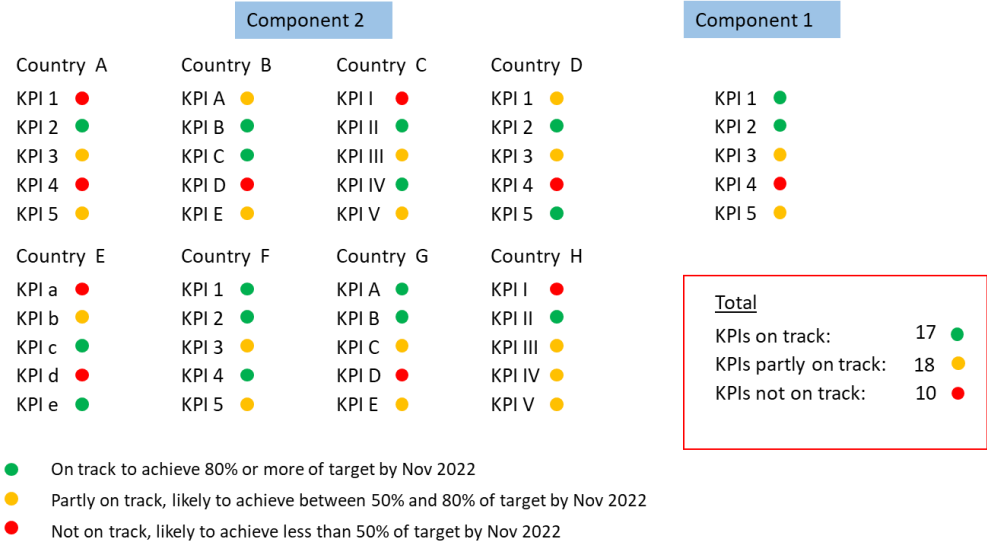
³⁷ GQSP, Monitoring & Evaluation Framework, UNIDO, May 2018.

³⁸ The last presentation at the 5th Steering Committee Meeting on 15 September 2020 had 104 slides.

of availability of baseline and progress data is, however, just one reason for the limited informative nature of the logical framework. More problematic is – as previously stated - the limited alignment of outputs and indicators in the logical frameworks of the country projects with the global logical framework. So even when data becomes available, aggregated reporting will still not be possible for many indicators because they are different. While it makes sense to allow for flexibility at the country level with regard to outputs and indicators (reflecting also the different value chains), it is not clear which core set of indicators each country is supposed to report on. This seems to be related to the fact that it is not clear which indicators are considered key performance indicators (KPIs). The terms “indicators” and “key performance indicators” are used interchangeably and there is no systematic reporting on KPIs. In some cases, there are probably also too many indicators. By way of example, the revised logical framework for the country project in Indonesia (2020) has over 100 indicators.

Given the different value chains and the different timelines of the country projects, the question arises as to how meaningful it is to aggregate indicators at all. An alternative monitoring system using a traffic light system should be considered (Figure 8). Such a management tool would allow for a rapid and transparent overview on progress both at the country and at the global level. It allows each country to define its own KPIs while progress can still be aggregated at the global level. It is recognized that such a system may not fully replace the collection of quantitative data on indicators which UNIDO and SECO may still want to collect and report at the global level.

Figure 8: Example of an alternative monitoring system ("traffic light")



KPIs for each country can be different.

Figure: Evaluation team, December 2020.

4.5.c Country projects resource management

Summary Finding 12: Budgets vary greatly among GQSP country projects. Some countries received considerably less resources than hoped for. Regional earmarking by SECO guides the funds allocation to countries. Expenditures in absolute terms are similar among the five larger country projects as of November 2020. The financial flexibility in shifting resources among country projects is – while possible in theory - very limited once a project document has been signed with a government. The programme approach allows for more efficient resource mobilisation for country projects.

Resources allocated to the different country projects vary significantly (Figure 9). The country project in Colombia has the largest budget with 2.7m Euro.³⁹ The three smallest country projects have a budget below Euro 900,000 (Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam). Budget allocations depend to some extent on SECO resource allocation to different regions and on overall budget limitations. The two countries with special measures have a budget of around Euro 330,000 (Georgia, Costa Rica). Implementation in terms of percentage of budget expenditure also varies significantly (Figure 5 in chapter 4.2.b). While the project in South Africa has spent 50% of the budget, Kyrgyzstan has only spent 13%. In absolute terms, five country projects have spent similar amounts as of November 2020, between Euro 550,000 and 780,000 (Nov. 2020, Figure 9). The three smaller projects have spent between Euro 110,000 and 230,000.

Considering the project duration, some country projects appear to be behind schedule in terms of expenditure, in particular Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Peru and Vietnam (Figure 5 in chapter 4.2.b). The expenditure depends on the start of the project. While South Africa was the first project to start, Kyrgyzstan was one of the last. Overall financial implementation is expected to be around 25% less than foreseen in 2020, due to the changed modalities of work, travel and meeting limitations due to COVID-19.⁴⁰ This is of concern to SECO which indicated the need to accelerate overall financial execution of the programme. SECO has requested UNIDO to prepare an assessment of financial implementation forecast until the end of the programme (Nov 2022) to better assess the implications and decide on the implications and related actions to be take.⁴¹

Figure 9: Approved budgets and expenditures

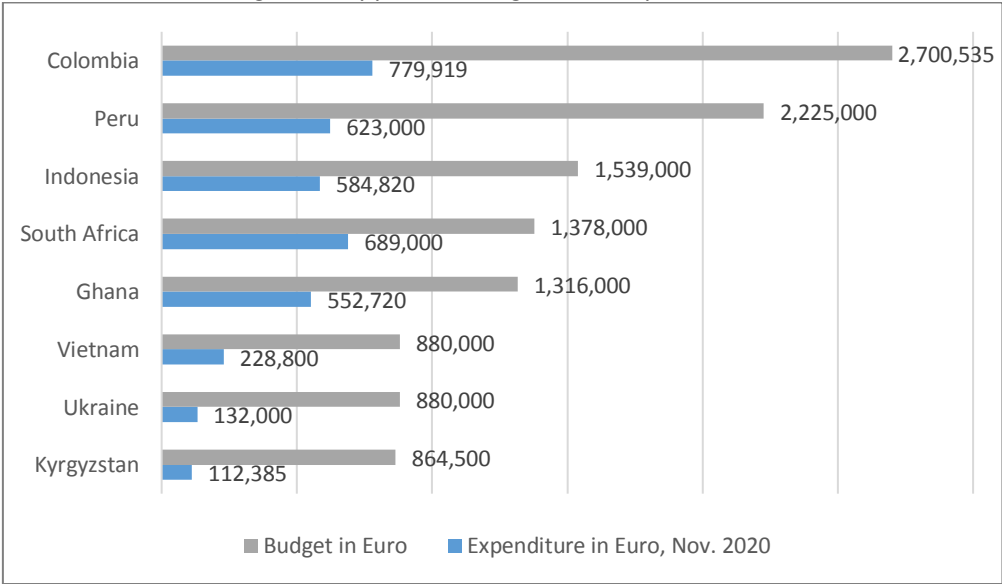


Figure: Evaluation team, based on GQSP data and UNIDO open data platform, Nov. 2020.

The budget volume is another issue mentioned by several stakeholders. The view was expressed that a project budget should be at least Euro 1.3m (better Euro 1.7m). Budgets below this amount are considered too small for UNIDO QS projects. It was suggested that ideally project budgets should be around Euro 2.6-3m. Budgets should also consider the size of the country. For instance in Indonesia, a large country, stakeholders expected a much larger budget than that which has been allocated to the country project.

³⁹ Including additional resources approved in 2020.
⁴⁰ Minutes of the 5th Steering Committee Meeting, 15 September 2020.
⁴¹ Ibid.

The flexibility in using financial resources is another issue. While up to 10% of the budget can be moved between outputs within a project without donor approval, resources can't be moved easily between different country projects, despite the considerable delays in implementation. In principle, UNIDO is flexible to reallocate funds from one project to another. The administrative process requires an amendment of the project document. However, considering that UNIDO, SECO and the local government have an agreement (project document) the deduction of funds from a particular country is a political, rather than an administrative process. The political sensitivity of reallocating funds from one country to the other was discussed and agreed with SECO. Funds that are within the programme, but not promised to a particular country can be flexibly allocated upon agreement between UNIDO and SECO. However, resources not spent at the end of the project (Nov. 2022) will ultimately be lost.

The limited flexibility in the use of financial resources also stems from the initial resource allocation and country selection. The country selection is driven by SECO's "priority countries". SECO has defined 13 priority countries which are all advanced developing countries facing poverty and development issues.⁴² All eight GQSP country projects are part of this group. The SECO resources allocated to different regions determine, to a large extent, the resources allocated to the country projects.

UNIDO stressed the advantage in term of efficient resource mobilisation of having a donor such as SECO which is prepared to fund several country projects at the same time. Similarly, UNIDO is partnering with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) which is funding a comparable programme called Global Market Access Programme (GMAP).⁴³ GMAP has the same three outcomes as the GQSP (around NQI, SME, and quality culture) and is currently financing five country projects⁴⁴ with a total budget of Euro 10.5m. GMAP does not have a global financing component like the GQSP. However, the GQSP global component also adds value to the GMAP country projects and an additional 15-20 UNIDO QS projects, as visualised in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Multiple funding sources of UNIDO quality and standards projects

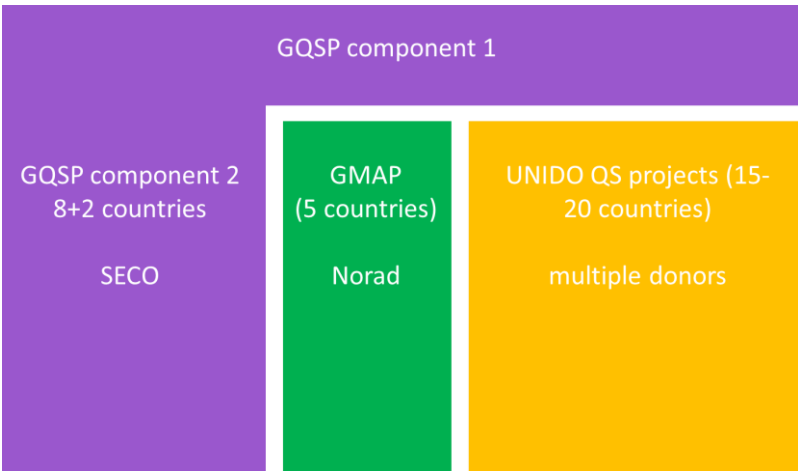


Figure: Evaluation team, December 2020.

⁴² <https://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch/secocoop/en/home/laender.html>

⁴³ <https://www.unido.org/news/unido-norway-help-smes-mitigate-negative-economic-impact-covid-19>

⁴⁴ In Ethiopia, Colombia and Myanmar, and, following a sequential approach, two other partner countries will be added.

4.6 GQSP response to COVID-19

Summary Finding 13: The rapid and substantial response to COVID-19 by the global GQSP team is widely acknowledged and praised by stakeholders. All country projects relied on the support and tools received from the GQSP team in Vienna. Country projects had to adjust their way of operations. Country specific efforts vary significantly with the Colombia country team being the most active. A small minority is of the view that the GQSP response to the pandemic was insufficient, showing limited flexibility in contributing substantially to joint efforts led by governments or the UN to cope with the pandemic.

Global response

The GQSP Mid-year Report 2020 provides an overview of global products related to COVID-19 developed by or with the support from the GQSP, which are summarized below (Table 12). The rapid and substantial response by the global GQSP team is widely acknowledged by stakeholders. The various online webinars are particularly praised by stakeholders at the country level. The products show a strong collaboration with international actors, in particular with ISO. The benefits of the GQSP global products go beyond the GQSP countries and reach participants in over 100 countries.⁴⁵

Further, UNIDO – outside of the GQSP - has developed a guidance for the private sector, i.e., *Responding to the COVID-19 Crisis – Pathway to business Continuity and Recovery* and *COVID-19 Business Continuity Programme*. This guidance material is being made available on the UNIDO Knowledge Hub and promoted to GQSP countries and stakeholders.⁴⁶

All three GQSP outcomes benefitted from the GQSP tools produced at the global level.

Table 12: Global products related to COVID-19 developed with support from the GQSP

Type of product	Global products related to COVID-19
GQSP publications	Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP), Responding to the Outbreak of COVID-19, UNIDO, 2020.
	Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP), Alternative Implementation Measures Due to COVID-19, UNIDO, Update June 2020.
	Flyer: Quality & Standards in the Fight against COVID-19, UNIDO 2020; available in English, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian.
UNIDO publication (based on GQSP analysis)	Quality and Standards and their role in responding to COVID-19, UNIDO, April 2020.
6 UNIDO webinars, supported by the GQSP PMU, promote to all GQSP countries, reached about 1'600 participants worldwide	17 April: Standards and testing in the fight against COVID-19 (with partners from the INetQI)
	23 April: Organizational resilience in times of COVID-19
	29 April: The role of conformity assessment during times of COVID-19 (incl. ISO/IEC 17025)
	4 May: Auditing and management system certification in a COVID-19 world
	7 May: Harnessing Innovation and standards for a better world after COVID-19

⁴⁵ GQSP Mid-year Report 2020, p. 43.

⁴⁶ GQSP Mid-year Report 2020, p. 9.

	15 May: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): bridging the standardization gap (in collaboration with the World Health Organization)
5 joint ISO-UNIDO webinars, reached more than 2'400 participants worldwide	9 June: International standards and accreditation in improving food safety (on the occasion of world accreditation day 2020)
	18 June: Occupational health and safety: ISO 45001 suite of standards and guidance
	25 June: Conformity assessment and accreditation in a virtual world (in collaboration with the International Accreditation Forum)
	2 July: COVID-19, cybersecurity and information security management ISO/IEC 27001
	9 July: Minimizing the risk of corruption: towards prevention policies for private and public entities

Table: Evaluation team, based on GQSP Mid-year Report 2020.

Country level response

All country projects relied on the support, tools and templates received from the GQSP team in Vienna. The tools were used, distributed and promoted. In addition, all countries were required to adjust their way of operating, by for example conducting the assessment of institutional gaps remotely and activities that relate to strengthen the capacity of the business support entities (e.g., training, advisory services, etc.) are being conducted with the remote involvement of an international expert and facilitation of local experts.

Additional country specific efforts varied significantly (Table 13). The country project in Colombia was very active in responding to COVID-19. This was also confirmed in interviews/questionnaires from stakeholders. Most of the other country projects had at least one specific COVID-19 activity.

The majority view of stakeholders at the country level regarding the GQSP response to COVID-19 is positive (response from country as well as global team). The response was viewed as timely and relevant. However, two stakeholders in two different countries criticized the GQSP response to the pandemic. They viewed the conduct of webinars and the distribution of publications as insufficient. They were hoping that the GQSP would cooperate with other actors and be sufficiently flexible to contribute substantially to joint efforts lead by governments or the UN to cope with the pandemic. In the words of one stakeholder *“the GQSP had no flexibility nor willingness and no space to think out of the box ... project staff should have been involved in a UN task force and seek synergies”*.

The GQSP team stressed, that the flexibility to respond to COVID-specific initiatives is linked to the subject value chain. While some value chains (e.g., chemicals) bear higher potential to contribute to the response to the global outbreak, other value chains (e.g., wood) bear less potential. The change of activities and introduction of new activities in a formulated project is subject to the decision of the national steering committee.

An important issue mentioned by many stakeholders is the need to continue to encourage communication between all other stakeholders within the programme under the current conditions imposed by the global pandemic. The evaluation team notes the intention of the GQSP that project teams will continue to identify alternative implementation modalities, using virtual means of communication and digital technologies. The use of virtual meetings has also demonstrated that many more attendees can be reached and far more cost effectively using such interventions than was previously possible when travel to meetings was the norm. Some stakeholders however stressed the need for periodic on-the- ground mentoring due to the specialised technical areas that the GQSP is assisting to develop. This is acknowledged, and based on current feedback, it is expected that the GQSP will continue to utilize innovative ways to address these more specialised needs. The

evaluation team also note the intention to continue to use virtual platforms in expanding the availability of technical knowledge and encouraging QI competence at the country level. This is encouraged as an important and defining feature of the programme.

Table 13: Country projects response to COVID-19

GQSP countries	Response to COVID-19
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinar Hygiene and Disinfection: Preventive Measures for Productivity in Times of COVID-19 with 731 registered participants. - Guide published <i>Hygiene and Disinfection Guide for the Industry in Times of COVID-19</i>. - 1,180 people reached through 3 virtual training events (COVID, regulation and CABs). - Work is being done towards publication of five technical documents in addition to the COVID-19 Biosecurity Protocol for Testing and Calibration Laboratories developed with institutional partners and issued by the Ministry of Health. - Support to qualitative proficiency testing for detection of COVID-19. - Support to Colombian Institute of Technical Standards and Certification in rapid adoption of 27 international standards related to technical and quality specifications of PPE and other products relevant to the pandemic.
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to the Ghana Standards Authority to develop key standards relevant for the quality assessment of personal protective equipment (PPEs) and medical devices needed for the fight against COVID-19.
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of quality coaches on how to do the remote assessments.
Kyrgyzstan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNIDO is planning to reserve a segment on the effects of COVID-19 in the upcoming training courses for NQI institutions.
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinar series on ISO standards in the context of COVID-19 (+1,700 participants).
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAEOPA was supported to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the essential and vegetable oils sector in SA and SADC. - Gap analyses of quality management systems conducted remotely. - Training courses conducted virtually. - Capacity built in SAEOPA to offer webinars aimed at strengthening industry.
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flyer “Quality & Standards in the Fight against COVID-19” was translated into Ukrainian and distributed to project stakeholders.
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual meeting and consultation between international consultants and local ones, effective deployment of local consultants to conduct assessments in the field.

Table: Evaluation team, based on GQSP Mid-year Report 2020, interviews and questionnaires.

4.7 Gender equality and environmental protection (relevance, effectiveness)

Summary Finding 14: Gender equality and environmental protection are important components of the GQSP. However, in the planning and reporting documents at the global level, both dimensions are not adequately reflected. Overall objectives and targets for gender equality and environment protection are missing and are therefore not reported on.

Gender equality

The original GQSP Programme Document (2017) highlights gender mainstreaming and the GQSP Monitoring & Evaluation Framework states, that “Gender mainstreaming considerations will be integrated into planning, monitoring and evaluation. Where appropriate, gender specific objectives

will be defined, monitored and evaluated to ensure that the project(s) respond(s) to considerations of gender equality.”⁴⁷

However, the document review (Table 14) reveals very little reporting on gender equality or gender disaggregated data to date. Only the GQSP in Colombia provides gender disaggregated data for the GQSP Mid-year report 2020. And the GQSP Ghana status report shows that 30% of national experts trained were women.

The limited reporting on gender equality should not be construed that the gender dimension is not important in the GQSP. Interviews with stakeholders show a quite different picture. Many stakeholders stress the important role women play in several of the GQSP value chains: mango (Vietnam), seaweed (Indonesia), oil sector (South Africa), coffee harvesting (Peru), fruits (Kyrgyzstan). This could indicate underreporting on gender. This is probably partly because neither the original logical framework (2017) nor the revised logical framework (2019) include gender objectives or targets. In the words of one stakeholder *“it would be very beneficial to enhance the gender dimension at the global level and to consider an output at the global level.”* The relevance of the gender dimension in the GQSP is also demonstrated in the GQSP COVID-19 analysis which shows that women are disproportionately at risk of negative outcomes arising from pandemic.

The GQSP team stressed that gender equality is not a priority of the GQSP and that it was agreed between UNIDO and SECO to not include gender in the reporting template.

Environmental protection

There is an inherent link in QI functions, in particular technical regulations, and CAB involvement in environmental protection. There are no indicators or targets formulated for environment protection in the logical framework and it does not figure much in the GQSP documents reviewed (Table 14). One of the few references to environmental protection found are the standard operating procedures (SOP) for shrimp farming in Indonesia focusing on minimalizing environment impacts including water waste management. Another reference is the pilot programme in Colombia launched for sustainability and quality standards for a circular economy in plastics sector. Another example is the COVID-19 analysis which stresses that environmental and waste management standards (e.g., ISO 14000 series) will become important in managing increased waste caused by use of single-use protective equipment.

It appears to be a missed opportunity to not highlight and report on the relevance of the GQSP for the protection of the environment. As highlighted by several stakeholders, environment protection plays a key role in several of the value chains. For example, in Vietnam the salination of the Mekong river delta where the mangos grow is a major challenge. In Indonesia, the GQSP project is expected to contribute to an environmentally sustainable aquaculture sector. In South Africa, environment protection is a component of the project, demonstrated for example by webinar on environmentally friendly production process and best agricultural practices. In Ghana, farmers were trained in environment protection. In Colombia, the quality standards in the chemicals sector look for improving the management and disposal of hazardous chemicals. And in Ukraine, technical regulations and standards related to environment protection are central to the wood processing sector.

The GQSP team stressed that environment protection is not a priority of the GQSP and that it was agreed between UNIDO and SECO to not include this dimension in the reporting template.

⁴⁷ Monitoring & Evaluation Framework, UNIDO, May 2018, p. 5.

Table 14: Document review of gender equality and environmental protection

Documents	Gender equality	Environmental protection
GQSP Programme Document, UNIDO, Nov. 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter on gender mainstreaming highlighting that gender will be considered when setting up criteria for selecting SME to receive technical assistance and training - Logical framework: no gender objectives or targets; intention to disaggregated indicators by gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasizes link between standardization function (i.e., technical regulations) and environment protection - Logical framework: no objectives or targets for environment protection
GQSP Annual Report 2019, UNIDO, March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender largely absent from report; only reference to a joint gender expert recruited to conduct local work - Logical framework: no gender disaggregated data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No reporting on link between GQSP and environment protection
GQSP Comparative Analysis Report, UNIDO, January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No gender analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No analysis of link between GQSP and environment protection
GQSP Mid-year Report 2020, UNIDO, August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some gender disaggregated data for GQSP in Colombia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objective of QI4SD index to measure how fit for purpose quality infrastructure system is to meet sustainable development needs (incl. environmental dimension) - Indonesia: SOP for shrimp farming focus on minimalizing environment impacts - Colombia: pilot programme launched for sustainability and quality standards for a circular economy in plastics sector
GQSP South Africa Mid-Year Report, July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No data on gender available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No data on environment protection available
GQSP Ghana – Status Report November, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30% of national experts trained are women - Intention in logical framework to provide gender disaggregated data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No data on environment protection available
Reporting template for the country projects under the GQSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No provision for reporting on gender or gender disaggregated data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No provision for reporting on environment protection
GQSP, Responding to the Outbreak of COVID-19, UNIDO, 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows that women are disproportionately at risk of negative outcomes arising from pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows that environmental and waste management standards (e.g., ISO 14000 series) will become important in managing increased waste caused by use of single-use protective equipment

Table: Evaluation team, based on GQSP documents.

4.8 Likelihood of transformational change (impact) and sustainability of change

Summary Finding 15: The assessment of the likelihood and sustainability of transformational change is only partially possible because of insufficient data and an incomplete theory of change.

Considering major uncertainties, there is a likelihood that the GQSP will contribute to enhanced export (impact) over time. If exports increase due to enhanced quality, it seems plausible that SMEs will continue to adhere to the enhanced quality standards in order to sustain export (sustainability).

Overall objective and impact

What is the transformational change envisaged by the GQSP? The GQSP documentation offers slightly diverging answers.

The original project document defines the overall objective of the GQSP as *“to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access for SME.”*⁴⁸ The theory of change in the same document includes as impact also *“increasing exports”*.⁴⁹ Yet, the logical frame in the original project document states as impact *“improved framework conditions for SMEs and greater international competitiveness of the country”*. The impact indicator used in the initial logical framework was *“Doing business indicators (5 year cycle) and other competitiveness measurements (WEF, etc.)”*. The revised logical framework as per the annual report 2019 defines two other indicators, the first being *“% reduction of rejections from the external markets”* and *“increase in export volumes (as a % and in mio. USD) of good and services in the supported value chains/sectors.”* The logical framework in the annual report 2019 does not yet provide data on these two indicators. It is expected that the Rejection Analysis, a tool developed by the GQSP as part of component 1, will provide data on the first indicator (reduction of rejections). The second indicator, increased exports, is dependent on country export statistics for the different value chains.

However, none of the latest available logical frameworks for Ghana (Nov. 2020), South Africa (July 2020), Indonesia (November 2020), include baseline nor progress data on these two indicators. At this point in the evolution of the GQSP, no data could be found for the impact indicators which would allow for the assessment of transformational change (expected impact). While this is to be expected during a mid-term evaluation, the baselines and targets should be established at least.

Theory of change analysis

In the absence of indicative data, the theory of change analysis method can be used in order to assess the likelihood of transformation change. This method is based on the assumption, that if there is a robust theory of change, the likelihood of transformation change (impact) can be assessed by looking at key elements of the theory of change, in particular progress towards achieving intermediated results (e.g., outcomes) or the accuracy of assumptions.

For the present analysis, the focus has been on *increased export* as the ultimate transformational change envisaged. As shown in chapter 4.1 the overall intervention logic of the GQSP is still valid. The three outcomes at the levels of quality infrastructure, SMEs and quality awareness are at the heart of the GQSP. This *system approach* constitutes the fundamental logic of the GQSP. A shortcoming of the GQSP theory of change is that it is limited to the intervention logic at the country level and does not include the global knowledge management component including the development of global public goods. The interplay between the two components (global and country level) is not included in the theory of change, a central component of the programme approach. From a methodological point of

⁴⁸ GQSP Project Document, 2017, p. 12.

⁴⁹ GQSP Project Document, 2017, p. 18.

view, the theory of change has several weaknesses like unclear terminologies, missing elements (e.g., outputs) or tautologies (Annex 1 for more details).

Assessment of progress towards outcomes

As of now and as shown in chapter 4.2.b, aggregated quantitative data on *outcomes* of the country project portfolio are not (yet) systematically made available and a comparison with targets is not possible at this stage. As shown in chapter 4.5.b this is not only because data is not yet available but mainly because of the limited alignment of outcome indicators (Annex 2).

The assessment of the GQSPs' relevance (chapter 4.2.a) found that the country projects are highly relevant, in particular the value chain approach. The analysis of beneficiaries, activities and funds allocation (chapter 4.2.b) suggests that there is reasonable progress towards achieving outcome 1 (NQI) and moderate progress towards achieving outcome 2 (SMEs) and outcome 3 (quality culture).

Assessing the likelihood of achieving *aggregated outcomes* of the entire portfolio is one way to assess the outcomes. Another approach is to assess progress towards outcomes by *country projects*. In chapter 4.2.b we found that Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia and South Africa are seen by various stakeholders as being largely on track. The country projects in Ukraine, Peru and Vietnam are viewed as partly behind schedule, although all three countries appear to be picking up speed. Based on limited available data the country project in Kyrgyzstan appears to be struggling.

At the global level (component 1) the GQSP global knowledge management is by and large doing the right things (see chapter 4.3.a). Most global tools will – once completed - be very useful. The quality of the tools is also expected to fulfil expectations. The online hub has gained relevance during COVID-19, in particular the online training and webinars attract a lot of participants. The awareness of the global tools among stakeholders is currently however limited and the language of the tools is an issue, as many beneficiaries (e.g., farmers) do not speak English.

Assessment of assumptions

What are the underlying assumptions for the GQSP theory of change to work? What are the major factors (assumptions) that, if present, are expected to contribute to the ultimate realisation of project impact? A critical question is if the three outcomes at the levels of NQI, SME and quality culture are achieved, would this automatically lead to increased exports? The focus group discussion revealed that the GQSP project managers agreed that there are major assumptions behind this logic for the three outcomes to lead to enhanced export. These underlying assumptions are not explained in the theory of change. While some of the assumptions are probably the same for all country projects (e.g., SMEs have access to finance), other assumptions may be more value chain specific (e.g., global demand for goods of a specific sector). In any case, the assessment of the accuracy of the assumptions would have to be done at the country level first⁵⁰ in order to be aggregated at the global level.

Theory of change approach in Indonesia⁵¹

In GQSP Indonesia developed an approach using the theory of change approach to identify enabling conditions needed for transforming the sector and how the programme's intervention contribute to transformational change. This is a promising approach. However, as of now, the approach is not fully developed and the GQSP's contribution to transformation change has not been assessed yet.

⁵⁰ This is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

⁵¹ Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP), Transforming Indonesia's aquaculture sector to be sustainable competitive for economic welfare – Theory of change approach, 2020.

Likelihood of transformational change (impact)

The analysis of the various factors that contribute to the likelihood of transformational change (Table 15) does not show a clear pattern. While some factors clearly point to the likelihood for change, others only do so to a limited extent. Some key factors could not be assessed because of a lack of data and information. It is considered likely that the GQSP will contribute to transformational change (enhanced export). However, this assumption comes with three caveats. First, there is a high level of uncertainty. The causality between outcomes and impact depends on several major assumptions which could not be assessed as they have not yet been defined. Second, the time frame of the projects (30 to 44 months) is probably too short for the evidence of transformational change (enhanced export) to materialise. It was suggested that a longer, 5-10 year, time horizon is probably more realistic. Third, and a related factor, is that some project budgets are considered too small, given the size of the country and the number of SMEs in a sector (e.g., approx. 6'000 companies in the fishery sector in Indonesia).

Table 15: Factors for assessing likelihood of transformational change

Factors for assessing likelihood of transformation change (impact)	Chapter in this report	Factor assessment
Overall intervention logic with the three outcomes at the centre still valid	4.1	↑
ToC does not include component 1 and interplay between component 1 and 2	4.1	?
Major assumptions behind ToC missing	4.1	?
Country projects are highly relevant	4.2.a	↑
Reasonable progress towards achieving outcome 1 (NQI)	4.2.b	↗
Some progress towards achieving outcome 2 (SMEs)	4.2.b	→
Modest progress towards outcome 3 (quality culture)	4.2.b	→
GQSPs Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia and South Africa largely on track	4.2.b	↗
GQSP Ukraine, Peru, Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan partly behind schedule	4.2.b	↘
Progress, quality and usefulness of GQSP global tools and global knowledge hub	4.3.a	↗
Added value of global programme to country projects	4.4.a	→
Synergies between country projects	4.4.c	↘
Time frame of projects probably too short for transformational change	4.5.a	↘
Currently no data on impact indicators which would allow for assessing impact	4.5.b	?
Some project budgets too small given size of country and number of SMEs	4.5.c	↘
Arrows indicate contribution to likelihood of transformational change. ↑: strong ↗: considerable →: moderate ↘: limited ↓: weak ?: factor can't be assessed		

Table: Evaluation team, based on various chapters of this report.

Likelihood of sustainability of change

In the GQSP, the likelihood of sustainability of change means how likely it is that the enhanced export (once achieved) will stay at a higher level or even grow further.

Sustainability is addressed in GQSP country project documents and inception reports. Also the reporting template requires the country teams to describe measures undertaken to ensure sustainability of the project. Most references relating to *sustainability* in GQSP documents refer to the sustainability of the national quality infrastructure. This is probably partly because outcome 1 includes the sustainability dimension in the outcome formulation (i.e., “*Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System*”). Also most stakeholders refer to the NQI when asked about the sustainability of the country projects. The QI related capacities built and their ownership nationally are viewed as contributing to sustainability. At the global level (component 1), sustainability is tied to the long-term usefulness of the global knowledge management tools.⁵²

Neither the GQSP documents nor stakeholders refer to the ultimate objective of the GQSP regarding sustainability which is to increase exports from the selected sectors. There are some exceptions. A few stakeholders emphasised the long-term perspective needed in order to change the behaviour of SMEs thereby implying that the SMEs – not the NQI institutions – are responsible for enhanced exports.

The eight country projects are at different stages. Some countries (Colombia, Ghana and Indonesia) had predecessor projects which already strengthened the national quality infrastructure.⁵³ Also South Africa has a well-established quality infrastructure. More attention can be given to supporting SMEs in a way that encourages sustainability.

If exports increase due to enhanced quality, it seems plausible that SMEs would strive to meet the required quality standards with suitable underpinning by a strong NQI. The sustainability of impact (export) is likely because SMEs have a strong incentive to keep the required quality standards.

⁵² GQSP Mid-year Report 2020, p. 55.

⁵³ One stakeholder in Ghana was questioning the sustainability of the project. UNIDO has been supporting the NQI for 10 years (including predecessor projects). It was observed that during COVID-19, COVID Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) standards were basically implemented by UNIDO and the question was raised if not the national authorities should have the capacity to establish standards without external support. The stakeholder suggested that the sustainability of the GQSP Ghana be evaluated.

5. Conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned

5.1 Conclusions

The GQSP is highly relevant. UNIDO is well positioned to support national quality infrastructure initiatives aimed at developing and strengthening SME capacity to meet quality and standards requirements. The sector specific value chain approach is widely supported. In short, the GQSP is doing the right thing in the right way.

Assessing the GQSP's *programme approach* reveals a mixed picture. Compared to stand-alone projects, the GQSP shows progress on a number of dimensions which constitute a programme. The GQSP country projects are harmonized to some extent as they share the same overall quality and standard framework, the same three main outcomes, the use of the same global knowledge tools, the use of the same planning and reporting templates, sharing the same team of UNIDO project managers, sharing the same global steering committee, and having the same donor.

However, rather than one programme the GQSP could also be seen as a compilation of projects in the common area of quality and standards with a global QI knowledge development and implementation component. The GQSP country projects are as diverse as they are harmonized. They are diverse with regard to different sectors/value chains, different geographical orientation (incl. language), different beneficiaries, different activities, deviations in planning and reporting tools (different ToCs or indicators), very different stage of project implementation and different budgets with no financial flexibility between projects.

While it is noted that most of the global tools are still in various stages of development, it is considered that the global knowledge products are the strongest element of the programme approach and as such an important added value of the programme. The main added value of country projects to the global programme is the piloting of new tools. The GQSP should advance and finalize the global tools expeditiously. At the same time, the GQSP should better promote the global knowledge hub. The INetQI has an important role to play in order to ensure coordination and collaboration at the global level. Their inputs related to quality checking of products including peer reviews and endorsement of publications is also important.

Country projects are at very different stages of implementation. Some are advancing well and making considerable progress. Others are only starting with the implementation given the longer time required for them to receive the necessary green lights. The different stages of implementation is one of the reasons why there are still rather limited synergies between country projects. Synergies are also limited because of the different sectors/value chains and the geographical as well as language barriers. The few collaborations observed are mainly between two countries in the same region, often sharing a common language.

The *programme approach* can also be evaluated by assessing it against expectations (Table 16). The evaluation team - together with the evaluation office - established a list of possible expectations related to the adoption of a programme approach. The evaluation team then assessed the GQSP against these. The assessment shows that the programme approach has a considerable effect on the relevance of the GQSP in particular due to global component 1. The effects of the programme approach on effectiveness and efficiency however are moderate at this point in time.

Table 16: Assessment of expected effects of programme approach on evaluation criteria

Expected effects of a programme approach on ... (as compared to using a project-by-project approach)	Chapter in this report	Assessment of effects
... relevance & coherence		↗
• GQSP global tools and global knowledge hub create additional learning potential for stakeholders in project countries and beyond	4.3.a	↗
• Coordination of global tools at international level increased	4.3.b	↑
• Reduced earmarking allows UNIDO to respond to member state's needs more directly and implement its mandate	4.5.c	→
... effectiveness (and impact)		→
• GQSP global tools and global knowledge hub contribute to results <i>beyond</i> the GQSP project countries	4.3.a	↗
• GQSP global tools and global knowledge hub contribute to better results in GQSP project countries (added value)	4.4.a	→
• GQSP country projects add value to global programme	4.4.b	→
• The GQSP creates synergies between country projects	4.4.c	↘
... efficiency		→
• Harmonization/design of country project documents (incl. logical framework, ToC) reduce time and resources needed for developing new interventions	4.5.a	→
• Preparation and approval process for country project documents is simpler than in a project-by-project situation	4.5.a	↘
• Efficiency gains through global steering committee	4.5.a	↑
• Harmonization of reporting (incl. harmonization of indicators) reduces cost	4.5.b	→
• Flexibility in resource allocation to country projects allow a more efficient resource use	4.5.c	↘
• More efficient resource mobilisation	4.5.c	↑
<p>Arrows indicate effects of programme approach on GQSP, December 2020. ↑: strong ↗: considerable →: moderate ↘: limited ↓: weak ?: factor can't be assessed</p>		

Table: Evaluation team, based on various chapters of this report.

The programme approach is still evolving. This evolution can also be seen in the shortcomings of the original theory of change of the GQSP. The theory of change needs to be strengthened in order to better reflect the different levels (global and country level, component 1 and 2) and the interplay between them (synergies). The theory of change should also explicitly identify the fundamental assumptions for the GQSP interventions to achieve the intended impact (increased exports).

The evaluation team would like to highlight and offer their suggestions on two interrelated challenges and strengths:

- *The appropriate use of common value chains could help promote greater efficacy and accelerate progress in implementation.*

The evaluation team is of the view that the development of a set of product specific standards to address the issues related to a particular value chain would be far more efficient if other countries with similar needs related to the associated value chains were included in future GQSP interventions. The process related to national standards development can be a relatively long

one. The current selection of different value chains would normally result in the standards developed and adopted in one country / region needing to be subsequently reviewed, and possibly revised, by the national Technical Committee of each subsequent country interventions targeting a similar value chain. This could introduce knock on delays in those activities related to addressing the conformity assessment capacity needs required to prove conformance or compliance with these standard(s).

- *Possibility of generating peer learning between countries including the use of value chain specific standards.*

The evaluation team is of the opinion that the appropriate future selection of similar value chains under the GQSP to address standardisation and other QI needs could lead to dramatic improvements in efficiency. It would also present improved opportunities such as technical peer interactions to address common conformity assessment challenges. A GQSP programmatic approach would definitely be innovative given that different regions are included under its umbrella. Such an approach would actively encourage far greater QI cohesion and reach than is possible under the traditional country focused approach.

COVID-19 has caused a slowdown in the implementation of country projects to some extent but not as dramatically as might have been expected. For several reasons, some country projects are under time related pressure. A non-cost extension of the GQSP or a second phase in order to complete the work started should therefore be seriously considered.

There are three ways for the country projects to potentially benefit from the programme approach: 1) the global knowledge tools, 2) synergies with other projects, 2) harmonized programme management. With regard to the latter new country projects benefit more than the earlier generation of country projects with a predecessor project. The new country projects can benefit in terms of project manager experiences, expert contacts, concepts, templates, resources. etc.

The GQSP team at UNIDO headquarters also benefits from the programme approach. For the project managers the standardisation and harmonisation is of value. It contributes to the scaling up of the activities in the area of quality and standards.

There is a need to rethink the logical framework and the reporting of indicators at the aggregated level. The current approach is not satisfactory. Rather than trying to aggregation “apples and oranges” (or “mangos and coffee”), the GQSP could consider a reporting which allows for diversity within a common framework (e.g., a traffic light system). At the same time, a few selected global KPI which can be aggregated should be kept (e.g., “# of businesses within the targeted valued chains that are certified according to the QMS standards supported by the project).

With regard to financial resources, it seems that resources are currently spread too thinly to make meaningful and lasting impacts possible.

The GQSP’s response to COVID-19 was satisfactory, although joining hands with other UN efforts in a crisis like this should be made possible.

It is a missed opportunity that the GQSP does not better report on its contribution to gender equality and the protection of the environment.

Summary of evaluation criteria

Adhering the UNIDO evaluation practice, the evaluation team was asked to rate key evaluation criteria based on above findings using the template provided by the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (IED). As this is a mid-term evaluation, below assessment reflects the situation as of November 2020.

Table 17: GQSP - Summary of evaluation criteria

Index	Evaluation criteria	Rating by evaluation team	Related summary findings
A	Progress to impact (likelihood)	moderately satisfactory	15
B	Programme design	moderately satisfactory	(see below)
1	• Overall design / theory of change	moderately satisfactory	1
2	• Logframe	moderately satisfactory	10, 11
C	Programme performance	satisfactory	(see below)
1	• Relevance	highly satisfactory	2, 5, 7
2	• Effectiveness	satisfactory	3, 5, 7, 8, 9
3	• Efficiency	moderately satisfactory	10, 11, 12
4	• Sustainability of benefits (likelihood)	satisfactory	15
D	Cross-cutting performance criteria		
1	• Gender mainstreaming	satisfactory	14
2	• Environment protection	satisfactory	14
3	• M&E	satisfactory	10, 11
4	• Results-based management (RBM)	moderately satisfactory	11
E	Performance of partners		
1	• UNIDO	satisfactory	1-15
2	• National counterparts	satisfactory	2, 3, 4, 13
3	• Donor	satisfactory	2, 3, 4, 9, 10
F	Overall assessment	satisfactory	
Rating scale: highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory			

Table: Evaluation team, based on UNIDO template provided by IED.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the **programme approach**. This should include the following dimensions:

- Promote greater synergies (see recommendation 2);
- Better promote the global knowledge hub (see recommendation 3);
- Strengthen the GQSP theory of change (see recommendation 7);
- Make the process of planning and approval more flexible (see recommendation 8);
- Revised and simplify the logical framework and reporting (see recommendation 9);
- Consider multi-donor funding (see recommendation 10).

global level country level current phase next phase

Recommendation 2: Promote greater synergies in addressing QI conformance or compliance capacity building needs including the provision of fit-for-purpose conformity assessment capacity. The following could be considered:

- Identify the root causes behind the excellent levels of cooperation between South Africa and Ghana that have led to significant reductions in time taken to implement particular activities in spite of being involved in different value chains and ensure that lessons learned including global level commonalities are shared between the rest of the GQSP country members as a further benefit of the programme;
- The deployment of a project manager for the development of global tools as well as being responsible for overseeing activities in assigned countries should be reviewed. The current approach could unintentionally create silos where the project manager for both a particular tool and for a certain group of countries would naturally favour their countries as candidates for piloting the tool;
- Address technical coherence in an appropriate manner across countries rather than a country silo approach to unlock expedited technical capacity building across the GQSP and help ensure future sustainability at the global programme level;
- Encourage working on the same value chains if possible while still reflecting country needs;
- Encourage greater peer interaction and facilitated learning for targeted areas of QI specializations at the global level;
- Provide more opportunities to strengthen technical interaction and peer learning for PMs and CTAs at the programme level;
- Develop a specific knowledge hub for GQSP partners to allow easier follow up and encourage greater exchanges between stakeholders of the country projects by for example creating virtual communities of QI related best practice; and
- Access to, and targeted use of, a much larger pool of technical expertise that can be deployed across the programme is an important and key value adding component of the GQSP.

global level country level current phase next phase

Recommendation 3: Expedite the finalisation of the current suite of **global tools** and better promote the global tools and the online knowledge hub. Invest more in translating key global tools in the languages of GQSP countries.

global level country level current phase next phase

Recommendation 4: Continue to ensure QI **public good thought leadership**, the development and deployment of QI best practices, especially through the GQSP, through the continuation of the active support of UNIDO to the INetQI and their interactions and interventions with similar global QI partners.

global level country level current phase next phase

Recommendation 5: At the heart of the GQSP is a systemic approach at three levels: National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) institutions and service providers, SMEs and quality culture. This report found an emphasis on the first level with comparatively less activities for SMEs and quality culture (Summary

finding 3, Table 7). Ensure that all three elements receive the necessary support in order for the **system approach** to deliver optimal results.

global level country level current phase next phase

Recommendation 6: Consider a **non-cost extension** for those country projects that were most affected by COVID-19. Consider also a **second phase of the GQSP**, i.e., for the global component and selected country projects in particular for those country projects with no predecessor projects. Decisions should be made based on case-by-case in-depth review of country activities.

global level country level current phase next phase

Recommendation 7: Revise and adapt the GQSP **theory of change** to better reflect the different levels (global and country level, component 1 and 2) and the interplay between the different levels. Start with the narrative of the theory of change. Explain the means-ends relationships between the two components in a stringent way (which elements of component 1 lead to which element of component 2, and vice versa, e.g., piloting of new tools). Once the narrative is established, redraw the ToC figure (Figure 2). Consider using the ToC concept and terminology outlined in Annex 1. Make explicit the fundamental assumptions in order for the GQSP interventions to lead to impact (increased export). Vigorously assess the assumptions underlying the claim that the three GQSP outcomes will ultimately contribute to more export.

global level country level current phase next phase

Recommendation 8: Make the process of planning and approval leaner, more flexible and adaptable. The following could be considered:

- Consider country projects as “country activities” of the GQSP programme rather than stand-alone projects;
- Empowering the GQSP programme manager to appraise and approve country activities as part of the GQSP programme;
- Replace the different progress reports (global and country level) by a single progress report which includes country activities and results; (see also recommendation 9)
- Make sure that other parts of UNIDO, including field offices, can continue commenting on proposed country activities;
- Continue to involve all stakeholders at the country level when developing country activities and continue formulating “country activity documents” (replacing country project documents); the “country activity documents” become “chapters” of the global programme);
- Introduce a phased approach to the resource allocation within the programme, including to country activities; funds allocation could be reviewed periodically (e.g., every two years) and re-allocated depending on progress towards expected results.

global level country level current phase next phase

Recommendation 9: Revise and simplify the **logical framework and reporting**.

This requires:

- Establish a limited set (5-6) of global key performance indicators (global KPIs) at the level of outcomes or impact that each country has to report on. The global KPIs will be *aggregated* at the global level. These indicators serve UNIDO’s and SECO’s global reporting requirements, and can include SECO Standard Indicators and can align to UNIDO’s Integrated Results and Performance Framework (IRPF). Example: “# of businesses within the targeted valued chains that are certified according to the QMS standards supported by the project“. This indicator included in the current results framework appears to be a relevant and measurable outcome indicator, which can also be aggregated at the global level.
- In addition, each country should define a limited number of local key performance indicators (local KPIs) at the level of key results (outputs, outcomes, impact). These indicators will also be reported but *not aggregated*. Consider introducing a traffic light system for the local KPIs allowing for an easy overview (see Figure 8 above as example).
- All indicators require baselines and targets. Indicators for which baselines and targets can’t be established should be dropped (because they are useless).

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> global level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> country level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> current phase	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> next phase
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Recommendation 10: Prepare a discussion paper on **financial resource** which includes reflections on the following aspects:

- Reasonable minimum budget for activities per country;
- Option of a multi-donor programme with other donors joining the GQSP in order to expand the overall budget and to share the cost of component 1;

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> global level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> country level	<input type="checkbox"/> current phase	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> next phase
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Recommendation 11: Better reflect the GQSP’s contribution to **gender equality and environmental protection** in planning and reporting. This can be done both at the global level (component 1) and at the country level (component 2). There are different ways to capture the two dimensions. A first option is to define specific expected results at the output or input level for gender and environment. A second option is to capture the two dimensions at the indicator level (both global or country indicators). This can include specific gender and environment indicators or in the case of gender it can imply reporting on existing indicators in a gender dis-aggregated manner.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> global level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> country level	<input type="checkbox"/> current phase	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> next phase
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5.3 Lessons Learned

- I. **Programme approach:** The programme approach is a loose concept open for interpretation. Expectations vis-à-vis a programme may vary. Moreover, the difference between a programme and a compilation of different projects is not obvious and requires explanations. A definition of what constitutes a programme might be useful, including defining criteria (e.g., the need for a global objective (?), multi-country (?), multi-donor (?), etc.). An analysis of the added value (and cost) of a programme compared with several standalone (and possibly coordinated) projects might also be useful. It is also important to clarify at what level the benefits of a programme approach materialise (country level, HQ level, international community). When defining a programme, its limitation should also be clearly spelled out (what a programme cannot deliver). Other international organisations may offer useful experiences with regard to a global programmes approach.⁵⁴
- II. **Monitoring and reporting of multi-country programmes:** Monitoring and reporting of a multi-country programme is challenging and different compared to the monitoring and reporting of project. The main challenge is to aggregate progress, in particular progress towards indicator targets. Depending on similarities or differences between country projects, the question arises how meaningful it is to aggregate indicators in the first place. An alternative monitoring system can help (e.g., “traffic light” system). An alternative monitoring system should on the one hand allow each country to define its own KPIs and related targets. On the other hand, it should allow for a rapid and transparent overview on progress based on hard indicator data (in addition to any narrative).
- III. **Beyond the GQSP - virtual networks of QI professionals:** Many stakeholders mentioned the opportunities that access to the knowledge hub provided including the training course and the series of webinars. It was also noteworthy that, due to the various restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, many technical staff were now in a position to spend far more time accessing such resources. The evaluation team is of the opinion that this presents a unique opportunity for the GQSP to increase its reach far beyond the current set of country projects. The publications, webinars and trainings currently on offer provide an excellent platform for QI professionals to increase their knowledge. It is recommended that UNIDO also actively seeks ways to use the same virtual platforms to allow them also to expedite their experience through coordinated interactive sessions that are QI topic based, and runs as a series rather than one off sessions. Rather than just receiving information, participants should be encouraged to share with one another with the aim to creating one or more virtual networks of QI professionals as centres of excellence that facilitate capacity building, i.e., how did you address this issue, how would you suggest that this be tackled, to create a global pool of shared experience. Sessions would need to be suitably facilitated to prevent it devolving into a talk shop and outcomes recorded so that newcomers could easily join at a later stage.

⁵⁴ E.g., ILO’s Better Work Programme is a multi-country, multi-donor programme in the textile industry with a global component. <https://betterwork.org/>

Annex 1: Some methodological thoughts on the GQSP’s theory of change

According to the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, UNIDO currently does not have a standardized methodology for theory of change and there is no international standard methodology for the design of a theory of change. The basis for this short methodological review of the GQSP theory of change is the concept developed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which is widely used in international cooperation. The GEF model has been supplemented with “pre-conditions” by the evaluation team (Figure A, and Table A).

Figure A: Theory of change – concept

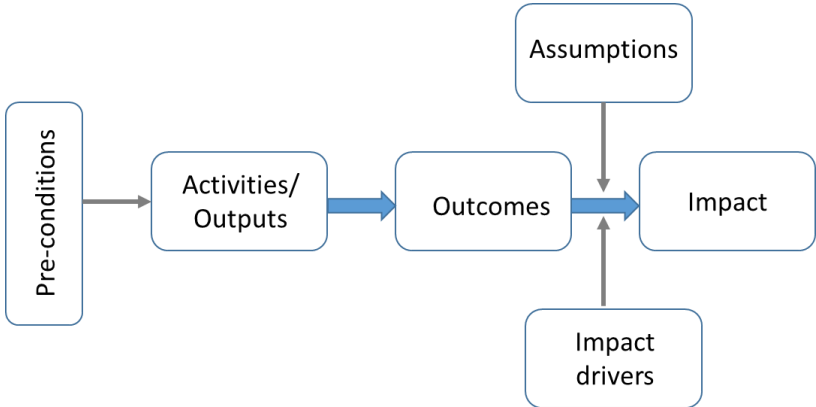


Figure: Evaluation team, adapted from theory of change concept developed by the GEF.

Table A: Key ToC terminologies

Impact pathway	The means-ends relationships between project outcomes and the intended impacts that describe the specific conditions or factors that are required in order to achieve impacts.
Impact	Positive and negative, intended and non-intended, directly and indirectly, long term effects produced by a development intervention.
Outcome	The likely or achieved (short-term and/or medium-term) effects of an intervention’s outputs.
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services which result from an intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
Assumptions	Significant factors that, if present, are expected to contribute to the ultimate realisation of project impacts, but that are largely beyond the power of the project to influence or address.
Impact drivers	Significant factors that, if present, are expected to contribute to the ultimate realisation of project impacts and that are within the ability of the project to influence.
Pre-conditions	Significant factors that need to be in place before an activity should start in order for the project to have a chance to succeed (not included in the GEF model)

Table: Evaluation team, adapted from theory of change concept developed by the GEF.

The following assessment is based on above concept and terminologies.

GQSP assumptions

The GQSP theory of change presents three assumptions:

1. *Trade facilitation requires a systemic approach.* No change is possible with a partial view, focusing technical assistance only on SME or in a particular aspect.

2. *An effective business environment is necessary*, that help SME and other actors to face market requirements and overall standards and quality issues is necessary. Strengthen QIS is a critical pillar for intervention; if there is not an effective QIS in place, SME will face extra-costs that will negatively affect their competitiveness.
3. *It is required to enhance the awareness for quality*, to create an appropriate environment to improve quality, so supporting a dynamic of change at all levels for better competitiveness.

Assumptions are generally understood as factors largely beyond the power of the project to influence or address. As such, the three above mentioned “assumptions” are not assumptions. In fact, they reflect the impact pathway and shows the GQSP main interventions: If the national quality infrastructure system is strengthened and the SME quality compliance capacity enhanced (“do-ability”) and the quality awareness enhanced (“want-to-do ability”), then the SMEs are more competitive and ultimately export is enhanced.

GQSP pre-conditions

The GQSP theory of change presents three pre-conditions:

1. Enhance quality culture awareness
2. Access to stronger QI services
3. Enhance SME capacity to comply

These are not pre-conditions in the sense of factors that need to be in place before an activity should start. Rather, these are the objectives of the GQSP as reflected in the three outcomes. In that sense it is tautological (repetition of the same) and can’t be considered as logical consequence of element A leading to element B.

Other factors

The GQSP ToC figure contains three additional factors:

- Local stakeholders committed with the Programme/projects
- Interventions targeted/oriented to VC needs
- SME and QI institutions/providers comply minimum requirements

The first and the third factor look like pre-conditions, i.e., factors that need to be in place before an activity should start. The orientation to value chain needs is probable an impact driver, i.e., a factor which contributes to the realisation of impact that and which can be influenced by the project.

Outputs

The outputs as presented on the original project document (p.21-24) are not reflected in the theory of change, although they constitute a key element of the GQSP intervention logic. The ToC only reflects activities, which do not seem to address all outputs (e.g., output 2.2.2. *“Technical assistance in the form of advice to SME to enhance their capacity to comply with standards provided”*).

Timeframe

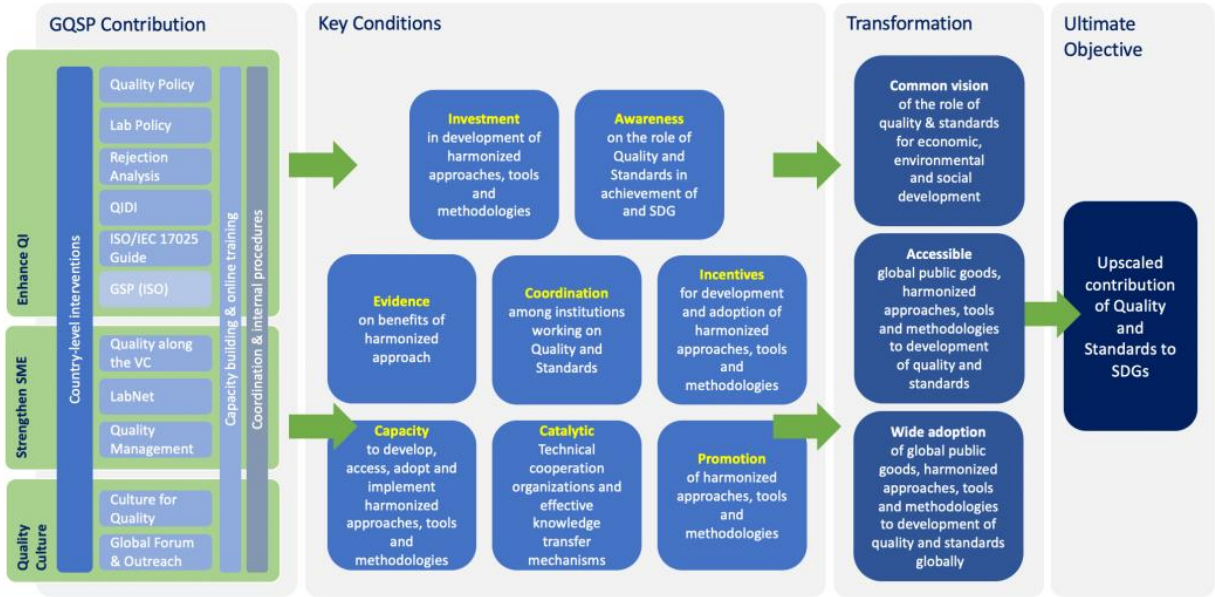
Is it realistic within the five-year timeframe of the programme – some country projects only have a three-year duration - to make a difference at the impact level (enhance export)? The GQSP theory of change should show, which results are expected within the programme duration and to which results the GQSP contributes beyond the duration of the programme.

Theory of Change for the Global Programme and beyond (December 2020)

In December 2020, the global team shared an additional theory of change - which was just finalized - with the evaluation team (Figure B). This theory of change focuses on the Global Programme and how it contributes to the higher level objective in the area of quality and standards. A few observations:

- As the overall objective of UNIDO’s work in the area, the ToC states “*upscaling the contribution of quality and standards to the SDGs.*” This is a much broader objective compared with the overall objective of the GQSP (as stated in the original project document⁵⁵).
- While this ToC shows the contribution of the GQSP beyond its own programme objective, it does not show the interaction between component 1 and component 2 of the GQSP.
- It is conceptually not quite clear what “conditions” are. Are they “outcomes” or “impact drivers”? The backbone of most ToCs is the results chain (output, outcome, impact) flanked by assumptions and drivers of impact. Example: “*awareness on the role of quality*” seems to be an outcome while “*coordination among institutions*” seems to be an impact driver.
- The ToC does not discuss the fundamental assumptions for the theory to work.
- The means-ends relationships (the green arrows) are visualized in a generic manner and causality links are not shown in a stringent way (which element A leads to which element B). While the three pillars of the GQSP are interlinked and may contribute to more than one higher level result, this different lines of contribution could be visualized more specifically.

Figure B: Theory of Change of the Global Programme & Beyond



Source: Global GQSP team, December 2020.

⁵⁵ “The overall objective of the GQSP is to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access for SME”, GQSP Project Document, 2017, p.12.

Annex 2: Comparison of logical frameworks

Same colour means same or very similar statement

	Global QOSP	QOSP country projects		
		Ghana	South Africa	Indonesia
Outcome 1	Technical competence and sustainability of National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced	The technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System and the conformity assessment services that serve the selected value chains is enhanced	The technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System and the conformity assessment services that serve the selected value chains is enhanced	Technical Competence and sustainability of National Quality Infrastructure System (NQI) enhanced
Indicator (for outcome 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of international recognitions or accreditations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of national and international recognitions or accreditation - improved services (% increase in laboratories accredited) - # standards implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of Technical Committees (TC) established per value chain/sector - Implementation of a strategy to leverage the use of the standards - # of accreditations achieved by test laboratories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved technical capacities of targeted NQI infrastructure. Improved financial, technical and/or institutional sustainability of targeted NQI institutions resulting from UNIDO's advice. with the following indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 50 quality inspector certified (including monitoring residue and surveillance) - 100 quality coach certified (aquaculture and product); - 60 auditors for aquaculture certified - 90% Customer satisfaction index of accreditation assessment by KAN for testing laboratories in fishery - 1 National Metrology Institute accredited by international accreditation body (not only KAN) - 4 certification bodies in aquaculture sector accredited by KAN (Takalar, Jepara, Jakarta (private), Sukabumi) - 3 Reference Material Producers (RMP) established and accredited (Serpong, Setu, Jepara) - 2 Proficiency Testing Provider (PTP) laboratories established (BUSKIPM, Jakarta – Private) - 1 national standards (SNI) and certification scheme (IndoGAP) in aquaculture recognized by importing countries - Recording of 15 and kind of Indonesian standards (SNI) in aquaculture are harmonized with international standards

				- 10 national standards (SNI) and certification scheme in product harmonized with international standard
Output 1 (under outcome 1)	In-depth analysis of the capacity of the QI institutions and service providers conducted and action plan prepared	The technical competence of the Quality Infrastructure at the institutional level is strengthened	The technical competence of the QI at institutional level is strengthened	In-depth analysis of the capacity of the NQIS institutions and service providers conducted and action plan prepared
Output 2 (under outcome 1)	Technical competence of the QI at the institutional level strengthened	The technical competence of the conformity assessment service providers and institutions is strengthened	The technical competence of the conformity assessment service providers (Business Support Providers) is strengthened	Advice on developing and harmonizing selected national standards with international standards relevant to fisheries and aquaculture provided
Outcome 2	SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced	SMEs compliance with international standards and technical regulations is enhanced	SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations is enhanced	Compliance of fisheries aquaculture and seaweed producers with internationally recognized standards and necessary technical regulation in target export markets enhanced
Indicators (for outcome 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of businesses within the target value chains that are certified according to the QMS standards supported by the project - # of SME that apply core elements of SOPs that are relevant to the relevant QMS standards 	No. of cooperatives, SMEs and other VC members with improved management systems to comply with international standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher membership of association (SAEOPA) - # of businesses receiving technical support in the improvement of their management systems to comply with international standards 	<p>Female and male headed fisheries aquaculture and seaweed farms and processors in target pilot locations (tentative target 30%) trained by agents of change to apply basic Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) relevant to compliance with internationally recognized standards as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10 hatchery/ nursery farmers certified to international recognized standards or IndoGAP (4 Shrimp, 2 Milkfish, 2 Pangasius, 2 catfish) ● 26 grow out farmers certified to international recognized standards or IndoGAP (20 Shrimp, 2 Milkfish, 2 Pangasius, 2 catfish) ● 3 of feed mill certified to international recognized standards or IndoGAP ● 18 of processors certified to international recognized standards ● 20 collectors/ middlemen certified to good handling practices (5 pangasius+ clarias, 5 shrimp, 5 milkfish) ● 155 hatchery/ nursery farmers and insitutions adopt the SOPs (40 pangasius, 50 clarias, 10 milkfish, 8 shrimp, 7 institution and 40 seaweed nursery farmers) ● 2240 grow out farmers adopt the SOPs (100 Pangasius, 50 clarias, 50 milkfish, 40 shrimp, 2000 seaweed)

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 collectors/ middlemen adopt the SOPs on handling (5 pangasius, 5 milkfish, 5 shrimp, 17 seaweed) • 18 processors with HACCP grade improvement (4 milkfish, 4 shrimp, 4 seaweed, 4 pangasius, 1 clarias) • 18 firms adopt marketing advice by the project - Increase productivity for the SOPS's adopters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% increase in productivity at hatchery level • 56% survival rate at hatchery level (40% shrimp, 80 pangasius, 50 clarias, 70 milkfish, 40 seaweed) • 35% increase in productivity at grow out farm level • 90% survival rate at grow out farm level (seaweed 85%) • 5% increase in productivity at processor level • 10 seed garden developed using seed from assisted nursery (seaweed) - Improve Harvest/Products Quality of SOPS adopters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% decrease in quality loss/ defect at hatchery level • 70% seed/ juvenile meet standardized size • 15% decrease in quality loss/ defect at grow out farm • 80% produced fish meet standardized size of market requirement • 40% targeted farmers that meet industry quality requirement (grade A) • 60 • 1700 farmers received higher price due to better quality • 15 decrease in quality loss/ defect at handling level (collectors) • 10 decrease in quality loss/ defect at processing plant - Environment of SOPS adopters improved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.45 ratio kg feed used per kg fish harvested (FCR: Pangasius 1.6; clarias 1.2; milkfish 1.5; shrimp 1.5) • 18 processing firms with waste treatment facilities • 150 farmers with waste water treatment (IPAL)
Output 1 (under outcome 2)	In-depth analysis/assessment of the relevant market requirements conducted and action plan prepared	SMEs are supported as appropriate along the VCs	Associations in the essential and vegetable oils VCs to improve market competitiveness, market intelligence/ market requirements, standards and technical regulations	Fisheries aquaculture and seaweed SOPs of Phase I further developed, and new SOPs in line with compliance requirements of internationally recognized standards developed

			are supported	
Output 2 (under outcome 2)	Technical assistance in the form of advice to SME to enhance capacity to comply with standards provided	n.a. (only one output under outcome 2)	Growers and producers (distillers) to implement GAP, GACP, GAHP, GMP and quality managements systems are supported as appropriate along the value chain	Fisheries aquaculture and seaweed farmers in main production locations enabled to apply SOPs relevant to standards and technical regulations
<i>Source:</i>	<i>GQSP Annual Report 2019</i>	<i>Inception Report Oct 2019</i>	<i>Inception Report May 2019</i>	<i>Revised Logical Framework, December 2020.</i>

Annex 3: List of people interviewed

(Q) = questionnaire

International working groups / experts

- Dr. Cynthia D. Woodley, Chief Operations Officer and Psychometrician, Professional Testing, Inc., Orlando, USA.
- Mr. William Becker, Independent IT expert, Milan, Italy.
- Mr. Ouseph Padickakudi, Senior Expert on Quality and Standards (Q).

International Partners

- Mr. Erich Kieck, director, capacity building, ISO central secretariat, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Mr. Ian Dunmill, Assistant Director, The International Bureau of Legal Metrology (BIML), Paris, France.
- Ms. Sharonmae Shirley, Sharonmae Shirley, Chief Executive Officer, Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation, Kingston, Jamaica.

Colombia

- Mr Aurelio Mejía, Director of Regulation, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (MINCIT), Bogota (Q).
- Ms Helen Jhoana Mier Giraldo, National Technical Coordinator, GQSP, UNIDO, Bogota.
- Mr Christian Brändli, Head of SECO in Colombia, SECO, Bogota (Q).
- Dr. Edwin Arvey Cristancho-Pinilla, Director General, Instituto Nacional de Metrología de Colombia, Bogota (Q).
- Ms. Julia Reyes, Chemist, Grupo MAIN SAS, Tunja, Boyaca, Colombia (Q).

Ghana

- Mr Fakhruddin Azizi, UNIDO Representative for Ghana and Liberia, UNIDO, Accra.
- Ms Anne Schick, Deputy Head of Cooperation, Embassy of Switzerland, Accra.
- Mr Alex Tseh, National Programme Officer, Embassy of Switzerland, Accra.
- Ms. Joyce Okoree, Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), Ag. Director Standards Directorate, Accra.
- Mr. Paul Osei Fosu, Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), Head of Department, Pesticide and Food and Drinks Laboratory, Accra.
- Mr. Edward Amankrah, Oil Palm Development Association of Ghana, Accra.
- Ms. Abena Safoa Osei, Chief Technical Advisor & National Coordinator, Global Quality and Standards Programme, Accra.

Indonesia

- Ms Lia Sugihartini, S.Pi, M.Eng, M.Sc, Deputy Director of Standardization, Directorate of Processing and Quality Development, Directorate General of Product Competitiveness, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta.
- Mr Simon Masengi, Fish Quality Advisor, Directorate of Processing and Quality Development, Directorate General of Product Competitiveness, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta.
- Mr Egi Prayogi, Fish Quality Advisor, Directorate of Processing and Quality Development, Directorate General of Product Competitiveness, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta.
- Mr Sudari Pawiro, National Chief Technical Advisor (NCTA), GQSP Indonesia, Jakarta.
- Mr Esam Alqararah, UNIDO Representative in Indonesia & Timor & Timor Leste, Jakarta.
- Ms Dewi-Suyenti Tio, National Programme Officer, Swiss Cooperation Office, Jakarta.
- Mr. Mochamad Aji Purbayu, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, representing Executive Secretary of FQIA, Jakarta.

- Mr. Imza Hermawan, Head of Aquaculture Division, Indonesian Pangasius Association (APCI), Jakarta.

Kyrgyzstan

- Ms Nuraiym Beksultanova, Senior National Project Assistant, UNIDO, Bishkek.

Peru

- Ms Clara Galvez Castillo, Executive President, National Quality Institute (INACAL), Lima. (Q)
- Mr Gilmer Ricardo Paredes, National Coordinator / Chief Technical Advisor, GQSP, UNIDO, Lima.
- Mr Mauricio Chiaravalli, Senior National Programme Officer, SECO, Lima (Q).
- Mr David Gonzáles. Coordinator - Cámara Peruana de Café y Cacao, Lima (Q).

South Africa

- Mr Khaled El Mekwad, UNIDO Representative, Head of Regional Office for Southern Africa, Pretoria.
- Ms Franziska Spörri, Head of Economic Cooperation and Development (SECO), Embassy of Switzerland to South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius and Namibia, Pretoria.
- Mr Shakespear Mudombi, Programme Manager, Swiss Economic Cooperation and Development (SECO), Embassy of Switzerland to South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius and Namibia, Pretoria.
- Dr Tshenge Demana, Chief Director: Industrial Development Division, Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, Pretoria.
- Mr. Paul Harding, Chairperson of the Board for South African Quality Institute (SAQI), Pretoria.
- Ms. Karen Swanepoel, Executive Director: Southern African Essential Oil Producers' Association (SAEOPA), Pretoria.
- Mr. Wim Du Toit, Secretary: Southern African Essential Oil Producers' Association (SAEOPA), Pretoria.
- Dr. Elsie Meintjies, Chief Technical Advisor, UNIDO, Pretoria.
- Ms Adrie El Mohamadi, Senior Technical Advisor, ABS Compliant Biotrade in Southern Africa, Center for Cooperation with the Private Sector (CCPS) ABioSA, Pretoria.
- Ms Anna Reynecke, Country Representative South Africa, SIPPO Swiss Import Promotion Programme, Pretoria.

Ukraine

- Mr Pavlo Ladetskyi, National Technical Advisor, Global Quality and Standards Programme, GQSP, UNIDO, Kyiv.
- Mr Viktor Shutkevych, Assistant Head of Cooperation, NPO in SMEs and Competitiveness (SMEC), Swiss Cooperation Office of the Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine, Kyiv (Q).

Vietnam

- Ms Hoang Mai Van Anh, Program Officer, National Coordinator GQSP, UNIDO, Hanoi.
- Mr Do Quang Huy, National Program Officer, Swiss Cooperation Office, Embassy of Switzerland in Hanoi (Q).
- Ms Vu Thi Tu Quyen, Acting Director, International Cooperation Department, Directorate for Standards, Metrology and Quality, Hanoi (Q).

UNIDO Vienna

(FGD) = focus group discussion, in addition to bilateral interview

- Mr Bernardo Calzadilla-Sarmiento, Managing Director, Directorate of Digitalization, Technology and Agri-Business (DTA).
- Mr Steffen Kaeser, Chief, Quality Infrastructure and Smart Production Division (QIS), Department of Digitalization, Technology and Innovation (DTI), Directorate of Digitalization, Technology and Agri-Business (DTA) (FGD).

- Ms Dorina Nati, Programme Coordinator, Global Quality and Standards Programme, GQSP, Directorate of Digitalization, Technology and Agri-Business (DTA) (FGD).
- Mr Juan Pablo Diaz-Castillo, Programme Manager and Industrial Development Officer, Quality Infrastructure and Smart Production Division, Department of Digitalization, Technology and Innovation (DTI), Directorate of Digitalization, Technology and Agri-Business (DTA) (FGD).
- Mr Juan Pablo Davila, Industrial Development Officer, Quality Infrastructure and Smart Production Division, Department of Digitalization, Technology and Innovation (DTI), Directorate of Digitalization, Technology and Agri-Business (DTA) (FGD).
- Mr Nima Bahramalian, Associate Industrial Development Expert, Quality Infrastructure and Smart Production Division (QIS), Department of Digitalization, Technology and Innovation (DTI), Directorate of Digitalization, Technology and Agri-Business (DTA) (FGD).
- Ms Dominika Dor, Rotational Gender Officer, Gender Office, GQSP Project Manager (2018- Sept 2020).

SECO Bern

- Ms Monica Rubiolo, Division Head, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, Trade Promotion.
- Mr Marco Kräuchi, Programme Manager, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, Trade Promotion Division.
- Ms Martina Locher, Project Manager, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, Trade Promotion WEHU.

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Quality Policy – Practical Tool:

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Quality Policy – Technical Guide:

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Laboratory Network (Labnet): <https://hub.unido.org/labnet/labnet-map>
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UNIDO Open data platform: <https://open.unido.org>
SECO Priority Countries: <https://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch/secocoop/en/home/laender.html>
Trade Rejection Analysis: <https://hub.unido.org/rejection-data/trade-rejection-analysis>
International Network on Quality Infrastructure (INetQI) : <https://www.inetqi.net/>
International Organization for Standardization (ISO): <https://www.iso.org/home.html>
International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML): <https://www.oiml.org/en>
Federal Institute for Metrology (METAS): <https://www.metas.ch/metas/en/home.html>
Standards connect the World (SNV): <https://www.snv.ch/de/startseite.html>

Annex 5: Evaluation framework

Evaluation subjects and evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Source of information and data collection methods	Data analysis methods
<p>1. Programme design and theory of change [component 1 and 2] > relevance, coherence</p>	<p>a) Is the programme design and the theory of change adequate to strengthen the capacity of partner countries to comply with quality regulations and conform with quality standards?</p> <p>b) Have the right assumptions, pre-conditions and impact drivers been identified?</p>	<p>Programme document review</p> <p>Focus group discussion on the theory of change</p>	<p>Analysis of programme design and theory of change</p>
<p>2. Global Knowledge Management [component 1] > relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency</p> <p>i. Knowledge creation and transfer</p> <p>ii. Skills and competence development</p> <p>iii. Visibility and advocacy</p>	<p>a) Is the global knowledge management doing the right things?⁵⁶</p> <p>b) Is the global knowledge management coherent with other international efforts?</p> <p>c) What are the main results of the global knowledge management so far?</p> <p>d) What is the quality and usefulness of the global knowledge management products? Are the products unique and demanded?</p> <p>e) Is the global knowledge management on track in terms of delivery of planned outputs?</p> <p>f) What was the GQSP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<p>UNIDO knowledge hub including online training, tools, publications, global policy dialogue, etc.</p> <p>Interviews with beneficiaries (oral or written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Line ministries (project countries) - Quality infrastructure institutions - Quality infrastructure services - SMEs <p>Focus group discussion with GQSP team global and national</p> <p>Interviews with programme stakeholders (oral or written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selected GQSP team member (global and national) - Donor government (HQ and country level) - Partner organisations (e.g. ISO) (?) - Experts (?) 	<p>Quality assessment of UNIDO knowledge hub</p> <p>Content analysis of interview notes /responses</p>

⁵⁶ This question includes: Is the global knowledge management answering to needs identified in the country projects?

<p>3. Country projects, programme approach and synergies [component 2 and 1]</p> <p>> relevance, effectiveness, coherence</p> <p>i. National Quality Infrastructure ii. SME compliance iii. Awareness for quality</p>	<p>a) Are the country projects doing the right things?</p> <p>b) Are the country projects coherent with other national efforts?</p> <p>c) What is the progress of the country project portfolio? ⁵⁷</p> <p>d) What are the key factors that determine progress - or lack thereof – at the country level?</p> <p>e) Are the country projects adding value to the global knowledge management?</p> <p>f) Is the global knowledge management adding value to the individual country projects? ⁵⁸</p> <p>g) What are the synergies between the different country projects?</p>	<p>Document/website review</p> <p>Interviews with beneficiaries (oral or written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Line ministries (project countries) - Quality infrastructure institutions - Quality infrastructure services - SMEs <p>Focus group discussion with GQSP team global and national</p> <p>Interviews with programme stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selected GQSP team member (global and national) - UNIDO Representatives - Donor government (HQ and country level) 	<p>Content analysis of documents and websites</p> <p>Content analysis of interview notes /responses</p>
<p>4. Programme management [component 3]</p> <p>> efficiency</p> <p>i. Streamlining of procedures ii. Monitoring and reporting iii. Use of resources</p>	<p>a) To what extent does the programme approach streamline the planning and approval process of country projects? ⁵⁹</p> <p>b) To what extent does the programme approach streamline the monitoring and reporting process? ⁶⁰</p>	<p>Document/website review</p> <p>Interviews with programme stakeholders (oral or written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selected GQSP team member (global and national) - UNIDO Representatives - Donor government (HQ and country level) 	<p>Content analysis of documents and websites</p> <p>Content analysis of interview notes /responses</p>

⁵⁷ The progress of country projects will be looked at not in terms of results (outcomes, impact), but only to provide an overview of the overall programme and it's status of implementation.

⁵⁸ This question includes: Are the tools developed in the global knowledge management being used effectively at country level? How do country projects benefit from the programmatic approach?

⁵⁹ This question includes: How do country projects benefit from the programmatic approach?

⁶⁰ Ibid

	c) To what extent does the programme approach allow for flexibility in shifting resources among countries? ⁶¹		
5. Likelihood of long-lasting transformational change [component 1 and 2] > impact and sustainability	a) Is the GQSP likely to achieve expected higher level results? ⁶² b) How likely is it that after completion of the programme, the results will remain?	Document review Interviews with beneficiaries (oral or written): - Line ministries (project countries) - Quality infrastructure institutions - Quality infrastructure services - SMEs Interviews with programme stakeholders: - Selected GQSP team member (global and national) - Donor government (HQ and country level) - Experts (?)	Theory of change analysis Content analysis of documents and websites Content analysis of interview notes /responses

Source: Evaluation team.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Awareness for quality enhanced, technical competence & sustainability of NQIS enhanced, SME compliance capacity enhanced, SME market access enhanced.

Annex 6: Terms of Reference

DRAFT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Independent mid-term evaluation

Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP)

UNIDO Project No.: 170032

AUGUST 2020

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I. Project background and overview

1. Project factsheet

Project title	Global Quality and Standards Programme, GQSP
UNIDO project No. and/or ID	170032
Region	Global
Country(ies)	Colombia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, South Africa, Ukraine, and Vietnam
Planned implementation start date	01.11.2017
Planned implementation end date	31.10.2022
Actual implementation start date	01.12.2017
Actual implementation end date	30.11.2022
Implementing agency(ies)	UNIDO
Executing partner(s)/entity(ies)	
Donor(s):	Switzerland, through the State Secretariat of Economic Affairs (SECO)
Total project allotment	EUR 14,956,426 equal to CHF 17,349,455 (incl. 13% Programme Support Costs)
Total co-financing at design (in cash and in-kind)	N/A
Materialized co-financing at project completion (in cash and in-kind)	N/A

(Source: Project document)⁶³

⁶³ Project information data throughout these TOR are to be verified during the inception phase.

2. Project context

Background

Global trade is growingly embedded within value chains, influenced by new technologies and is increasingly governed by quality and standard requirements. 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 struggle to meet market requirements and thus substantially increase their access to global markets.

Exporters from developing countries, in particular Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME), face substantial challenges to meet and prove conformity with market entry requirements, thus face Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) that hinder their ability to compete. Import rejections rates in major global markets clearly mirror systemic deficiencies in many developing countries in terms of compliance with requirements, and this is especially true for middle-income countries, which account for the bulk of import rejections in major markets. Such rejections result in financial losses for the producers and can seriously damage the reputation of their home country, in both cases affecting their competitiveness. These situations can be overcome with better quality products, which have been tested, inspected and, if possible, certified, through an internationally recognized accredited body.

In order to gain and maintain access to international trade and benefit from global markets, standards compliance and proof of conformity are essential. To ensure standards compliance, countries need to establish an effective, efficient and internationally recognized Quality Infrastructure System (QIS), so that firms can assess and verify the conformity of their products against the requirements (standards) of application, being the results internationally acceptable. Thus, QI becomes an issue of importance for industry, regulators and trade negotiators, with implications at macro, meso and micro levels.

UNIDO/SECO Cooperation

SECO and UNIDO have been cooperating on providing trade-related technical assistance for over 15 years, supporting partner countries to increase their international competitiveness through stronger National Quality Infrastructure System and compliance with international standards. The Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP) consolidates UNIDO-SECO interventions on quality and standards compliance within one programme, adding the benefit of a global component facilitating synergies and enhancing coherence among the interventions.

Until now, joint projects on standards compliance have been conducted in different countries with no formal cross-linkages between them to capitalize experiences and overall knowledge. Henceforth, SECO and UNIDO want to achieve a more comprehensive impact by implementing a coherent programmatic approach. The GQSP is the first programme of its kind developed and implemented to achieve higher impact at a programme level.

GQSP Overview

The GQSP was formulated in 2017 as a result of a long standing cooperation between SECO and UNIDO. UNIDO and Switzerland have signed a Letter of Agreement at the opening of UNIDO's 17th Session of the General Conference to further strengthen their strategic partnership in the field of trade and competitiveness to facilitate inclusive and sustainable development in partner countries.

The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity in SECO partner countries to facilitate market access for SME by working in emblematic value chains per country. The total budget of the GQSP is CHF 17,349,455 (incl. 13% support costs), equal to € 14,956,426. SECO contribution is provided in CHF, all projects are implemented in EUR.

This programme supports countries to align the demand for and supply of quality services required to prove and verify the quality of products, through:

- 1 Strengthening the technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System,
- 2 Enhancing SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations, and
- 3 Raising awareness for quality through advocacy and knowledge dissemination.

The programme is structured around three components, one of global knowledge management (C1), one on country projects (C2) and one on programme management, monitoring and evaluation (C3).

Eight countries have been selected for country projects under the component 2, based on SECO priority countries and UNIDO country assessments (Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, South Africa, Ukraine, Vietnam). All country projects are expected to address the three outcomes of the programme and are structured accordingly.

In addition to these full-fledged country projects, the possibility of special measure interventions (under Component 2) has been explored in five countries, Georgia, Costa Rica, Philippines, Bolivia, Albania and Guatemala. Project proposals for Costa Rica and Georgia have been approved and implementation is expected to start during the third quarter 2020. The table below provides a summary of countries, starting dates, project budget and value chains selected for support.

Country	Starting Date	SECO contribution (EUR)*	Duration	Value Chain(s)
Colombia	Apr 2019	1,957,000	44 months	▪ Chemicals
Ghana	Aug 2019	1,316,000	40 months	▪ Cocoa ▪ Cashew ▪ Oil palm
Indonesia	July 2019	1,539,000	36 months	▪ Fish ▪ Seaweed
Kyrgyzstan	Oct 2019	864,500	36 months	▪ Fruits

Peru	Jan 2019	2,225,000	48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cocoa ▪ Coffee
South Africa	Sept 2018	1,378,000	42 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Essential and vegetable oils
Ukraine	Sept 2019	880,000	36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wood
Vietnam	March 2020	880,000	30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mango
Costa Rica	Q3 2020	320,000	24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beef
Georgia	Q3 2020	339,000	24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fruits & vegetables

**numbers rounded to the nearest hundred*

The project document and GQSP monitoring and evaluation framework foresees regular monitoring, an independent mid-term review (MTR) and a terminal evaluation (TE).

3. Project objective

The overall objective of the GQSP is to strengthen the quality and standards compliance capacity to facilitate market access for SME. The Programme will pursue three outcomes, thus responding to the main compliance challenges identified for developing countries:

- **Outcome 1:** *Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced.* Institutional strengthening of key institutions and relevant public-private support institutions through capacity building, use of best practices, skills development, and implementation of management systems to ensure quality and international recognition of their services.
- **Outcome 2:** *SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced.* Improving of compliance capacity through specialized training, capacity building and preparation for certification, strengthening of cluster networks and quality consortia as well as relevant support institutions.
- **Outcome 3:** *Awareness for quality is enhanced.* Advocacy, up-scaling of knowledge dissemination, and advice for informed policy decisions on standards compliance and support for policy development.

The three programme outcomes are achieved through two Components:

- 1 Global Knowledge Management (Component 1: C1)
- 2 Country Projects (Component 2: C2)

A third component (Component 3: C3), relating to programme management and coordination, is considered in reporting and budget structure. The graph below illustrates the interrelation between the two technical components of the GQSP (Figure 2).

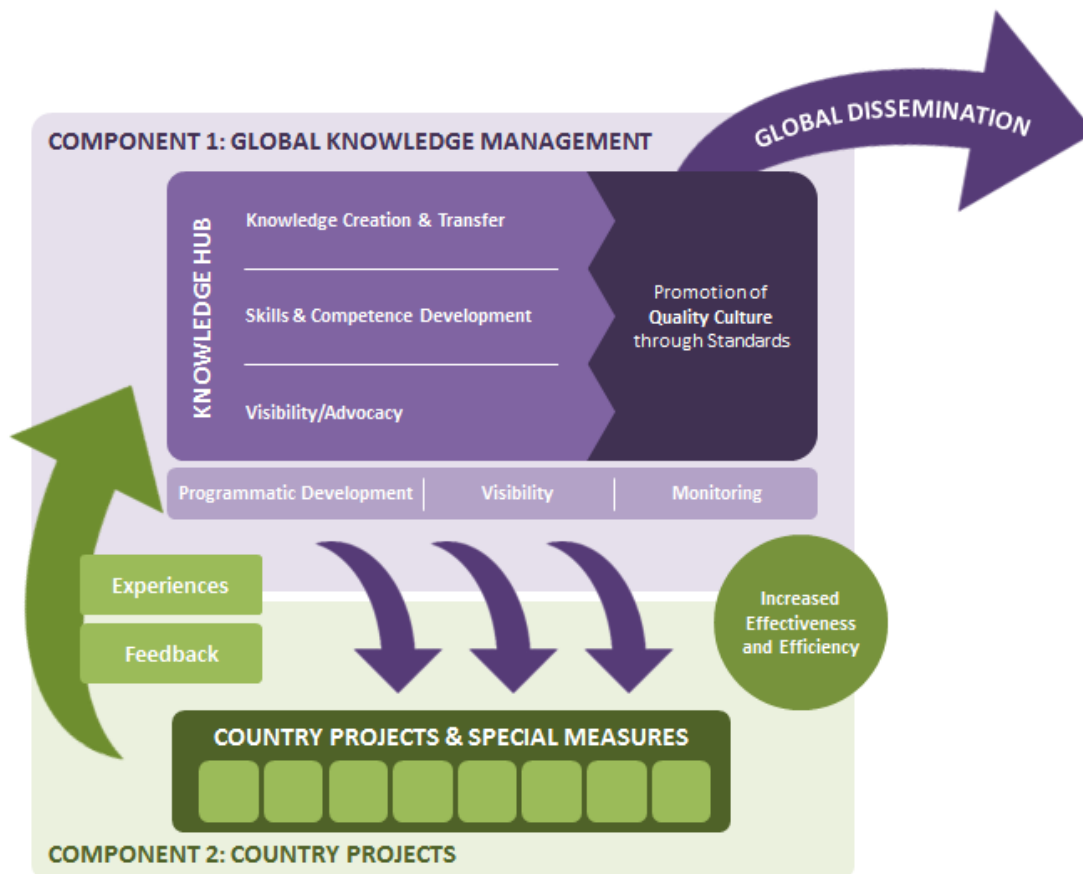


Figure 11: Global Programme

Component 1: Global Knowledge Management (C1)

C1 is a strategic and transversal component with the objective to generate and disseminate knowledge from research and past endeavors, which can be used to tackle quality and standards related challenges. This knowledge will be globally disseminated to country projects within the C2 and to the general public through an online platform hosted by UNIDO – the Knowledge Hub. C1 will have a direct feedback link with C2 by responding to the common needs in line with the three outcomes of the programme. C1 will support development of skills and competences, and provide visibility and advocacy of the tools produced. It will be a catalyst to achieve greater effectiveness, while optimizing efficiency in the use of resources. The benefits of C1 will exceed the GQSP framework and serve as a useful global public good for future quality and standard related programmes and to strengthen the cooperation with other organizations working within this field.

Component 2: Country Projects (C2)

C2 will address country-specific standards and quality compliance issues by implementing tailor made interventions for:

Type 1: Priority country projects (3-4 years) will address standard compliance challenges in a holistic and tailor-made manner and intervene on all three outcome levels, giving priority according to country needs in one or a limited number of specific sectors, with a focus on value chains.

Type 2: Special measures (1-2 years) will consist of short term strategic activities in the area of standards compliance and quality. It will be limited in scope and focus on targeted issues, not necessarily intervening on all three outcome-levels.

In both types, coordination with existing projects – thematic or country – will be actively promoted, to avoid overlaps and create synergies.

Component 3: Programme Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

C3 of the GQSP was introduced to reflect activities related to project coordination, including monitoring, reporting and evaluation, as well as activities related to overall programme visibility and communication.

Expected Results

The following are, in brief, some of the expected results of the project/programme:

C1: Global Knowledge Management

Outcome 1: Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced.

- Global issues and trends on standards compliance and identified, analyzed and disseminated.
- Good practices on Quality Infrastructure Systems shared.

Outcome 2: SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced.

- Knowledge to support SME in enhancing their capacity to comply with standards created and disseminated.
- Competences and skills of SME enhanced through e-learning.
- Lessons learned from country projects identified, analyzed and disseminated.

Outcome 3: Awareness for quality is enhanced.

- Advice for informed policy decision making on standards compliance and support for policy development provided.
- Activities to raise quality awareness developed.

C2: Country Projects

Outcome 1: Technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure System enhanced.

- In-depth analysis of the capacity of the QI institutions and service providers conducted and action plan prepared.
- Technical competence of the QI at the institutional level strengthened.
- Technical competence of the QI at the service provider's level strengthened.

Outcome 2: SME compliance with international standards and technical regulations enhanced.

- In-depth analysis/assessment of the relevant market requirements conducted and action plan prepared.
- Technical assistance in the form of advice to SME to enhance capacity to comply with standards provided.

- Targeted training to SME to enhance capacity to comply with standards provided.
- Clusters among VC actors promoted.

Outcome 3: Awareness for quality is enhanced.

- Advice for informed policy decision making on standards compliance and support for policy development provided.
- Activities to raise quality awareness developed.

Further information on implementation progress, budget and implementation arrangements is given in Annex 8.

II. Scope and purpose of the evaluation

The mid-term evaluation (MTE) will be conducted as a formative evaluation⁶⁴ and cover the first 2,5 years of the programme from its starting date up to the date of the evaluation. Based on an assessment of progress towards achievement of results (outputs, outcomes, impact) it will generate recommendation to address possibly necessary adjustments for the remaining activities until the end of the programme. Standard evaluation criteria will guide the evaluation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence and impact.⁶⁵

The overall objective of the exercise should be the evaluation of programmatic approach (compared to traditional technical cooperation with independent country projects). This includes:

- Synergies created and used between country projects
- Synergies created and used between the Global Knowledge Management component and the country projects.
- Streamlining of procedures (ProDocs, approaches, etc.) within UNIDO and stakeholder (beneficiaries, donor, etc.)

Another objective of the assignment is the evaluation of the Global Knowledge Management activities under Component 1.

Through its assessments, the Evaluation Team (ET) should enable the Government, counterparts, UNIDO and other stakeholders and donors to verify prospects for development impact and sustainability, providing an analysis of the attainment of global objectives, programme objectives, delivery and completion of programme outputs/activities, and outcomes/impacts based on indicators.

The MTE will assess if the programme is on track in terms of time, human and financial resources and delivery of planned outputs.

⁶⁴ Evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs (source: OECD/DAC glossary of evaluation terms).

⁶⁵ As per new DAC evaluation criteria:

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

The MTE is to assess whether the programme is likely to achieve its main objective, and to what extent the programme is still relevant and coherent and whether it has also considered sustainability and scaling-up factors for increasing contribution to sustainable results and further impact.

The MTE will cover all three components and all three outcome dimensions, but it will focus on the overall programme, without the need for in-depth assessments of the country projects. To that effect it will assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (risks) of the programme.

The evaluation should also identify early lessons and provide recommendations for streamlining/simplifying UNIDO procedures, particularly for future global programmes.

III. Evaluation approach and methodology⁶⁶

The MTE will be conducted in accordance with the UNIDO Evaluation Policy⁶⁷ UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation and the UNIDO Guidelines for the Technical Cooperation Project and Project Cycle⁶⁸.

The evaluation will be carried out as an independent in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby all key parties associated with the programme will be informed and consulted throughout the evaluation. The evaluation team leader will liaise with the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division on the conduct of the evaluation and methodological issues.

In line with its objectives, the evaluation will have two main components. The first component focuses on an overall **assessment of performance** of the project, whereas the second one focuses on the **learning** from the successful and unsuccessful practices in project design and implementation.

The evaluation will use a theory of change approach and mixed methods to collect data and information from a range of sources and informants. It will pay attention to triangulating the data and information collected before forming its assessment. This is essential to ensure an evidence-based and credible evaluation, with robust analytical underpinning.

The theory of change will identify causal and transformational pathways from the project outputs to outcomes and longer-term impacts, and drivers as well as barriers to achieve them. The learning from this analysis will be useful to feed into the design of the future projects so that the management team can effectively manage them based on results.

In those cases where baseline information for relevant indicators is not available, the evaluation team will aim at establishing a proxy-baseline through recall and secondary information.

⁶⁶ Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation will be conducted in line with overall UNIDO guidance and rules responding to the global crisis, thus prioritizing the health and safety of all parties involved.

⁶⁷ UNIDO. (2018). Director General's Bulletin: Evaluation Policy (DGB/2018/08, dated 1 June 2018)

⁶⁸ UNIDO. (2006). Director-General's Administrative Instruction No. 17/Rev.1: Guidelines for the Technical Cooperation Programme and Project Cycle (DGAI.17/Rev.1, 24 August 2006)

1. Data collection methods

The MTE will be required to use different methods to ensure that data gathering and analysis deliver evidence-based qualitative and quantitative information, based on diverse sources, as necessary: desk studies and literature review, statistical analysis, individual interviews, focus group meetings/discussions, surveys and direct observation. The specific mixed methodological approach will be described in the inception report.

Following are the main instruments for data collection:

- (a) **Desk and literature review** of documents related to the project, including but not limited to:
 - The original project document, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports), mid-term review report, output reports, back-to-office mission report(s), end-of-contract report(s) and relevant correspondence
 - Notes from meetings of committees involved in the project.
- (b) **Stakeholder consultations** will be conducted through structured and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. Key stakeholders to be interviewed include:
 - UNIDO Management and staff involved in the project; and
 - Representatives of donors and counterparts
- (c) **Progress review of GQSP country projects**
 - Review of results achieved by the project, including interviews of actual and potential beneficiaries of improved technologies
 - A portfolio review of all relevant documents (project documents, progress reports, etc.) related to the country projects
 - Interviews with the relevant UNIDO Country Office(s) representative to the extent that he/she was involved in the project, and the project's management members and the various national [and sub-regional] authorities dealing with project activities as necessary
- (d) Other interviews, surveys or document reviews as deemed necessary by the evaluation team and/or by the Independent Evaluation Division for triangulation purposes

Note: Given the current circumstances and travel limitations due to the outbreak of COVID-19, physical field visits might not be possible, in this case remote visits and interviews with relevant stakeholders will be held virtually.

2. Evaluation key questions and criteria

The evaluation team will develop interview guidelines. Interviews can take place either in the form of focus-group discussions or one-to-one consultations.

The key evaluation questions are the following:

- a) What are the key drivers and barriers to achieve the long term objectives? To what extent has the programme targeted key driving conditions necessary for overcoming barriers and achieving the long term objectives?
- b) How well has the programme performed so far in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency? Has the programme done the right things? Is the programme doing things right, with good value for Fconmoney?

- c) What have been the programme's key results so far (outputs, outcome and impact)? To what extent have the expected results been achieved or are likely to be achieved?
- d) Is the programme approach adding value to the individual country projects and vice versa?
- e) Has the programme approach added value in view of achieving the overall objectives of UNIDO and the donor?
- f) To what extent will achieved results sustain after completion of the programme?
- g) To what extent does the programme contribute to the achievement of long-term objectives and the possibility of transformational change (impact)?
- h) How well does the intervention fit? Is the Programme compatible and consistent with policies and/or other interventions in the country in the same context (coherence)?
- i) What lessons can be drawn from the programme design, the ongoing implementation and management of the programme, with particular emphasis on the global programme approach? What corrective measures are recommended?

The evaluation will assess the likelihood of sustainability of the results after the programme completion. The assessment will identify key risks (e.g. in terms of financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental risks) and explain how these risks may affect the continuation of results after the project ends. Table 5 below provides the key evaluation criteria to be assessed by the evaluation. The detailed questions to assess each evaluation criterion are in annex 2. The **rating criteria** and table to be used is presented in annex 8.

Table 5. Summary of Project evaluation criteria

Index	Evaluation criteria	Mandatory rating
A	Progress to Impact	Yes
B	Programme design	Yes
1	• Overall design	Yes
2	• Logframe	Yes
C	Programme performance	Yes
1	• Relevance	Yes
2	• Effectiveness	Yes
3	• Efficiency	Yes
4	• Sustainability of benefits	Yes
D	Cross-cutting performance criteria	
1	• Gender mainstreaming	Yes
2	• Environment and socio-economic aspects	
2	• M&E: (focus on Monitoring) ✓ M&E design ✓ M&E implementation	Yes
3	• Results-based Management (RBM)	Yes
E	Performance of partners	

1	• UNIDO	Yes
2	• National counterparts	Yes
3	• Donor	Yes
F	Overall assessment	Yes

IV. Evaluation process

The evaluation will be implemented in phases which are not strictly sequential, but in many cases iterative, conducted in parallel and partly overlapping:

- UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (IED) identifies and selects the Evaluation Team members, in consultation with project manager
- Inception phase
 - ✓ Desk review and data analysis: The evaluation team will review project-related documentation and literature and carry out a data analysis
 - ✓ Briefing of consultant(s) at UNIDO Headquarters (HQ)
 - ✓ Preparation of inception report Interviews, survey
- Data collection phase
 - ✓ Interviews, in-depth document review, surveys
- Reporting phase
 - ✓ After data collection and first analysis a debriefing with preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations by the ET leader
 - ✓ Further data analysis and draft report writing
 - ✓ Draft report submission
 - ✓ Sharing and factual validation of draft report with stakeholders
 - ✓ Final evaluation report Submission and QA/clearance by IED, and
 - ✓ Two pages summary take-away message
- IED Final report issuance and distribution with the respective management response sheet and further follow-up, and publication of evaluation report in UNIDO intra/internet sites

V. Evaluation team composition

A staff from the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division will be assigned as Evaluation Manager and will coordinate and provide evaluation backstopping to the evaluation team and ensure the quality of the evaluation. The UNIDO Project Manager and national project teams will act as resourced persons and provide support to the evaluation team and the IED evaluation manager.

The evaluation team will be composed of at least one international evaluation consultant acting as the team leader and one possible additional consultant. The evaluation team members will possess relevant strong experience and skills on evaluation and evaluation management. Expertise and experience in the related technical subject of the project is desirable. The evaluation consultants will be contracted by UNIDO.

The tasks of each team member are specified in the job descriptions in annex 3 to these terms of reference.

According to UNIDO Evaluation Policy, members of the evaluation team must not have been directly involved in the design and/or implementation of the project under evaluation.

VI. Time schedule

The evaluation is scheduled to take place from October/November 2020 to January/February 2021.

The Draft Evaluation report will be submitted 2 to 4 weeks after the data collection phase and the debriefing with preliminary evaluation findings⁶⁹.

The Final Evaluation report will be submitted 2 weeks after comments received.

VII. Evaluation deliverables

Inception report

This Terms of Reference (ToR) provides some information on the evaluation methodology, but this should not be regarded as exhaustive. After reviewing the project documentation and initial interviews with the project manager, the evaluation team will prepare an inception report that will operationalize the ToR relating to the evaluation questions and provide information on what type of and how the evidence will be collected (methodology). It will be discussed with and approved by the responsible UNIDO Evaluation Manager.

The Inception Report will focus on the following elements: preliminary project theory model(s); elaboration of evaluation methodology including quantitative and qualitative approaches through an evaluation framework (“evaluation matrix”); division of work between the Evaluation Consultants; field mission/phase plan, including places to be visited, people to be interviewed and possible surveys to be conducted and a debriefing and reporting timetable⁷⁰.

Evaluation report and review procedures

The draft report will be delivered to UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (the suggested report outline is in annex 4) and circulated to UNIDO staff and national stakeholders associated with the project for factual validation and comments. Any comments or responses, or feedback on any errors of fact to the draft report provided by the stakeholders will be sent to UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division for collation and onward transmission to the project evaluation team who will be advised of any necessary revisions. On the basis of this feedback, and taking into consideration the comments received, the evaluation team will prepare the final version of the terminal evaluation report.

⁶⁹ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the briefing will be conducted in line with UNIDO guidance and rules responding to the global crisis.

⁷⁰ The evaluator will be provided with a Guide on how to prepare an evaluation inception report and a Guide on how to formulate lessons learned (including quality checklist) prepared by the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division.

The ET will present its preliminary findings to the local stakeholders at the end of the field visit and take into account their feed-back in preparing the evaluation report. A presentation of preliminary findings will take place at UNIDO HQ after the field mission/phase.

The MTE report should be brief, to the point and easy to understand. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated, and the methods used. The report must highlight any methodological limitations, identify key concerns and present evidence-based findings, consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. The report should provide information on when the evaluation took place, the places visited, who was involved and be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. The report should include an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons.

Findings, conclusions and recommendations should be presented in a complete, logical and balanced manner. The evaluation report shall be written in English and follow the outline given in annex 4. The ET should submit the final version of the MTE report in accordance with UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division standards.

VIII. Quality assurance

All UNIDO evaluations are subject to quality assessments by UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division. Quality assurance and control is exercised in different ways throughout the evaluation process (briefing of consultants on methodology and process of UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, providing inputs regarding findings, lessons learned and recommendations from other UNIDO evaluations, review of inception report and evaluation report).

The quality of the evaluation report will be assessed and rated against the criteria set forth in the Checklist on evaluation report quality, attached as annex 5. UNIDO's Independent Evaluation Division should ensure that the evaluation report is useful for UNIDO in terms of organizational learning (recommendations and lessons learned) and is compliant with UNIDO's evaluation policy and these terms of reference. The draft and final evaluation report are reviewed by UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division, which will issue and circulate it within UNIDO together with a management response sheet, as well as submit to relevant stakeholders as required.

