

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S NIGERIA COMPETITIVENESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME



# National Quality Infrastructure Project for Nigeria

THE NIGERIA NATIONAL QUALITY POLICY  
**SHARING THE GENESIS PROCESS**



THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA



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*In order to fully exploit export opportunities, Nigeria's industry would need access to an internationally recognized and supportive national quality infrastructure.*

## I. Summary

In order to compete successfully in developed markets, Nigeria's industry, especially the sector of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), faces a number of challenges. The Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and related Nigerian government institutions recognized that one of the major obstacles to trade was the attainment of verifiable product quality for the domestic market, and the product quality demanded by foreign regulatory authorities and major trading partners.

Hence, in order to fully exploit export opportunities, Nigeria's industry would need access to an internationally recognized and supportive national quality infrastructure to provide the capacity and independent evidence required for product standards compliance. This cross-cutting issue would require a holistic approach involving many ministries, quality infrastructure (QI) agencies and other stakeholders from the private and public sectors.

Leading stakeholders from the public and private domain were identified to form the Nigerian National Quality Policy Steering Committee (NNQPSC). This body would oversee the development process of the Nigerian National Quality Policy (NNQP) and take all crucial decisions, supported and advised throughout the NNQP upgrading process by an international expert on quality policy. SON was given the leading role as secretariat.

The Steering Committee first convened in January 2014 in Abuja to decide on the composition of Technical Committees and the work plan of the NNQPSC. The second meeting took place in May, where the roadmap for the NNQP was produced and presented in three workshops for stakeholders including manufacturers and SMEs. In the course of the workshops, the participants visited six Nigerian QI institutions, the NNQPSC membership was continuously readjusted, and sub-committee reports presented.

June saw a regional NNQPSC Consultative Forum in Lagos, Nigeria, to collect stakeholder contributions, from where the policy drafting process took off. The draft, based on the aggregation of stakeholder resolutions, would be reviewed later at five other regional consultative fora. The initial workshops were held to raise awareness of the role of a functional QI and to accompany the policy review conducted by the NNQP international expert, which revealed QI policy gaps both at the national and institutional level as well as duplicate activities among the QI agencies.

During the following step, seven Technical Committees of stakeholders were established to draft different chapters of the National Quality Policy with guidance from SON as the lead institution. The Green Paper, a first draft of the NNQP, was produced at a one-week retreat in Makurdi, Nigeria, in July 2014. In November, the draft NNQP was presented at five regional consultative workshops for comments and review to ensure consistency with international best practices, considering also its social inclusiveness.

The final national consultative workshop was held in Abuja to present the final draft for adoption. Two NNQP study tours, to Malaysia and Austria, contributed to the drafting phase. In the beginning of March 2015, the Technical Secretariat of the NNQPSC set out a roadmap for further NNQP implementation. The National Steering Committee approved the final NNQP document three weeks later. The entire process took no more than 14 months.

## II. The Nigeria National Quality Policy Programme

As the first step in upgrading the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), the Nigerian National Quality Policy (NNQP) had to be made coherent and stable, entailing a comprehensive review of fundamental laws on standardization, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation and a rewriting process to upgrade this in efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance with the requirements of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) measures and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The aim of the National Quality Infrastructure Project (NQIP) – conducted in cooperation among UNIDO, the European Union (EU), and the Nigerian government– was to develop an NNQP by aggregating stakeholder resolutions on the legislation supporting it and to motivate analysis and discussion. The NNQP itself aimed at preparing a ‘Green Paper’ on the legal framework for an overarching, systematic, coherent, efficient and sustainable NQP and NQI.



Over 42 leading stakeholders from a number of ministries as well as public and private agencies related to QI were identified. Together they formed the Nigerian National Quality Policy Steering Committee (NNQPSC), headed by 24 Technical Secretaries and a Chairperson. This body would direct the NNQP process and convene to take leading decisions on the new policy. The Hon. Minister for Industry, Trade and Investment and Chair of the Steering Committee inaugurated the NNQPSC, demonstrating the government of Nigeria's commitment. SON was to play the leading role in the process and, as such, was appointed secretariat.

Nigeria embarked on upgrading its national QI in order to enhance its technical regulation regime and to organize the relationship between the two. There was a need for decision-making that would address technological and quality needs and minimize negative environmental, health and safety externalities, while avoiding unnecessary and costly barriers to trade. This was something to be implemented in a tangible quality policy framework.

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The international expert on quality policy Evah Oduor was hired by UNIDO to provide advisory and administrative support to the NNQPSC throughout the NNQP upgrading process. She was able to draw on her experience as former Director of the Standards and International Trade department at the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) and as KEBS Managing Director, as well as on her previous participation in trade negotiations in the East African Community (EAC) and (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) COMESA regions, ARSO and AFSEC, on issues of Standardization and Conformity Assessment.

The Steering Committee first convened in January 2014 in Abuja to decide on the composition of the sub-committees and the work plan of the NNQPSC. The second meeting took place in May, where the roadmap for the NNQP was produced and presented in the course of three workshops with more than 30 stakeholders including manufacturers and SMEs. The meeting gathered 70 participants, including 13 female members.



The workshops with stakeholders served two purposes. They were held to raise awareness of the role of a functional QI, which helped all stakeholder institutions to understand and appreciate their role in QI and therefore the importance of their participation in the process of developing the national quality policy. Beyond this, the workshops served to review the existing policy conducted by the international expert.

The workshops and the expert's review revealed that there were a number of institutions duplicating regulatory work, thereby increasing business cost and causing delays. For example, both NAFDAC and NESREA performed regulatory functions on environmental matters. The initial laboratory survey during the NNQP inception phase detected reiterative and conflicting practices and policies even within SON. Furthermore, SON was involved in both the development and enforcement of standards. In a number of cases, a trader was requested two certificates with the same parameters from more than one QI institution. This proved costly and ensued unnecessary delays.

These institutions had been carrying out their duties in this fashion for several years due to existing policy inconsistencies. It became evident that the Nigerian technical regulations and related procedures for compliance had to be further systematized, made more intelligible and easily accessible, strengthened through its application and enforcement processes, and redesigned based on cost-effectiveness.



Six Technical Committees were established to prepare a draft NNQP acceptable to all stakeholders. The committees took charge of the following QI areas: Standards, Metrology, Conformity assessment/testing laboratories, Communications, Technical Regulations, Budget and planning, and the Technical Secretariat.

The members of the Technical Committees, from the private and public sector, were placed in each committee according to the areas of particular relevance to their involvement in QI. The Technical Committees met in April, June and September, while the Technical Secretariat held twelve meetings during this period.

SON organized a regional NNQPSC Consultative Forum in Lagos, which took place on 18 June 2014 in order to collect stakeholder contributions for the formulation of the NNQP. A total 87 participants joined the Forum, among them manufacturers, business leaders, academics, government officials, standards experts, regulators, and interested civil society and NGO representatives. Upon this basis, the policy



drafting process took off. The draft, based on the aggregation of stakeholder resolutions, would be reviewed later at five further regional consultative fora.

From 15 to 18 July, UNIDO set up a four-day retreat for the Technical Committees, where the reports of the Committee chairmen were received and adopted. Together, the 26 participants, among them 6 women, produced the first draft of the NNQP Green Paper. Besides UNIDO, SON, and FMITI, the stakeholder institutions represented at the NNQP retreat in Makurdi included the Institute of Public Analysts of Nigeria (IPAN), CPC, the Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (NASME), and the Industrial Development Centre (IDO).

Stakeholders wanted to know what the NNQP would do for them and how it would help their organizations or their businesses. To convey the impact of QI, meetings were able to increase awareness for every individual role within the bigger picture, in this case the development strategy within the Nigeria Industrial master plan. In particular, SON's role was not well understood. Being the focal point of the National Quality Infrastructure in Nigeria, it was important that their role would be clearly articulated to stakeholders. Some aspects of the work that SON performed included filling an existent QI vacuum. The NQP now clearly defines and streamlines these roles.

There was a need to break down barriers and mistrust that existed among the different QI institutions. It was also important for the institutions to gain trust and confidence in SON as the leader and driver of the process. UNIDO's support and the commitment displayed by SON led members of the Technical Committees to attend the meetings and therefore ensured that all stakeholders were on board, which accelerated and enriched the process.

The Regional Consultative meetings took place at weekly intervals in the Nigerian cities of Calabar, Enugu, Minna, and Sokoto, with 121, 97, 47, and 204 participants respectively. A platform for e-consultations was set up throughout October and November 2014 so that stakeholders and experts could enhance the decision-making process with their recommendations on the draft NNQP regardless of their geographical location or proximity to the NNQP programme. This was followed by a final validation consultation that took place in Abuja on 8 December, with 199 members. The proportion of female attendants for all five consultations hovered around 24 per cent.

The consultative meetings, counting with the international expert's participation, provided a platform to raise awareness

of the NNQP and to present the draft NQP document for comments. The broad submission to commentary additionally ensured that the NNQP ownership was ultimately with the Nigerian government and the Nigerian people. Experts reviewed the draft version of the Green Paper to ensure that it was in line with international best practice and that it was socially inclusive of gender and vulnerable groups' concerns.

The Green Paper considered the baseline survey report by UNIDO, containing outcomes of consultations with the Nigerian Bank of Industry on creating an enabling environment for SMEs, reports on the consultative fora, as well as inputs from e-consultations on the SON website and the Facebook page. The international expert reviewed the zero draft of the NNQP. On 3 March 2015, the Technical Secretariat met to finalize the paper, which was again reviewed by the international expert. The NSC then presented and adopted the Green Paper on 5 March and presented it to the Hon. Minister for Industry, Trade and Investment for implementation on 17 March.

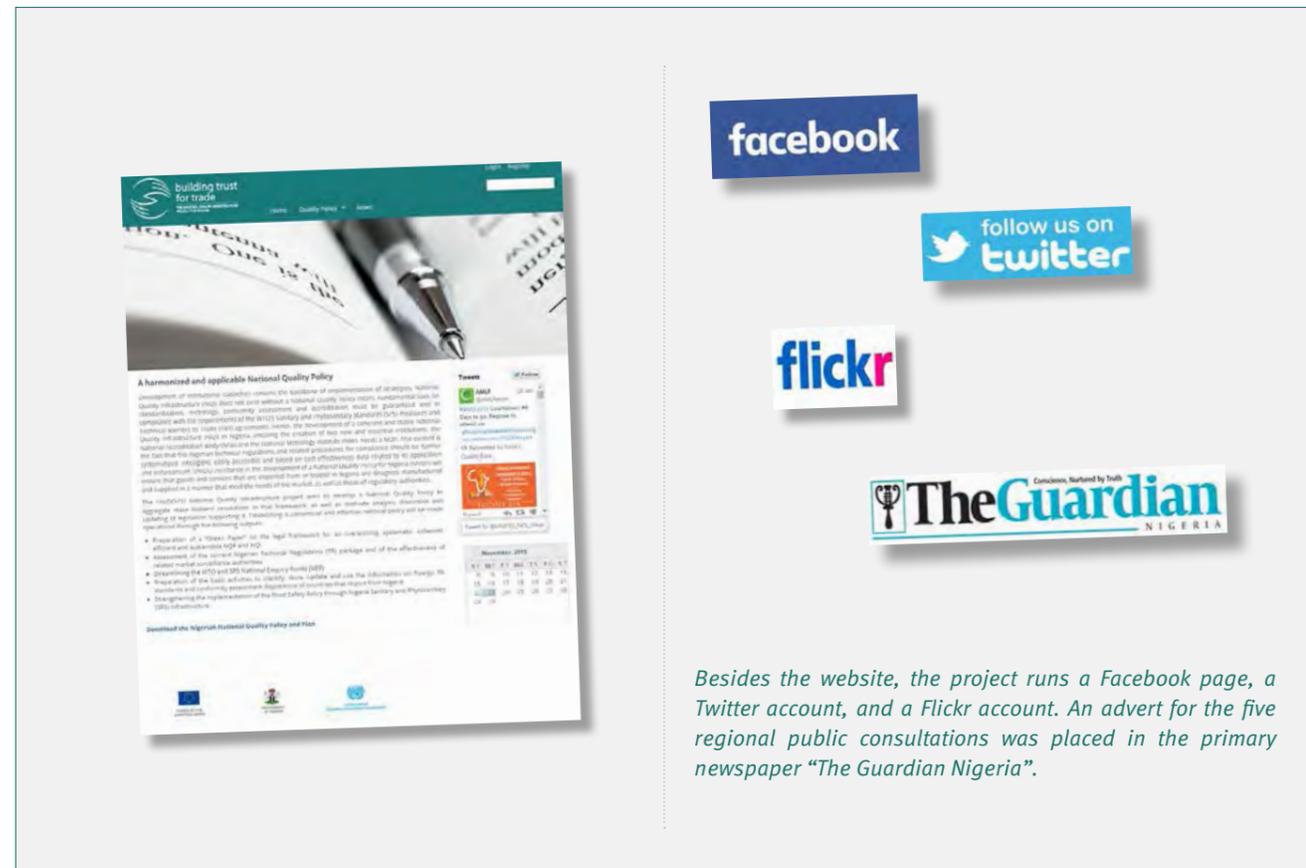
THE HISTORIC PROGRAMME WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN THE 14-MONTH TIMELINE AND TOTAL EXPENSES AT EUR 242,096. NO OTHER COUNTRY HAD EVER BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP AN NQP IN LESS THAN FIVE YEARS.



### III. Visibility

To promote the NNQP and the NQIP as a whole, a website was created providing information on all steps and outputs of the NQIP, the three project implementing agencies, and their visions. The website allows interested parties to follow the progress and current events in the course of the project, as well as access to fact sheets, brochures, reports, and a photo gallery, among other relevant materials. Furthermore, the new Nigerian National Quality Policy draft itself can be downloaded from this platform. For online information on the NNQP, see <http://www.nqi-nigeria.org/quality/26>.

Besides the website, the project runs a Facebook page, a Twitter account, and a Flickr account, as well as a newsletter mailing list. Printed material for publicity includes brochures, fact sheets, and reports available to interested parties and stakeholders. An advert for the five regional public consultations was placed in the primary newspaper "The Guardian Nigeria" on 8 November 2014 to disseminate information among the Nigerian people and call for participants. Specifically for the regional NNQP consultations in Enugu, an additional advert was published in a local newspaper to attract attention and engage the population.



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### IV. Observations

Having the Minister inaugurate the National Steering Committee gave the process a symbolical meaning that did justice to its importance for the national economy, making it a working priority for those involved. It proved both a strong accelerating factor and a qualitative upgrade to convey the significance of quality infrastructure services for business from the very beginning.



It was important to understand the rationale on the basis of which agencies such as NAFDAC, NESREA, CPC, and SON were originally formed. This information made it possible to discuss potential new roles that would not diminish or undermine the existing agencies. In its function as secretariat, SON demonstrated total commitment to the process, with their DG being present on every occasion. The technical expertise and institutional influence of UNIDO and the EU accelerated the process and contributed to its recognition among all participants.

The cooperative process involving broad consultation with Nigerian and international stakeholders led to acceptance and readiness.

Familiarity with the Nigerian working culture and understanding helped to approach the involved parties on their terms, facilitating trust and cooperation among everyone involved. The subject was a fragile one, as it did not augur well with the Nigerians that their National Quality Infrastructure revealed strong shortcomings. However, the cooperative process involving broad consultation with Nigerian and international stakeholders led to acceptance and readiness to engage in its upgrade. This inclusive strategy also made it possible for the final draft to be adopted easily with broad consent.

Furthermore, there was no need to call for a national expert to support the process – as originally foreseen– seeing as the intensive consultation process, including so many national stakeholders from different links to quality policy, functioned so well.

Ultimately, an implementation plan was put in place. The momentum and speed already displayed promises that the QI upgrading process itself will likely be continued at the same speed and, more importantly, will continue to include a broad range of stakeholders. They themselves are the experts of their needs. The new quality policy and infrastructure can only come out strong with cooperation at all levels.



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#### **Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria**

21st Crescent, Off Constitution Avenue  
Central Business District P.M.B. 280  
Garki- Abuja Nigeria  
Tel: (+234) 9-4617800  
Email: [Delegation-Nigeria@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Delegation-Nigeria@eeas.europa.eu)  
[www.delnga.ec.europa.eu](http://www.delnga.ec.europa.eu)

#### **NQI Project Office in Nigeria**

Plot 256 Zone A0 Hebert Macaulay Way  
Bank of Industry Building Central Business  
District- Abuja Nigeria  
Tel: (+234) 9-2205009  
[office.nigeria@unido.org](mailto:office.nigeria@unido.org)

#### **NQI Project Office in Vienna, Austria**

Email: [nqip-nigeria@unido.org](mailto:nqip-nigeria@unido.org)

#### **Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment**

Old Secretariat, Area 1  
Garki-Abuja FCT Nigeria  
Email: [Info@fmti.gov.ng](mailto:Info@fmti.gov.ng)  
[www.fmti.gov.ng](http://www.fmti.gov.ng)

#### **UNIDO Trade Capacity Building**

Vienna International Centre  
P.O. BOX 300 A-1400 Vienna Austria  
Tel: (+43) 1260626 3571  
Email: [tcb@unido.org](mailto:tcb@unido.org)  
[www.unido.org](http://www.unido.org)

#### **UNIDO Regional Office in Nigeria**

UN House, Plot 617/618 Diplomatic  
Drive,  
Central Business District,  
P.M.B. 2851, Garki  
Abuja, 234  
Nigeria



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