

# Alliance for Product Quality in Africa - AfCFTA

## Quality Generates Trade

### The challenge

Africa's economic development is hindered by its limited integration into the world economy. Its share in global trade stands at only approximately 3 percent, while intra-African trade accounts for a mere 0.5 percent of total world trade. Our objective is to collectively bolster intra-African trade and elevate Africa's role as an exporter on the international market and to increase local value creation. To this end, we are focusing on improving product quality and strengthening the national quality infrastructure. For this purpose, we develop partnerships with European and African companies, associations, and the quality infrastructure.

Facilitating the importation of goods into the European Union or their trade within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) necessitates strict adherence to statutory quality and consumer protection standards. Additionally, numerous international and regional importers mandate compliance with voluntary environmental and social standards. African products frequently fall short of meeting these criteria or lack the requisite certifications. Despite robust international demand for African commodities such as fruits, tea, and textiles, many producers restrict their sales to domestic markets. Consequently, despite favorable production costs, they fail to capitalize on opportunities for Africa-wide and global trade, job creation, and profit maximization.

### Our approach

The quality infrastructure encompasses all stakeholders involved in standardization, metrology, accreditation, and conformity assessment services (including product and system inspection, testing, and certification). A robust quality infrastructure is indispensable for local companies seeking to engage in international trade, as it serves as evidence of the quality and safety of their products.

The Alliance for Product Quality in Africa (AfPQ) comes into play when European companies want to import from Africa or when African companies want to trade more within Africa and product quality poses a challenge. Together with African and European companies and associations, we develop and implement projects to overcome these barriers.

The AfPQ supports African companies in accessing new markets - regional and international. These new export opportunities enable them to increase their production and achieve higher prices for their products, which in turn can lead to an increase in wages. Environmental and social standards, which are in high demand by international importers, furthermore, have positive effects on working conditions and the protection of natural resources.

The Alliance for Product Quality in Africa implements activities with African companies, business associations and other development cooperation stakeholders. Among other services, the project offers training for African companies, in cooperation with business associations, to implement quality standards or introduce quality management systems in businesses. It also provides support and advice on certification for African producers which manufacture goods with export potential. One priority in this context is promoting regional trade, including cooperation with public and private export promotion programmes.

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L. to r.: textile production from Rabalma (Senegal);

Tom BAGAZA, founder and managing director of Coffee Villages, a cooperative supported by AfPQ that has successfully obtained EU organic certification (Rwanda)



*L. to r.: production of dried mangoes COOPERATIVE GNIN-NANGNON from Korhogo (Côte d'Ivoire); picking tea for production, Karongi TeaFactory Ltd (Rwanda)*

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## The AfPQ structure

The AfPQ-AfCFTA module is implemented by GIZ and forms part of a co-implementation structure including the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) and which is led by the joint secretariat. PTB's focus is at the macro level, where collaboration with standardization authorities, for example, is prevalent for norm-setting activities. On the GIZ side, the collaboration is focused on the enterprise and business association level. The alliance comprises two modules: the first is part of the Special Initiative (SI-Module) "Decent Work for a Just Transition" and thus operates since 2019 in the 8 SI partner countries (**Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal**). The second is the AfCFTA module, which has an emphasis on fostering regional and international trade. It operates since 2023 out of two regional antennas in **Kenya and Togo** and is also active in **Benin, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania**.

## The AfPQ – AfCFTA programme

AfPQ – AfCFTA focuses on facilitating regional and international trade along two work streams: (A) enhancing African companies' quality management systems (QMS) and (B) ensuring compliance with environmental and social standards demanded by regional and European buyers.

In workstream A, the project implements its newly developed AfPQ Q-Boost programme to familiarize export ready SMEs in East and West Africa with professional and user-oriented QMS to enhance product quality and thereby export potential in the regional market. Q-Boost is implemented in collaboration with private sector institutions and bi-lateral private sector development programmes.

In workstream B, AfPQ-AfCFTA supports East African national organic associations and its members in strengthening regional organic trade along the East African Organic Product Standard. In West Africa, companies are supported to achieve compliance with international standards, notably EU organic and Fair Trade, to connect to European markets.

The project thereby contributes to a Just Transition, by enhancing working conditions and promoting environmentally and climate-friendly production practices.

## Intended Results

The AfPQ AfCFTA programme aims to achieve the following objectives:

- The capacities of African companies for the implementation of practical quality management systems have improved through the Q-Boost programme
- The local range of services in the context of product quality in Africa has improved through implementation of AfPQ-AfCFTA activities in close collaboration with local business associations
- African companies have better information and processes to meet private standards on product quality by supporting SMEs in complying with international and regional standards.

## Examples from the field

While QMS certifications and compliance with voluntary sustainability standards play a crucial role in international trade, its role in regional trade is rather limited. Certifications are rarely demanded from importers. On the other hand, the lack of cross-border trust in product quality limits sales to national markets. To enable such regional trade, the Q-Boost Programme is developed by local consultants in cooperation with business associations in East and West Africa. Based on the ISO 9001:2015 standard, it comprises trainings and coaching. It introduces a customized quality management systems in SMEs that works for them addressing pertinent quality issues specific to their business operations. Q-Boost will be piloted in Kenya and undertaken in Rwanda, Uganda, Togo and Benin.

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