



GOVERNMENT OF ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
**MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INDUSTRY,
COMMERCE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & LABOUR**



NATIONAL *QUALITY* POLICY

2021 - 2030 FOR ST. KITTS & NEVIS

NOVEMBER 2021



GOVERNMENT OF SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS
THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INDUSTRY, COMMERCE,
CONSUMER AFFAIRS & LABOUR

National Quality Policy



This document is the outcome of a consultancy by Mesopartner PartG on behalf of the CARICOM Organisation for Standardisation and Quality and the St Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards as funded by a grant from the Caribbean Development Bank.

FOREWORD

St. Kitts and Nevis is one of the CARICOM Member States seeking to diversify its economy and maximise the development benefits associated with trade. Trade plays an indispensable role in promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, creating employment opportunities, lowering prices, facilitating technology transfer, building capacity, maximizing competitiveness, and increasing the variety of goods available to consumers. In St. Kitts and Nevis, trade growth has been on a downward trend over the past few years. In 2019, the Country exported goods totalling US\$61.2 million, a significant decrease from the US\$103 million in 2014 (OEC, n.d.). In addition, the Nation imported goods worth US\$313 million in 2019, a substantial drop compared to its US\$469 million import bill in 2014 (OEC, n.d.).

Since the decline of sugar as the Country's economic mainstay in the 1970s, tourism and the allied services sector has been the largest contributor to GDP. Dependence on one industry makes any country highly vulnerable to economic shocks. In 2020, the Federation's GDP decreased by almost 11% compared to 2019 (Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, 2020). The substantial decline in the Federation's GDP was mainly a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent restrictions to control the spread of the virus, which adversely affected the tourism industry. This highlights the economy's vulnerability and fragility, and therefore justifies the urgent need for diversification and increasing the Country's trade competitiveness.

In light of (a) the economic vulnerability of St. Kitts and Nevis; and (b) the need to urgently address economic diversification and boost national competitiveness through trade, the Ministry of International Trade, Industry, Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Labour (MITICCAL) presents this National Quality Policy (NQP) for St. Kitts and Nevis. The elaboration of this NQP was made possible with financial and technical support from the CARICOM Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). The NQP was prepared by Mesopartner after several rounds of assessments, consultations and workshops with public and private sector stakeholders, beginning in April 2021 and ending in March 2022.

The NQP will act as the basic government instrument for developing and overseeing the quality infrastructure (QI) system in St. Kitts and Nevis. It includes objectives and recommendations for the development of the QI of the Country, as well as an implementation plan to help meet these targets. A strong QI system includes well-functioning standardization, metrology, accreditation, conformity assessment, testing, certification, inspection, and market surveillance services. QI is essential for increasing a country's trade competitiveness. It improves efficiency in the domestic trading environment and facilitates access to international markets through quality assurance and compliance with international standards.

It is envisioned that this NQP will help St. Kitts and Nevis find new opportunities to export and diversify our product portfolio, attract investments, become integrated in global value chains, and earn foreign currency. It should bolster the confidence of global trading partners and visitors in the quality of goods and services produced in our Federation. The NQP should also play a crucial role in ensuring product safety and protecting the health of the population and environment of St. Kitts and Nevis. Among other matters, the NQP is also designed to (i) empower consumers to make more informed decisions through increased transparency; and (ii) support the development of a quality culture within the Nation.

On behalf of the Government of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, the MITICCAL -through this NQP - is demonstrating its support to CROSQ's Regional Quality Policy. In addition, our government encourages all CARICOM Member States to develop NQPs of their own to strengthen the overall quality infrastructure of our region.

Wendy Phipps

Wendy Phipps

MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS &
LABOUR

Government of St. Kitts and Nevis

TESTIMONIAL

The development of a (NQP) National Quality Policy for St. Kitts & Nevis was quite a significant step towards the development of our national quality infrastructure. It was a very comprehensive exercise that brought the various ministries together as well as the private sector to illustrate how interconnected and invaluable communication between all parties helps to foster and develop an NQI.

We had many workshops learning about the process, the players and the outcomes. Implementation mapping was critical to highlight the chronology of the stages within the policy. Regional partners in Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua & Barbuda and St. Lucia from the private and public sector exchanged critical insights into their experiences when the policies were developed there. We were able to garner this knowledge to facilitate our needs in the federation of St. Kitts & Nevis.

My team at SKNBS learnt a lot and got significant exposure. The PSC was engaged and participated in the workshops and gave crucial insights based on their points of view.

The process overall came at a critical moment on the heels of a new Standards & Quality Act where we were able to include aspects of the NQP.

This process would not have been possible without CROSQ who facilitated and secured the funding from CDB which led to the services of Mesopartners. Mesopartners who were the consultants on this project guided the process from start to finish. They were very engaging and, in some instances, overwhelming to ensure that we developed a quality document (NQP). We had opportunities to network and develop strong relationships over the last year. For a project that started in 2021, it feels like we have known Mesopartners for years.

We would like to thank the Minister of International Trade (Hon Wendy Phipps) for her unwavering support from beginning to end. CROSQ and CDB for the facilitation and the funding and last but by no means least Mesopartners who were professional, insightful and accommodating.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St. Kitts and Nevis needs to strengthen its National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) to participate successfully in international trade and guarantee sustainable development. With the National Quality Policy (NQP) the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis establishes the framework for an internationally aligned NQI system.

St. Kitts and Nevis is a twin-island federation located in the Leeward Islands group of the Lesser Antillean segment of the Caribbean Archipelago (Ministry of Sustainable Development, 2006). Up until the 1970s agriculture, predominantly sugar, formed the backbone of the country's economy. After the closure of the sugar industry in 2005, services, mainly tourism, replaced sugar as the economy's mainstay, accounting for over half of the country's GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; FCDO, 2021).

The Federation's reliance on tourism puts its economy in a vulnerable position since it is a volatile sector that is susceptible to economic and environmental shocks. This is exemplified by the adverse effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the strict measures being taken to curb the spread of the virus, on the tourism industry, and by extension the economy of St. Kitts and Nevis. According to estimates, in 2020 the Federation's economy contracted by 10.7% compared to 2019 (Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, 2020). This highlights the urgent need to stimulate other sectors of the economy.

In light of the current situation, St. Kitts and Nevis is looking towards international trade as a means of diversifying its economy. The country exports a plethora of products. In recent years, the top exports have been low-voltage protection equipment, broadcasting equipment, other measuring instruments, electric motor parts and electrical transformers (OEC, n.d.). Other important export products include recreational boats, beer, hard liquor, postage stamps, other animal products and molluscs (OEC, n.d.). Additionally, the Federation exports several products from the agriculture sector; including coconuts, tropical fruit, roots/tubers, vegetables, rice, sweet potatoes, tea, spices, cabbages, perfume plants, cut flowers, pulses, watermelons, carrots/turnips, eggs, and tomatoes (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

In addition, a large proportion of the products on the islands are imported. Some of these products include refined petroleum, jewellery, passenger and cargo ships, cars, poultry meat, cement, postage stamps, base metal watches, delivery trucks, packaged medicaments, other measuring instruments, and hard liquor.

Nevertheless, trade has decreased sharply over the past few years. In 2019 St. Kitts and Nevis earned approximately 40% less from exports than it did in 2014. Additionally, the value of its imports in 2019 was approximately 33% less than in 2014. Therefore, urgent action is needed to boost the country's participation in international trade.

An essential step towards enabling St. Kitts and Nevis to participate successfully in international trade is strengthening its National Quality Infrastructure (NQI). A strong NQI, with all of the required components in place - standardization; metrology; accreditation; and conformity assessment, particularly testing, certification, and inspection services – is a catalyst for improving the quality of products and services on a national scale. It will also verify and demonstrate that products and services from St. Kitts and Nevis meet international standards. This will increase demand for these products and services and help the country meet the requirements of export markets. Therefore, the development of a strong NQI will play a crucial role in stimulating key sectors in the Federation, such as tourism and transport, light manufacturing, and agriculture and fisheries. These sectors have the potential to contribute significantly to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In addition to boosting the country's trade competitiveness, a robust NQI will help the citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis make informed purchasing decisions and will instil confidence that the products and services they purchase are safe and fit for purpose.

Furthermore, it will contribute to the efficient and effective use of available resources and decrease waste generation; both of which are essential given the limitations of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like St. Kitts and Nevis.

A National Quality Policy (NQP) is critical for establishing and overseeing the NQI in the Federation. It is a government instrument that provides the framework for the development of the country's NQI. The development and implementation of the NQP is guided by coherence, ownership, inclusiveness, optimization, sustainability, and specificity. There are no ready-made NQI models that fit all countries, therefore this NQP takes into consideration the reality of St. Kitts and Nevis when setting objectives for the development of the country's NQI. It considers the elements of QI on the islands, awareness of QI, the demand for QI services, the extent to which this demand is met, gaps in the provision of QI services, and the standards and technical regulations in place. It was developed after a thorough assessment of the existing QI institutions and main economic activities in the Federation; as well as with input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including ministries, agencies, regulatory bodies, trade and industry associations, chambers of commerce, consumer associations and providers and users of QI services. It also includes inspiring practices from benchmark countries in the region – Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad and Tobago - that have more advanced tourism and transport, light manufacturing, and agriculture and fisheries sectors, which can be used to develop these industries in St. Kitts and Nevis. In addition, the NQP will provide guidance for the development of standards and technical regulations in the Federation. This is necessary to prevent them from being implemented inconsistently since it might lead to technical barriers to trade (TBT) which will hinder the flow of goods and services between St. Kitts and Nevis and its trading partners. Furthermore, the NQP will nurture a quality culture and increase awareness of and demand for QI services in the Federation. It is envisioned that the NQP will provide the necessary support to increase the availability, accessibility, credibility, and reliability of QI services in St. Kitts and Nevis. The NQP will also provide support for all other national policies and become the umbrella under which all the different policies emanate.

The success of the NQP depends to a large extent on its implementation. In addition to the NQP, an implementation plan was developed to guide the application of the policy. Responsibility for the NQP falls under the auspices of the Ministry of International Trade, Industry, Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Labour (MITICCAL). The St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards (SKNBS) will also play a crucial role in implementing the policy and developing the country's NQI. Additionally, a National Quality Council and Secretariat will be established to discuss, coordinate and monitor the NQP and the development of the country's NQI. The Council will include representatives from all relevant stakeholder groups, including ministries, the private sector, civil society and academia. The implementation and management of the NQP will be funded by the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, with assistance from donor agencies.

Furthermore, effective communication of the NQP is also essential for its success. The NQP must be properly communicated to bolster consumer awareness, build quality consciousness, and target NQP users and multipliers. The implementation plan provides guidance for the successful communication of the NQP.

In sum, St. Kitts and Nevis is seeking to diversify and rebuild its economy, as well as guarantee sustainable development, through more active participation in international trade. A strong NQI is crucial for achieving this goal. To this end, an NQP was developed to drive the development of NQI in the Federation.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABBS	Antigua and Barbuda Bureau of Standards
ABNS	Antigua and Barbuda National Standard
ASHRAE	American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
AVEC	Advanced Vocational Education Center
BIPM	International Bureau of Weights and Measures
BSO	Business Support Organization
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CABUREK	Capacity Building in Technical and Scientific Organizations Using Regional Experiences and Knowledge
CAHFSA	Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency
CARDI	Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum
CCA	Caribbean Cooperation for Accreditation
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CFBC	Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College
COP	Code of Practice
CRCP	CARICOM Regional Code of Practice
CREEBC	CARICOM Regional Energy Efficiency Building Code
CROSQ	CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality
CRS	CARICOM Regional Standard
CSO	Consumer Support Organization
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organization
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
DR	Dominican Republic
ECCB	Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
EU	European Union
FSRC	Financial Services Regulatory Commission
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GRP	Good Regulatory Practice
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
HPLC	High Performance Liquid Chromatography
IAQ	Indoor Air Quality
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDB	Interamerican Development Bank
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JANAAC	Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation
KE	Key Expert
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MIKE	Marketing Knowledge and Education Management
MITICCAL	Ministry of International Trade, Industry, Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Labour
NAB	National Accreditation Body
NAFP	National Accreditation Focal Point
NEVLEC	Nevis Electricity Company Limited
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
NKE	Non-Key Expert
NMI	National Metrology Institute
NQC	National Quality Council
NQI	National Quality Infrastructure
NQP	National Quality Policy
NSB	National Standards Body
NSBA	National Bureau of Standards Act
NSC	National Standards Council
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OIML	International Organization of Legal Metrology
OSH	Occupational Health and Safety
PACE	Professional Association for Creativity & Entertainment
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction

PDCA	Plan–Do–Check–Act
PS	Project Secretariat
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTB	Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (German National Metrology Institute)
QI	Quality Infrastructure
QICA	Quality Infrastructure Committee for the Americas
QMS	Quality Management System
QP	Quality Policy
RQI	Regional Quality Infrastructure
RQP	Regional Quality Policy
SDC	Sustainable Destination Council
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIM	Inter-American Metrology System
SKELEC	St. Kitts Electricity Company
SKN	St. Kitts and Nevis
SKNBS	St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards
SKNCIC	St. Kitts and Nevis Chamber of Industry and Commerce
SLNS	Saint Lucia National Standard
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRI	Trade Related Institution
TTBS	Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards
TTS	Trinidad and Tobago Standard
TVOC	Total Volatile Organic Compounds
TWB	The World Bank
UL	Underwriters Laboratories
UNIDO	United National Industrial Development Organization
USA	United States of America

USOSHA	US Occupational Safety and Health Administration
VIM	International Vocabulary of Metrology
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

RATIONALE

The achievement of the goals and aspirations of a country require as a critical component the application of quality to all its systems and processes. This quality input is demonstrated by the presence of effective and relevant Quality Infrastructure (QI). The alignment of the QI to these goals and aspirations is accomplished through the NQP. The government of St. Kitts and Nevis is guided by the Caribbean Development Bank Country Strategy Paper 2017-2021, which underscores three pillars for sustainable economic growth: (i) Economic Development and Enhanced Livelihoods; (ii) Inclusive Social Development and (iii) Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Enhancement (Ministry of Sustainable Development, 2019).

St. Kitts and Nevis needs a National Quality Policy (NQP) to participate successfully in international trade and to guarantee safe products for the health of its citizens through the establishment of an internationally recognized, nationally relevant QI. The NQP will also foster cooperation among all sectors of the country and support the growth of the economy by making businesses more competitive.

QI builds on continuous quality improvement principles and practices in the industry, the public sector, civil society (including consumers) and academia. Quality must become the driver of all economic activities. QI encourages higher levels of productivity, innovation, competitiveness and consumer protection and well-being, as well as health, and environmental protection in the country. The St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards (SKNBS) is the main QI institution in the Federation and together with laboratories and educational entities, is also part of the national quality infrastructure for the Federation.

The importance of the NQP goes far beyond trade and supports other policy areas through the implementation of good regulatory and management practices. The NQP links policy measures relating to standards, quality, and technical regulations contained in all existing policies across all sectors. The development of the NQP provides an opportunity for St. Kitts and Nevis to review quality aspects mentioned in other policies, to include those not yet mentioned and to amend those parts which are not compatible with international rules and guidelines.



The National Quality Policy

THE NATIONAL QUALITY POLICY

CONTEXT AND DEFINITION OF A NATIONAL QUALITY POLICY

The St. Kitts and Nevis National Quality Policy draws from the Country Strategy Paper 2017-2021, which sets out the vision of the country's sustainable development and long-term transformation as sustained and enhanced across 3 broad areas: (i) Economic Development and Enhanced Livelihoods; (ii) Inclusive Social Development and (iii) Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Enhancement. These areas are all underpinned by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a climate resilient approach.

The NQP is a basic national instrument that sets out the objectives and strategies of the country regarding the development and use of the quality infrastructure in relation to its economic and societal needs and the building of a quality culture. Internationally, the quality infrastructure is recognized as a critical support mechanism for social progress and economic development, enabling the participation of developing countries in international trade.

The NQP provides the formal expression of the intentions and direction of the government and stakeholders regarding known standards and technical regulations, metrology, accreditation, conformity assessment services, and information awareness and education programmes—involved in strengthening the quality and competitiveness of the services provided and goods produced, thereby ensuring consumers' needs are satisfied.

COMMITMENT AND DIRECTION

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis is focused on economic recovery and expansion through economic diversification in key areas, such as, the medicinal cannabis and entertainment industries, while expanding trade in goods and services, and encouraging domestic and foreign direct investments.

The NQP contributes to regional movement and is aligned with the Regional Quality Policy (RQP) promoted by the CARICOM Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ). The NQP honours the commitments of regional and international trade agreements such as the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, European Union – CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement and the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement.

The commitment of the Government of the Federation is formalised and institutionalised through the provision of the resources for the development of the legal, institutional, and administrative frameworks, which have the appropriate external recognition and can provide the required services.

POLICY VISION

By 2030, St. Kitts and Nevis aims to have a quality culture, whereby all producers and service providers ensure that they meet regulatory and sustainability requirements, as well as satisfy consumer needs.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The NQP is the driving force for nurturing a quality culture in St. Kitts and Nevis by guiding the development and facilitating the use of an accessible, affordable and internationally recognized, demand-oriented National Quality Infrastructure system. Additionally, the NQP encourages higher levels of productivity, innovation, consumer health and environmental protection in the country; as well as leads to greater competitiveness of local businesses, while at the same time meeting the Country Strategy Paper 2017-2021 plans and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Specific objectives include:

- Ensuring that leadership structures exist, which can provide appropriate governance and institutional building;
- Establishing an integrative quality policy framework which supports other policies;

- Supporting a legal framework which allows for the development of standards, an effective technical regulatory mechanism, certification and conformity assessment;
- Guaranteeing that adequate physical infrastructure, and technical and organisational capabilities are available for the implementation of standards, and the application of conformity assessment;
- Creating consciousness among critical stakeholders, to the point where they are willing to make decisions that lead to the creation of an environment which favours the development, alignment, establishment, implementation, and maintenance of the NQI; and
- Supporting the achievement of the SDGs, protecting people and the environment in a sustainable manner.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The success of the QP is measured by the following results:

1. Established and functional National Quality Council and a private sector dedicated to the advancement of the QP;
2. Presence of references to QI and the QP in national policies and plans; Improved effectiveness of technical regulations and the national regulatory systems that support NQI;
3. Increased national productivity, innovation, competitiveness and trade facilitation of services and goods, due to growth in the use of related services such as standardization, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation;
4. Greater demonstration of quality conscious decision-making by stakeholders including government officials, policy makers, manufacturers, exporters, service providers, consumers and civil society leaders;
5. Higher consumer protection, societal health, safety, and security, with added focus on environmental preservation; and
6. Gender equality and diversity being included in all aspects of quality infrastructure, especially but not limited to education and employment opportunities, as well as youth empowerment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This policy is guided by six (6) key principles in both its development and implementation. The key guiding principles are intended to assist in the adaptation and identification of specific needs, while still ensuring a standardized approach in line with international best practices. This policy is guided by the following core principles:

1. **Coherence:** This key principle emphasizes the need for the various QP and QI elements to seek and obtain appropriate synergies, agree on shared objectives, and encourage mutual support in achieving agreed outcomes. It also involves appropriate integration of, and alignment with, other national, regional and international policies that are intended to address quality-related needs.
2. **Ownership:** Ownership emphasizes the need to address the way the QP and associated QI are overseen, directed and implemented at the national and regional level.
3. **Inclusiveness:** This key principle emphasizes the need to address those subjects and/or areas that could influence the development of the QP, using appropriate consultative processes that include all necessary stakeholders, to promote the required and necessary ownership of intended outcomes and subsequent actions.
4. **Optimization:** Optimization emphasizes the pursuit of the most effective and efficient use of applicable; and available national, regional, and international situation(s) and / or resource(s) when creating a QP.
5. **Sustainability:** This key principle emphasizes the need to ensure the QP is in support of the appropriate political, societal and economic objectives; and the associated QI; and that the necessary technical capability and capacity are maintained in the long term at the required level.

6. **Specificity:** The usefulness and effective implementation of the quality policy is enhanced on the one hand by being meticulous in analysis, and on the other by being selective, relevant and specific in implementation actions. The principle is particularly used to secure “buy in” from stakeholders and in turn, guarantee momentum in the initial stages of implementation.

These principles are inspired by CROSQ’s Regional Quality Policy (RQP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization’s (UNIDO) Guiding Principles for Quality Policy development.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER NATIONAL POLICIES

Quality cuts across all sectors of the economy and society. However, it is manifested only in application to the achievement of goals and objectives. There is a need to include quality principles to increase the chances of success in the implementation of national policies.

Standards, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation can all be combined to ensure greater effectiveness in the application of the available resources, and therefore the QP provides support for all other policies in this regard. Quality and the strengthening of quality infrastructure must be an overarching principle that drives all policies. This is exemplified in *Figure 1* below.



Figure 1: Relationship between the NQP and other national polices in SKN

Source: Mesopartner

Below is a list of government policies and proposed linkages with the NQP:

1. EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN 2017-2021

Access and participation, quality and relevance, governance, finance and management were identified in an assessment as key policy issues affecting education for all.

In response to these key policy issues, the plan developed puts forward three overarching policy goals supported by six programme areas, within which dedicated strategies have been devised (The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, 2017).

Policy Goal I. Improve equitable access to and participation in education at all levels

Programme areas:

- i. Access and participation

Policy Goal II. Strengthen the quality and relevance of education at all levels to improve learning outcomes.

Programme areas:

- ii. Curriculum and assessment
- iii. Quality and relevant teaching and learning
- iv. Professionalizing the teaching force

Policy Goal III. Enhance governance, planning, and management to improve efficiency and effectiveness throughout the sector.

Programme areas:

- v. Knowledge management for decision making
- vi. Leadership and accountability

In the area of education, the link to the NQP comes about through the certification of the teaching staff and the accreditation of the educational institutions. This linkage will ensure that when the various strategies are being put in place, the quality of the teaching staff and institutions become pivotal to the success of the education sector plan.

2. NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

The National Security Strategy represents an 'all of government' approach to national security, where all government agencies, ministries and departments are expected to review their structure and operations to ensure that the security of the nation receives priority attention as required (Ministry of National Security, 2021). The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security and the National Security Advisor are immediate facilitators and will advise on a framework to monitor the implementation of required reforms and other related actions in the process and will be available to provide any direction and guidance required throughout.

Objective 1. The objective of the National Security Strategy is to clearly determine those threats that impact or could impact the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, inform the citizenry, provide for and take the necessary actions to ensure the safety, security and stability of the nation and its interests.

Objective 2. This document represents the results of a detailed and extensive study undertaken by the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, together with consultations with all the relevant stakeholders, to include a very wide cross-section of the public. The Government developed the Strategy to deal with threat realities. It outlines the threat assessment, approach, tier rating system, responsibilities and their allocations, tangential or cross-cutting issues and closing statements.

The link with the NQP to national security rests on the confidence of the forensics tests being done, the calibration of equipment and machines, as well as the standardisation of procedures used in crime fighting. Additionally, the certification of the trainers of the police force and the accreditation of the training academy are other areas where the linkages should be applied.

3. ST. KITTS TOURISM SECTOR STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2014- 2019

Tourism is a major economic driver globally and has become a key sector for stimulating growth and development for the citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis.

Following the closure of the sugar industry in 2005, government in its National Adaptation Strategy 2006–2013, earmarked the tourism sector along with other sectors, including financial services, agriculture, offshore education and information technology, to transform the economy. The offshore education sub-sector has since been embraced strategically as an integral part of the tourism sector.

The Tourism Sector Strategy outlined the recommended course of development of this vibrant industry in St. Kitts over the period 2014 to 2019 (Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, 2014).

The two-pronged pro-people and pro-planet strategy was a result of careful and updated analysis and it identified various steps required to promote the economic, sociocultural, and environmental sustainability of St. Kitts' tourism.

Pro-people Objectives - Increased level of tourism awareness among public, private, and civil society sectors - Tourism to be seen as a viable career/business option for Kittitian and Nevisian people - 800 additional direct jobs and 1200 additional indirect jobs by 2019 - Tourism human resources developed to match international standards and ascertained skilled labour needs of private sector in St. Kitts - Improved linkages between tourism and other economic sectors, including agriculture, fisheries, craft, entertainment, and transportation.

Pro-planet Objectives - Environmental management systems (including management of energy, waste, water, environment, etc.) adopted and promoted in the sector by 2019 - At least 10 natural and historical sites restored and enhanced by 2019 - Marine parks established and environmental standards governing beaches implemented - Guides trained and tourism enterprises and sites adopting visitor codes of conduct and sustainability standards.

The tourism sector is well on its way to forming linkages with QI. The Hospitality Assured Certification has already been done for four properties on both islands; and the use of regional or international standards for recreation services, training, and implementing environmental standards puts the sector on a good footing for the delivery of quality services.

4. ST. KITTS AND NEVIS NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2014 TO 2020

The main goal was to assess the diversity of flora and fauna (land and sea) in St. Kitts and Nevis, then to determine what were the threats to their existence. Protective or conservation measures were then proposed for preserving the biodiversity.

The Action Plan was developed to address issues at the policy level that will lead to the success of the strategies which in turn will realize the national and international targets and the national objectives and goals that have been established (Ministry of Sustainable Development, 2014). The main objectives were:

- i. To ensure that the biological resources of SKN remain rich and diverse
- ii. To reduce or eliminate the potential risks from the use of biotechnology and its by-products
- iii. To reduce and/or minimize the loss of terrestrial and marine biodiversity
- iv. To ensure that the basis for development is through the sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biological resources
- v. To ensure the equitable and sustainable distribution of social and economic benefits from the use of terrestrial and marine biological resources

The Biodiversity Strategy can form the link with the NQP by going after environmental management certification systems and implementing them. This would help to meet the goals to be achieved in conserving the flora and fauna of the Federation.

5. FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY (2019)

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy aims to promote rational food choices and healthy lifestyles by the population. It further seeks to enhance the resilience of food supplies in the face of natural and socioeconomic shocks, and climate change.

The Policy states that the government will facilitate the implementation of risk management and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in the food sector (Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, 2019). It tasks the government with 1) establishing a National Task Force for the implementation and supervision of such strategies, 2) enabling capacity building of stakeholders with respect to disaster management, 3) developing an agricultural risk management scheme, and 4) facilitating the re-zoning of agricultural production as necessary to reduce vulnerability to adverse effects of climate change.

The link to the NQP and food and nutrition security rests in the conformity assessment bodies providing the relevant testing, inspection and certification services to the production and distribution of food to ensure that it is safe. This includes the risk mitigation measures that will make the local production systems more climate smart and sustainable, such as adopting various regional standards for fresh produce.

6. SPORTS POLICY 2020-2025

The Government designed, established and implemented a National Sports Policy, with the aim of mobilizing sport activities as a means of engaging with athletes in all areas of recreational sports (St. Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO, n.d.). Special attention will be given to young men and women, supporting them in absencing from violent and destructive behaviour, by proposing constructive and meaningful athletic activities devoid of doping substances. In addition, the Government views the introduction of structured sport development and policies as part of its contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in the country's capacity of being a small island developing state (SIDS).

Objectives:

The Sports Policy document, and the procedures and strategic plan that will be followed to implement a comprehensive and inclusive National Sport Programme, will aim to fulfil the following:

1. Promote equity and inclusivity regarding the accessibility of sport practice, with special attention given to girls and women, and people with disabilities and other marginalized groups;
2. Ensure the quality of and equality within physical education programmes;
3. Highlight the values of fair play, participation and skills development as opposed to competitive success;
4. Foster anti-doping values and promote the integrity of sport;
5. Ensure that sport activities are included as a compulsory component of the curriculum in all schools and nation-wide;
6. Ensure the safety of students, staff and volunteers involved in school related sporting activities;
7. Highlight support provided for representative levels of sporting achievement.

The link to the NQP for the sport policy includes the certification of coaches, calibration of equipment, and the use of standardised procedures in training and coaching.



State of the National Quality Infrastructure



STATE OF THE NATIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

UNDERSTANDING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The term “quality infrastructure” refers to a regional or national system of institutions for the production and distribution of healthy, safe, and high-quality services and products.

The five components of quality infrastructure are: standards and technical regulations, metrology, accreditation, conformity assessment and quality promotion (marketing and communication, information and awareness, education, etc).

QI goes beyond the SKNBS’ responsibilities; it includes all of the organisations and agencies that provide QI services in the country, such as metrology, standardization and accreditation - SKELEC, NEVLEC, Nevis Water Services and the St. Kitts Water Department laboratories, Department of Agriculture laboratories, Veterinary, etc. - working together.

STAKEHOLDERS

Multiple organizations must work together to increase and facilitate trade, to boost industrial and state efficiency and effectiveness, to promote consumer welfare, safety, and sustainable development. To shape and implement the National Quality Infrastructure of St. Kitts and Nevis, it is necessary to collaborate with stakeholders at the following levels:

Private Sector Entities and Umbrella Bodies - *Associations of Manufacturers, Exporters, Service Providers, Importers, Merchants, Chambers of Commerce* - such as The Chamber of Industry and Commerce, St. Kitts-Nevis Association of Professional Engineers, Professional Association for Creativity & Entertainment - PACE, Nevis Agro-processors Co-operative, Fahie’s Women Agro-processors, Liamigua Agro-processors Cooperative, St. Kitts Agro-processors Cooperative Society, “inter alia”;

Civil Society - *Consumer Groups, Trade unions, Academia, Community-based Organizations, other Non-Governmental Organizations* - such as Business and Professional Women, St. Kitts and Nevis Bar Association, St. Kitts and Nevis Trades and Labour Union, St. Christopher Heritage Society, Nevis Historical and Conservation Society, Rotaract, Rotary & Lions Clubs, Advancement for Children Foundation, The Ripple Institute, “inter alia”;

National Governmental Institutions - *Government Ministries and Departments, National Standards Bodies and Agencies, Regulatory Bodies*- such as: Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of International Trade, Ministry Tourism, Ministry of Education, SKELEC, NEVLEC, Nevis Water Services, St. Kitts Water Department, Department of Agriculture, “inter alia”;

Regional Private Sector Entities and Umbrella Bodies - *Business Support Organizations (BSOs), Trade Related Institutions (TRIs)* – such as: Caribbean Export and Investment Agency (Carib-Export), Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), CARIMET, “inter alia”;

Regional Governmental Institutions - *Organizations and Bodies of the Caribbean Community*- such as: CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Caribbean Agricultural Development Institute (CARDI); “inter alia”;

Media - *Companies and Institutions* – are important in promotion of the NQP. The national, regional and international media are also stakeholders of the NQP of St. Kitts and Nevis, so everyone can receive information and updates on the NQP and about its progress.

QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENTS

STANDARDS

According to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, a standard is:

a guideline approved by a recognised body that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products, processes and production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory. The term may also include or deal exclusively with terminology, symbols, packaging, marking or labelling requirements as they apply to a product, process or production method. (Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas Establishing the Caribbean Community Including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, 2001)

Standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience; and aimed at the promotion of optimum community benefits. In the modern world, standards have become the most successful tool to achieve economies of scale, reduce market inefficiencies and enhance the possibilities for technology transfer. In addition, standards facilitate the streamlining of internal processes, scaling-up operations, creating/entering new markets, the adoption of better regulations and the overall protection of consumers.

The St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards (SKNBS), the National Standards Body of the Federation St. Kitts and Nevis, was established in 1999, and is responsible for standardisation activities, the development of technical regulations, metrology, conformity assessment, accreditation, and market surveillance. It also serves as the WTO/ TBT Enquiry Point. A proposed new Standards Act seeks to align the legal framework in SKN with the WTO TBT Agreement.

Up until now, the SKNBS has provided only limited standardization services, and only very few Technical Standard Committees have been established and are operational. Consequently, only seven standards have been adopted by the SKNBS to date, which leaves several key areas of the Federation's economy without standards. Furthermore, there have been no requests from the private sector to develop national standards or adopt international standards even though some stakeholders on the islands have adopted international standards on their own – most of which are not under the auspices of the SKNBS. Additionally, the SKNBS, with the support of an ISO consultant, elaborated a National Standardization Plan in 2015, but this effort has since been discontinued.

The SKNBS is a correspondent member of the International Organisation for Standards (ISO) and an affiliate member of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). The SKNBS also functions as the enquiry point for both the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Codex Alimentarius.

However, the SKNBS does not maximize the benefits of these international memberships. The ISO website states that St. Kitts and Nevis is a member of six Technical Committees and two Policy Development Committees; but, in practice, the country is currently not participating in any of them. Moreover, the country has only adopted two ISO standards. Additionally, the SKNBS is member of the IEC developing country facility, even though it has not yet adopted any IEC standards.

In contrast, the SKNBS participates more actively in CROSQ's standardization work. The SKNBS is represented in the CROSQ Council and participates in project and training activities.

There is a lack of national standards for the key sector of the SKN economy. While these and other issues are being addressed through the National Standards Development planning process, several weaknesses have been identified as needing focus and action:

- Stakeholder awareness and use of standards is very limited
- Amendment and implementation of the new Standard Act
- The involvement and ownership of the Standards Development Plan by stakeholders

- The inclusion of sustainability standards and/or standards to support sustainability goals in the standards plan
- The inclusion of other standards development organizations for the development of standards and the distribution of standards by sector

The SKNBS may establish a Technical Committee to develop, adapt or adopt standards for areas of need expressed by stakeholders. The committee may also serve as mirror committee to participate in regional or international standards work.

Recommendations:

- Development of a new national standardization plan on a systematic basis
- Establishment of a Technical Standards Committee (and sub-committee) for key sectors of the SKN economy
- Conducting sensitization seminars to disseminate information about the benefits of standards to various groups

Quick-win activities:

- National adoption of standards already in use in St. Kitts and Nevis, e.g., ISO 9001, ISO/IEC 17065 and ISO/IEC 17025.
- Numbering of the national standards according to the ISO requirements.
- Informing members of the public about the process of requesting the development of a national standard or the adoption of an international standard
- Publishing the standards already adopted in SKN on the website of the SKNBS

TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

Countries have the possibility to enact primary or secondary legislation to regulate different aspects of business and life in society. With regard to the regulation of products, international trade rules indicate that no country should be prevented from taking measures necessary to ensure the quality of its exports; or for the protection of human, animal or plant life or health of the environment; or for the prevention of deceptive practices at the levels it considers appropriate, subject to the requirement that they are not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries where the same conditions prevail or a disguised restriction on international trade.

In the case of SKN, this prerogative has been exercised, but such power has been limited by the fact that the SKNBS' Standards Council has not been appointed. As indicated above, this situation that SKN faces leaves the country with little or no control over certain imports and local products that may be deemed unsafe or pernicious for the environment, the inhabitants, or the plants and animals in the country. Given this, it is understandable and valuable that SKNBS has decided to go forward with the proposition to update the Bureau of Standards Act of 1999. SKN still follows a common practice by some developing countries - enacting "compulsory standards" - but this, in principle, is no longer accepted under the WTO TBT Agreement.

The proposed bill changes the definitions of "standards" and "technical regulations", which is a step in the right direction. While the updates in the definitions were required, that alone will not suffice to comply with actual WTO international obligations. The amended Act will need to adequately separate the standard setting process from the technical regulation enactment process.

In other words, when preparing regulations receive technical support by SKNBS and follow a procedure different from the standards setting process. In addition, the responsibility for regulatory action, its preparation and adoption shall be left to the responsible Minister. Means may be found to avoid undue political interference in the regulatory process.

SKNBS shall be responsible for setting the standards the Federation requires, while a giving technical support to the Ministry in charge when a regulation is needed.

A Technical Regulation Coordination Unit needs to be established and its members appointed. Training for Regulators in the Federation and ITC systems may be required.

A Code of Practice (COP) to adopt Good Regulatory Practice (GRP) principles and activities, is also required. Training of regulators on GRP is recommended.

In addition, the SKN TBT focal point has not been active since no product regulations have been passed as explained above. However, this will have to be rectified once the NBSA is repealed by the new Standards Bill which is currently in Parliament.

Finally, as sanitary and phytosanitary measures issued by SKN also need to be notified to the WTO Secretariat, the SKN SPS focal point, which is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, needs to be managed actively.

METROLOGY

Metrology is the science of measurement and its application. It is essential part of the quality infrastructure system as metrology provides the technical basis for high-quality goods that are produced based on accurate, reliable and traceable measurements. It is therefore an enabler of regional and international trade, but also ensures that quality of locally consumed products can be assured and demonstrated.

Metrology includes the units of measurement to be used in the country and their representation through measurement standards, as well as measurement instruments and their field of application, and all theoretical and practical aspects relating to measurements.

Metrology is classified into three *key* areas:

1. *Scientific Metrology* is that part of metrology which deals with aspects common to all metrological questions, irrespective of the quantity measured. It covers general theoretical and practical problems concerning units of measurement, including their realization and dissemination through scientific methods, the problems of errors and uncertainties in measurement, and the problems of metrological properties of measuring instruments.
2. *Industrial Metrology* is that part of metrology which deals with measurements in production and quality control. It covers calibration procedures, calibration intervals, control of measurement processes and management of measuring instruments in industry, to ensure that they are in a state of compliance with requirements for their intended use.
3. *Legal Metrology* is that part of metrology which is subject to legal/regulatory control. It provides regulations for the control of measurements and measuring instruments. Legal metrology provides protection of public safety, the environment, consumers, and traders, and is critical to fair trade.

The SKNBS' metrology department has five (5) staff members, who are engaged mainly in legal metrology, but also in industrial metrology. The areas currently covered are weighing instruments and fuel pumps at gas stations.

The SKNBS is currently undertaking a complete refurbishment of the metrology laboratory, using government funds.

This activity is related to the CDB – CROSQ Strengthening of Regional Quality Infrastructure Programme, which is currently being implemented and through which the SKNBS will receive equipment and capacity building in both quality management and mass metrology (calibration / verification of weights) to develop technical capacities in this field.

This project will take the SKNBS to the point of readiness for accreditation, or peer review by SIM respectively. This is a very important and significant step as it will set the foundation for other metrological areas to develop.

However, the situation in the area of metrology needs further improvement. It will be crucial for the development of additional capacities that the lack of space can be addressed in the short term. With more metrological areas to develop there will be the need for more metrology staff, as well. Additionally, the situation at the SKNBS in terms of traceability is critical, as almost all metrology equipment is overdue for calibration.

Local businesses, in particular manufacturers and producers, depend on the SKNBS to provide traceable calibration and verification services in a sufficiently wide range. This includes areas where electrical, dimensional and temperature measurements are concerned and such areas that are critical for health and safety of the population. As the demand for metrology (in particular for calibration services) in the various sectors will change over time the specific demand needs to be re-determined on a regular basis. Businesses in industry and other sectors might not be aware of the necessity for the regular calibration of their measuring equipment with impact on product quality. Here, users of measuring instruments need the Bureau as a partner for consulting, training and awareness building on metrology issues.

In the following, some general recommendations for the strengthening of the metrology component are given, including activities that can provide quick wins:

- Securing of an annual budget for the SKNBS to cover traceability and other equipment-related costs
- Development of consultancy capabilities in specific fields of metrology to serve local manufacturers and service providers in solving issues related to measurements and thus providing active support in assuring quality and safety of local products
- Extension of the physical space for metrology to accommodate for additional laboratory activities (e.g., calibration of electrical and length equipment, as well as thermometers, testing of LPG gas cylinders, prepackages, etc.)
- Enhancement of staff and staff training in metrology to address additional areas, such as electrical, dimensional, temperature and other measurements
- Active engagement with businesses in industry and other sectors to update the information on the demand for metrology in SKN and use this as an opportunity for awareness building and sensitization on equipment calibration.

Quick wins:

- SKNBS to advertise and provide regular *Introduction to Metrology* Courses and other metrology-related sensitization training to local businesses. Respective course material for introductory courses is readily available for use through the CROSQ IPortal.
- Advertise available calibration services at the SKNBS Website.

CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

Conformity Assessment

Conformity Assessment is the demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled and is typically conducted through quality assessment services such as inspection, testing and certification.

Testing

The government is a major player in the testing laboratory services market in St. Kitts and Nevis, providing services through four (4) main laboratories, namely: (1) The Ministry of Agriculture (2) the St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards (3) Pathology laboratory, Joseph N. France General Hospital

(Clinical medical laboratory with responsibilities of public health laboratory and national lab) and (4) St. Kitts Water Services Department (potable water quality and monitoring).

In addition to these laboratories there are at least three (3) privately owned medical laboratories and research laboratories affiliated with the medical universities.

The SKNBS laboratory services are the most developed of the services offered by the government and covers testing scopes in chemistry services and microbiology. Furthermore, in the near future it is expected to perform materials testing - asphalt and concrete. The multipurpose laboratory of the SKNBS assists other Ministries with testing services, and also provides testing services to the public.

Recommendations

- Work towards accreditation of laboratories in all categories, whether they perform medical, industrial, or regulatory testing, starting with critical services

Quick win activities

- There is a need for capacity building in government-operated laboratories and on the job training

Inspection

There are two main agencies/ government departments empowered by law in St. Kitts and Nevis to carry out inspection work in the respective sectors. In the area of Food Safety Inspection, services are provided by the Ministry of Health (Environmental Health Department), and the Ministry of Agriculture (Plant Quarantine and Veterinary Services). The Ministry of Health (Environmental Health Officers) inspects all foods from retail food service providers and at ports of entry: airport and seaports. The Environmental Health Officers/food inspectors also inspect meat sold at meat markets and abattoirs. Customs and Excise inspections, as well as motor vehicle inspections are done by other government or non-government entities.

Recommendations

- Develop a mechanism for improved coordination amongst the various agencies that perform inspections for greater synergy.

Quick win activities

- Develop a schedule for regular training of inspectors, according to a manual or guideline following international practices as far as is feasible

Certification

There is not a certification programme for QI per se, but a number of the agencies produce certificates as part of their work and function. The SKNBS laboratories issue certificates of analysis for the tests done. The Department of Agriculture issues Phytosanitary certificates for plants or plant products to be exported and the Veterinary Department also issues export certificates for fish or fish products to be exported.

In the tourism sector there is the Hospitality Assured Certificate.

This is a programme that recognizes excellence in the service environment, which means meeting the expectation of a range of customers on a consistent and regular basis. Hospitality Assured is an industry standard that promotes and rewards the highest levels of business and service excellence for organisations in the hospitality industry.

There are four properties in St. Kitts and Nevis that have received this certification: Nisbet Plantation Resort, Qualie Beach Resort, Nelson Spring Beach Resort (all three in Nevis) and Ocean Terrace Resort (St. Kitts).

Recommendations

- The SKNBS should seek to develop its capacity to deliver/audit or oversee training in certification systems/schemes (e.g., audit ISO 9001). This would increase the services offered by the SKNBS.

Quick win activities

- Perform an assessment of the government or statutory services that could benefit from having certification systems in place: the ports (air and sea), SKELEC, NEVLEC, etc.

ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body (CAB), conveying formal demonstration of its competence, impartiality, and consistent operation in performing specific conformity assessment activities. Through accreditation; testing, medical, and calibration laboratories; and inspection bodies (conformity assessment bodies) gain formal recognition that they are technically competent to carry out specific activities within their scope.

In keeping with the agreed regional approach to accreditation, the SKNBS has been nominated by CROSQ as the National Accreditation Focal Point (NAFP). The main mandate of the SKNBS in its capacity as the NAFP is to implement the activities supporting accreditation in St. Kitts and Nevis. The functions of the NAFP entails:

- Advisory and support services to national certification bodies and laboratories
- Advisory and Referral Services to the Caribbean Cooperation for Accreditation Scheme (CCA)

In this regard both the scope of laboratory services that are available locally and the risks posed to the society, due to the absence of accredited testing laboratories and inspection bodies are major deliverables for the immediate future.

At this moment there are no accredited laboratories or inspection bodies in St. Kitts and Nevis. This means the services currently being provided at the national level are not accredited which precludes recognition by authoritative bodies. This poses a risk to citizens and industries that use these services.

It is important to note that due to resource constraints it is not economically viable to develop domestic accreditation functions in SKN. Given the small number of conformity assessment bodies operating on the islands, recovering the cost for developing domestic accreditation services may not be possible. This gives SKN the opportunity to strengthen regional ties by sourcing accreditation services from national accreditation bodies in the region.

Recommendations:

- The SKNBS enters into strategic partnerships with accreditation bodies in Jamaica (Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) and Trinidad and Tobago (TTLabs).
- The SKNBS organises information sessions on accreditation for conformity assessment bodies and regulatory authorities in the country.
- The SKNBS compiles and publishes a register of accredited bodies in St. Kitts and Nevis.
- The SKNBS contemplates the possibility of a financial support scheme for conformity assessment bodies' candidates for accreditation to assist with the cost of contracting external service providers.

Quick-win activities:

- The SKNBS establishes a section on the NAFP on its website
- The SKNBS engages with conformity assessment bodies on the islands to assess their needs

QUALITY PROMOTION

Quality Promotion (QP) refers to marketing, communication, information, awareness and education. It is understood as a relatively new, non-technical element of the NQI.

Understanding and awareness of key stakeholders and the public in general is so important that it demands short, medium and long-term plans for the dissemination of information. Consumers should be aware of quality standards as it affects health and their quality of life. Additionally, reference to quality standards should be included in business plans.

QP is a central task of the NQI institutions. The SKNBS is well on its way in this regard, with its presentations to educational institutions/schools around the island and use of videos on its Facebook page.

A Marketing Information Knowledge Management and Education (MIKE) Committee has been established by CROSQ to assist in the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) within its member states. The MIKE Committee is made up of representatives from each of the National Standards Bodies in CARICOM in the areas of information technology, information management, marketing and communications; and WTO/TBT enquiry points; and CODEX nodes. This committee has been very useful in the promotion of NQIs in the region. Each country should have a local coordinator.

Recommendations

- Special effort should be made to develop a quality consciousness through education on quality (both products and services). This should be taught in primary schools through to tertiary institutions.
- Before SMEs use QI services, they must be informed about their benefits. This requires information that show a cost-benefit analysis.
- Additionally, enterprises, especially micro and small ones, must be given the technical assistance needed to support them as they seek to develop and deliver quality products and services that meet the relevant standards.

Quick win activities

- There is an important role for the mass media in the promotion of the NQP. The government of St. Kitts and Nevis could air mark specific times for NQP/NQI promotion – quarterly, bimonthly, etc. so that the public gets used to hearing about the NQP and updates on its progress. As awareness increases, interest in the NQP and NQI should also increase.
- SKNBS should nominate a representative to the MIKE Committee as soon as possible.
- The regional media also plays a key role in the promotion of quality. CROSQ, CARIMET and SIM can help, together with other regional media entities such as the Caribbean Broadcasting Union and One Caribbean Media. Messages can be broadcasted regularly to help increase awareness and promote the various NQI activities in the region.

QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR KEY SECTORS

GENERAL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Over the years the twin-island Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis has successfully managed to diversify its economy and adapt to changes in international markets. The country has come a long way from the days when sugar formed the backbone of its economy and is today considered a high-income country despite its small size. In 2020, the economy of St. Kitts and Nevis ranked 48th out of 196 countries in terms of GDP per capita (*Saint Kitts and Nevis GDP - Gross Domestic Product 2020*, n.d.).

This can be mostly credited to the services industry, predominantly tourism, which accounts for over half of the country's GDP (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021; FCDO, 2021); and the light manufacturing industry, which contributes roughly 25% of its GDP. In addition, agriculture and fisheries play a minor role in the Federation's economy, accounting for less than 5% of its GDP.

In recent years the country's top exports have been low-voltage protection equipment, broadcasting equipment, other measuring instruments, electric motor parts and electrical transformers (OEC, n.d.). Other important export products for the country include recreational boats, beer, hard liquor, postage stamps, other animal products, and molluscs (OEC, n.d.). In addition, the main export products coming from the agriculture industry include coconuts, tropical fruit, roots/tubers, vegetables, rice, sweet potatoes, tea, spices, cabbages, perfume plants, cut flowers, pulses, watermelons, carrots/turnips, eggs, and tomatoes (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

The Federation's main import commodities include refined petroleum, jewellery, passenger and cargo ships, cars, poultry meat, cement, postage stamps, base metal watches, delivery trucks, packaged medicaments, other measuring instruments, and hard liquor (OEC, n.d.).

The global shutdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the country's economy despite the government's timely actions to keep the infection rate low. Before the pandemic, St. Kitts and Nevis experienced mostly positive economic growth over a five-year period (CS Global Partners, 2021). However, in 2020 the Federation's GDP decreased by 10.7% compared to 2019 (*Saint Kitts and Nevis GDP - Gross Domestic Product 2020*, n.d.). This can be attributed to the complete halt in cruise ship arrivals, the sharp decline in stayover tourists, and the pandemic's disruptions on domestic activities. Nevertheless, the outlook for the economy in 2022 is positive as the tourism industry is expected to make a strong recovery. The IMF (2021) projects a 10% growth in GDP in 2022, and the pre-pandemic GDP to be reached by 2024, should conditions improve and sustained disruptions imposed by the pandemic decline.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

Agriculture continues to be a minor contributor to the country's economy, accounting for 1.31% of its GDP in 2019 (Statista, 2021). Some of the main agricultural products include coconuts, tropical fruit, roots/tubers, vegetables, sweet potatoes, pulses, watermelons, carrots/turnips, eggs, and tomatoes (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021).

Fishing is an important contributor to the country's economy and culture. For instance, molluscs accounted for 0.11% of its GDP (OEC, n.d.). The fishing sector is under the administration of the Department of Marine Resources and there is one fish processing factory on each island. Two of the main fishing complexes in the country are the Basseterre Fisheries Complex and the Old Road Fisheries Complex.

The Federation is a net importer of food. In 2015 the population in St. Kitts and Nevis imported 95 per cent of the food it consumed. Attempts have been made to increase agricultural production and fisheries, including aquaculture. The latter is a fledgling industry with two or three small enterprises. Fish and other seafood contribute to overall food availability in the OECS; and to employment, income and livelihoods of many citizens living in coastal areas (Phillip, 2021).

QI Services available to the sector

Currently the SKNBS can do the following tests for fish and fisheries products: marine water tests, microbiological tests, heavy metal testing in water and fish, HPLC testing (scheduled to begin shortly); in metrology: mass - calibration of scales and also PCR: genetic identification (to combat fish fraud).

QI Service gaps

The gaps in QI services for fisheries and aquaculture include Histamine testing, which is currently sub-contracted to a laboratory in Miami. There is also need to review the CODEX Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery, as well as develop packaging and labelling standards specifically for aquaculture. Additionally, building capacity to attain the sanitary certificate required by Canada is necessary (the current format is not considered appropriate).

There is also need for Ciguatera testing services, this is a very important requirement for market access. Currently the closest laboratories where it can be done are in Cuba or Chile. Sending samples to these laboratories' present logistical hurdles.

The SKNBS is conducting research on adopting the fish testing techniques applied in Chile and Cuba. Finally, there is need for the establishment of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for fishery and aquaculture, and to develop the ability to do the tests for pesine bacteria in aquaculture.

Recommendations:

- Revive national CODEX Committee and review the CODEX Standards for fish and fishery products, as well as the regional Code of Practice for the Handling of Fish and Fishery Products CRCP 4:2010 and the Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene CRCP 5:2010
- Revise support by QI in the regulation for the Fishery Act
- Evaluate introduction of Aquaculture Stewardship Council certificate or similar
- Regional CARICOM approach to become recognized as a 3rd country for fish exports to the European Union

Quick win activities:

- Provide public education and awareness for the need for fishery standards
- Setup a standards committee for fishery and aquaculture
- Promote the e-ping tool and inform the fishery sector
- Identify laboratories for missing tests, e.g., for the ciguatera toxin
- Notify regulation of Fishery Act to WTO
- Metrology training by SKNBS to fishery sector
- HACCP training fishery depots
- SKNBS develops a rapid training programme on metrology knowledge

TOURISM & TRANSPORT SECTOR

Tourism

Tourism forms the backbone of the economy of SKN, contributing approximately 60% of its GDP (FCDO, 2021). The industry falls under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, Transport and Ports.

Both islands of the Federation target different types of tourists, with St. Kitts focusing on mid-range, cruise ship travellers and Nevis focusing on high-end, stay-over travellers. Most tourists on the islands come from the United States of America; with fewer coming from Canada and the United Kingdom.

The Federation's main goal for its tourism sector is two-fold. It aims to increase the number of tourists it receives from the aforementioned countries, as well as attract tourists from other countries. Improving QI in the country is essential for achieving this goal.

The importance of QI in the tourism industry was emphasized in the country's Tourism Sector Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2019. Inadequate standards, a lack of awareness about standards, and poor compliance with the standards that have been adopted were highlighted as some of the main weaknesses in the industry. For these reasons, one of the Federation's targets was getting 5% of tourism establishments certified to an appropriate quality and sustainability standard by 2019 (Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, 2014). Furthermore, the country aimed to revise and improve quality and sustainability standards for various subsectors in the tourism industry, including vendor operations, tourist accommodations, food and beverage providers, the retail sector, and sites and attractions (Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, 2014).

Additionally, the 2014-2019 Strategy and Action plan aimed to develop human resources in the tourism sector according to international standards and adopt and implement environmental and sustainability standards (Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, 2014). While several of the objectives have been met, more work is needed to achieve the others.

The growth of the tourism industry in SKN faces several challenges. One of the main ones is the environmental constraints it faces as a SIDS. The pristine environment is one of the main attractions to tourists. However, this can be adversely affected without adequate protection. The country must strike a balance between leveraging its natural beauty while preserving it. This is only possible with a robust QI system. Thus far the country has been making great strides in promoting sustainability in the tourism industry. SKN is a member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and in 2019 the Federation's Sustainable Destination Council (SDC) won the World Travel & Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow Destination Stewardship Award (GSTC, 2019). The SDC was recognized with this award for its business practices that balance the needs of "people, planet, and profits" within the tourism industry (GSTC, 2019).

Another hindrance to the growth of the industry is a lack of regulations. No technical regulations exist – there are only voluntary standards which service providers in the industry adopt at their own discretion. The SKNBS has adopted one international standard - ISO 13009:2015 - Tourism and Related Services - Requirements and Recommendations for Beach Operations – but many service gaps still exist.

Hotels and other types of accommodation for tourists are yet to be regulated. Standards and codes need to be adopted to ensure the safety of the tourists who use them. In addition, properties listed on Airbnb need to be regulated to protect guests and prevent tax leakages.

Furthermore, adequate regulations are required for dining and entertainment establishments, as well as for tourist sites and attractions. While some guidelines have been drafted for some services, like water sports and watercrafts, these need to be formalised.

Additionally, it should be mandatory for all service providers in the tourism industry to receive training from certified instructors. There are certified instructors in the Federation who are experts in various fields in the industry. For instance, the Advanced Vocational Education Center (AVEC) provides training for beauticians in compliance with the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) standards; and the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College (CFBC) offers training courses in food and beverages. However, training is only mandatory for tour guides and taxi operators.

Therefore, more must be done to ensure that service providers in the industry take advantage of the training opportunities available on the islands to help their businesses meet regional and international standards. In addition, gaps in training should be identified and addressed to ensure that training is available to service providers in all areas of the tourism industry.

Three CARICOM Member States – Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia, and Antigua and Barbuda - were selected as benchmark countries to share some inspiring practices with SKN. One prominent practice that emerged during a workshop with representatives from these benchmark countries was the formation of special committees to handle issues in the tourism industry, and monitor international standards and their local applicability. These committees work closely with the Ministries of Tourism and the NSBs in their respective countries. Together they work with their respective legal departments to convert voluntary standards into technical regulations.

The benchmark countries have all adopted standards for their tourism sectors – some of which are mandatory and can easily be found and purchased on their websites. For instance, Saint Lucia has adopted ISO/TC 228 - Tourism and related services; and Trinidad and Tobago has adopted the following:

- TTS 22-1:2012, Requirements for Tourist Accommodation - Part 1: Hotels and Guesthouses
- TTS 22-2:2014, Requirements for Tourist Accommodation – Part 2: Bed & Breakfast and Self-Catering Facilities
- TTS 579:2018, Tour Guiding Services – Requirements
- TTS 571:2014, Recreational Dive – Requirements for Operation of Facilities

It is also worth noting that CROSQ has developed tourism standards in cooperation with the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) for the following areas:

- Tourist accommodation
 - Part 1 - General requirements
 - Part 2 - requirements for hotels
 - Part 3 - requirements for guest houses;
- Inbound Tour operators – Code of practice
- Tour guides – Code of practice
- Transport – Short term vehicle rentals – Code of practice

Additionally, training and certification for service providers in the tourism industry was made obligatory by law in one of the benchmark countries. Furthermore, training programmes were made prerequisites for renewing these certifications. Another interesting practice that emerged was designating a special department of the police service to monitor illegal activities on beaches and other touristic areas. This special department receives additional training and wear different uniforms. In addition, one of the benchmark countries has special legislations to govern touristic areas.

Recommendations for SKN:

- Legitimizing uncertified service providers in the sector.
- Establishing a committee to address matter related to the tourism industry, such as best practices for short-term rentals and formalising regulations for water sports and watercrafts.
- Making requirements for service providers in the industry obligatory through legislation.
- Inspection of accommodation in the tourism sector.
- Regulating Airbnb in SKN.
- Establishing a regulatory committee to monitor regional and international tourism standards that should be adopted in SKN. This committee should also work closely with the Ministry of Tourism, Transport and Ports; the SKNBS; and the legal department to transform relevant voluntary standards to technical regulations.
- Improving data collection to analyse progress and aid in the development of policies and strategies for the industry.
- Revising the Strategy and Action Plan for the tourism industry.

Quick win activities:

- Sensitization programmes on standards for tourism.
- Increased collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism, Transport and Ports; and the SKNBS so there is more alignment when addressing shortcomings in the industry; and when determining future goals for the industry in the Federation.

TRANSPORT

The tourism industry stimulates activities in other industries in SKN, one of which is transport, particularly transport for tourists.

The important link between tourism and transport was highlighted in the 2014-2016 St. Kitts Tourism Sector Strategy and Action Plan, which included objectives to strengthen the institutional framework of the transport subsector and ensure transport operators were trained according to international standards (Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, 2014). Transport-related matters also fall under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, Transport and Ports. This sector must be carefully regulated to protect the lives of the residents of SKN, as well as the tourists visiting the country.

In 2016, the Traffic Department reported 1222 road accidents in St. Kitts and 296 in Nevis. Most of these accidents were due to driver error and speeding.

Currently there are some practices in place for the transport sector in the Federation. Vehicles are inspected using the appropriate measuring equipment to ensure they are safe; and as previously mentioned, transport operators in the tourism industry must be trained and certified. There are twenty-five vehicle testing centres in the Federation that test brake pressure, and the working conditions of lights, horns, and wipers in vehicles. Nevertheless, there is need for improvement. Some vehicle testing centres are more equipped than others to conduct the necessary assessments on vehicles. Furthermore, public transport, Uber-like services, taxis, and vehicle rental services are in urgent need of more control and regulation. QI plays an important role in regulating the transport industry.

Three countries were used as benchmarks to provide inspiring practices for SKN – Colombia, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Lucia. The transport sector in Colombia is well-regulated. The country takes into consideration its primary and secondary laws when drafting legislations and implements technical regulations based on voluntary standards already adopted in Colombia. Vehicle inspections are carried out by accredited inspection bodies using appropriate equipment, which must be calibrated. Inspectors are trained and their accreditation certification must be renewed on a systematic basis. Furthermore, inspection certificates and information about vehicles are kept in a publicly accessible centralised database which is consulted when amending regulations. Vehicles must be inspected on a systematic basis and security cameras are used to monitor inspection certificates on vehicles on the roads.

Antigua and Barbuda has adopted the ABNS 17:2017 - Specification for tourism ground transportation - standard which establishes the minimum requirements for acceptable practices within the tourism ground transport subsector.

It provides guidelines for all ground transport operators in the tourism industry - such as taxis, tourism transport drivers, luxury and limousine operators, etc. - that have been certified or approved by the Ministry of Tourism.

Saint Lucia has adopted the SLNS 41: 2001: Specification for Pneumatic Tyres for passenger vehicles.

This standard establishes guidelines for tyre designation, labelling and laboratory test and performance requirements for physical dimensions, strength, endurance, bead unseating resistance and high-speed performance for new and used pneumatic tyres intended for passenger vehicles with rim code diameters from 254 mm (10 in) to 483 mm (19 in).

A standard like this would be particularly useful in SKN where persons import snow tires and sell them to unsuspecting consumers who are unable to distinguish them from regular tires.

In addition, CROSQ has developed standards to control vehicle rentals.

Recommendations for SKN:

- Setting up a standards committee for the transport sector with a mandate that includes:
 - i. Introducing accreditation for vehicle inspection services.
 - ii. Expanding the parameters of physical inspection of vehicles to guarantee metrology traceability
- Setting up a technical regulations committee for the transport sector with a focus on:
 - i. Taxis and buses
 - ii. Stricter speeding regulations
 - iii. Collaborating with the legal department to transform minimum internationally accepted voluntary standards to technical regulations
- Developing a certification scheme for transport service providers and making it obligatory through legislation.
- Data collection on vehicles in the country.

Quick win activities:

- i. Information campaigns about standards for public and tourist transport.
- ii. Ensuring all vehicle testing centres are equipped to conduct the necessary assessments on vehicles.
- iii. Ensuring the equipment used to test vehicles are calibrated on a systematic basis.
- iv. More equipment to measure speed to deter drivers from speeding

Light manufacturing

The light manufacturing sector is a major pillar of the St. Kitts and Nevis economy and one of the fastest growing ones in country. From the registered manufacturing companies, about 50% can be assigned to the light manufacturing sector. This sector provides jobs for over 8% of the country's workforce and it comprises companies which are engaged in the assembly of electric and electronic equipment, production of electrical components and measuring instruments, as well as garment, textiles and shoe manufacturing. Additionally, several products for vehicles, furniture, windows, doors and plastic articles are produced, mainly for the local market, but several products are also exported to the region. Electrical and electronic equipment are amongst the top exports of SKN, and are delivered to the USA, Canada and Europe.

A quick analysis of the sector including a benchmark analysis with Trinidad and Tobago showed potential for improvement regarding the provision of QI services and information on standards in SKN in order to sufficiently support this sector.

As a rule, and compared to other sectors, the manufacturing sector is less driven by regulation, but more by the market and by quality requirements.

However, the urgent need for implementation of basic regulations in SKN, for example concerning occupational safety and health (OSH), as well as electrical safety, was identified.

This would, in consequence, require a robust enforcement system based on conformity assessment, in particular inspections.

Generally, for exported products the required standards and specifications are set by the customers abroad.

However, for products that are sold in SKN, e.g., garment, footwear, furniture, etc. it also has to be ensured that they are safe and meet minimum standards. Apart from meeting product standards, manufacturing businesses in SKN should be more encouraged to establish quality teams at their companies to undertake regular quality checks and to implement Quality Management System Standards, such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, and be supported in the implementation of such management systems. This would boost the demand for QI services from the SKNBS and enable local companies to compete in local, and more importantly in regional and international markets. This, however, can only be successful in the long term if the workforce is safe.

At least a minimum of occupational safety and health regulations should be put in place, which are based on the OSH Conventions of the International Labour Organization.

For the quick analysis Trinidad and Tobago was selected as benchmark country because of the advanced product compliance regime and active private sector engagement performed by the TTBS.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the electrical sector is one of the most regulated ones in the country. The National Electrical Committee issues and reviews electrical codes, which are then implemented by the Electrical Inspectorate. In Trinidad and Tobago compulsory standards are used to regulate electrical products because of their high impact on consumer safety. In particular, electrical appliances and equipment produced, imported or used in the country, have clear labelling requirements, which are set in labelling standards. Such measures also prevent counterfeit and potentially unsafe electrical products from entering the country and being used in production processes.

The analysis of the light manufacturing sector globally and in particular in Trinidad and Tobago, to which the stakeholder workshop with Trinidad and Tobago sector representatives on October 04, 2021, has significantly contributed, shows the following good practices, which ensure effective support of local manufacturing businesses and the assurance of workers' and consumers' safety:

- i. Availability of guides or minimum performance standards and labelling requirements for garments, footwear and other consumer products (for garment and footwear in particular the selection of fabrics and materials)
- ii. Support of the local businesses in implementing QMS or at least some elements of a QMS, e.g., in garment sector (TTS 626:2013 – Good Management Practices for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises – Requirements; a CARICOM standard is also available: CRS 14:2010 - Good Management Practices for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises)
- iii. Establishment of good manufacturing practices for MSME to support the production process and to ensure workers' safety
- iv. Ensuring electrical safety of industrial electrical installations by regular site assessments (inspections) through the respective authorities
- v. Regular engagement of the Bureau of Standards with stakeholders of the sector to push the development and implementation of standards and to enhance buy-in.
- vi. Provision of guidance to manufacturers in the use of e-ping services for maximum access to new market regulations and requirements.

The light manufacturing sector needs a number of QI Services, which are not yet in place in SKN or do not operate to the necessary extent. Derived from the above analysis the following general recommendations are given, also highlighting potential quick wins, that could be implemented within a short time and with no major investment:

- Put regulations in place which refer to minimum performance, labelling and safety standards (electrical equipment, garment, footwear, etc.) and ensure compliance to these standards
- Develop calibration capabilities for electrical instruments and increase the capabilities for electricity meter verification / calibration
- Develop basic calibration capabilities in dimensional metrology (calibration of calipers, micrometers, rulers)
- Establish and enforce basic regulations on occupational safety and health

- Ensure continuous electrical safety of industrial electrical installations by regular site inspections through SKELEC and NEVLEC
- Develop conformity assessment capabilities relevant to the sector, such as testing of garments and footwear (e.g., testing of raw materials), inspection services for electrical safety, health and environmental aspects, inspection of product compliance
- Develop consultancy services at the SKNBS to train local businesses in implementing QMS
- Promote the e-ping tool to be used by manufacturers
- Regularly engage with stakeholders of the manufacturing sector to push implementation of standards and to enhance buy-in. The formation of sub-sector groups (e. g. electrical/electronic products, garment, furniture) could push cooperation and product-specific quality initiatives and the setting of specific product standards. For the SKN garment manufacturers, such as Sun Island Cloths, the engagement with FashionTT, an organization in Trinidad and Tobago to promote the fashion industry, could be beneficial.

Quick wins:

- Provide local businesses access to quality management system standards, such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, and relevant product standards (adoption / adaption of regional / international standards)
- Develop guides or minimum quality, safety and labelling standards for garment and footwear. The option to adopt TT Standards could be a quick win in this regard (e. g. TTS 10:2021 – Garments and Textiles – Compulsory Requirements; TTS 21 10 500-12: 1985 – Requirements for Labelling – Size Designation of Garments; TTS 76-3:2007 - Requirements for Labelling – Labelling of Garments, TTS 76-7: 2008 - Textiles – Labelling and Advertising)
- Adopt UL, ASTM, IEC and other international standards relevant to electrical equipment, including cables (performance, labelling and safety)
- SKNBS to provide regular *Introduction to Metrology* and other courses to businesses (such courses were developed for the region through the CABUREK project (PTB) and are readily available at the CROSQ IPortal).



Quality Policy Measures



QUALITY POLICY MEASURES

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTION BUILDING

The Ministry with the mandate for trade shall have overall responsibility for supervising and facilitating the implementation of the NQP and the NQI. At the time of writing, that ministry is the Ministry of International Trade, Industry, Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Labour (MITICCAL). In particular, the Ministry is responsible for all standards-related policies, the promulgation of legislation and regulations, and the provision of budgetary resources to support QI services and implement relevant standards across the public sector (including laboratory accreditation).

A National Quality Council (henceforth referred to as the Council) and a Secretariat shall be established at the initiative of MITICCAL as the accountable body for the Quality Policy (QP). The Council's mission will be to discuss, coordinate and monitor the National Quality Strategy.

The members of the Council will be drawn from relevant government ministries, the private sector, civil society, and academia. (Members of the Project Steering Committee for the NQP could transition into the role of members of the Council).

Since the quality improvement initiatives will be cross-cutting and transcend trade and commerce, the Minister of International Trade, Industry, Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Labour or their nominee shall assume the position of Chair of the Council.

The co-chair shall be the Chamber of Commerce, rotated among the St. Kitts and Nevis chapters, every two years.

Based on current institutional arrangements (nationally and regionally), St. Kitts and Nevis's economic size, and the identified needs of the public and private sectors, the NQI for St. Kitts and Nevis shall be established around a core made up of the following:

1. MITICCAL
2. St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards
3. Tourism – St. Kitts and Nevis Tourism Association
4. Chamber of Commerce
5. Health
6. Commodities – St. Kitts and Nevis Fisheries/Agro-processors Associations
7. Finance
8. Works

In addition, the Ministry with responsibility for the QP shall establish, through legislation, the function, role, and responsibilities for technical regulations. This includes the establishment of a Technical Regulations Coordination Unit.

In particular, the Technical Regulation Coordination Unit of the MITICCAL, shall integrate all regulatory and conformity assessment activities of the government in the new QI framework.

Recommendations:

- Revision of the National Standards Act and expanding or renaming it as a National Quality Infrastructure Act.
- Conversion of the SKNBS to an autonomous government institution
- Establishment of a National Quality Council

- Adoption of the National Quality Policy by the government.
- Establishment of a Coordination Unit for Technical Regulations

Quick-win activities:

- Fostering and arranging liaisons with regional and international quality-related bodies or programmes that might support the development of the NQI in SKN.
- Discussing transitioning into the National Quality Council with the members of the PSC for the NQP.
- Discussing and analysing QI-related issues with relevant institutions, ministries, and members of the private sector to inform the revision of the National Standards Act.
- Guiding and advising relevant stakeholders, ministries, and institutions in the implementation of the NQP.
- Advertising the services of the SKNBS more intensively to increase its profits so it can reduce dependency on government funding.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM AND POLICY INTEGRATION

The institution responsible for the development and provision of quality services in SKN is the SKNBS. The legal basis for the SKNBS is the National Bureau of Standards Act of 1999 which was later revised on the 31st of December 2002. The SKNBS has certain functions and is responsible for the provision of different standard setting and quality assurance, quality promotion and information, metrology, conformity assessment services (i.e., certification, testing, and calibration services) and coordinates the efforts of producers and users of materials, products, appliances, processes, and methods, for the improvement of the materials, products, appliances, processes, and methods, among others.

It should be noted that the members of said Council have not been appointed. This has negatively affected the exercise of certain functions. Consequently, the Federation does not have any consumer products regulations in place, leaving it vulnerable to the possible importation of unsafe products. Currently, the SKNBS has championed a process to update the NBSA.

The proposed draft Bill follows recent legislation from other countries in the region. For example, these newer legislation models consider more updated definitions such as: “standards” (to define voluntary standards) and “technical regulations” (to define the regulation of products). Also, SKNBS will be able to avoid the need to double-gazette any voluntary standards it needs to adopt or adapt for the country. SKNBS has indicated that it is also in the process of defining the best way to establish a Standards Council within the new legal framework. It must be mentioned that the proposed Bill covers more than just standards.

- The draft Bill amending the Standards Act should complete its readings in Parliament and be Enacted.
- Secondary legislation is required to deal with the issues not contemplated in the current Act, as well as the draft Bill.
- Legal developments will be required for standard committees and procedure, the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations, market surveillance and market surveillance fees, legal metrology, scientific and industrial metrology, among others.
- Following the proper procedure SKN will need to consider at least some basic regulations to protect human, animal or plant life or health, the environment, and prevent deceptive practices in the country.
- However, not all requirements in the Act can be made compulsory without contravening the WTO TBT or SPS agreements.
- The members of the Standards Council should be appointed.
- SKNBS shall play a coordinating role with other authorities in SKN.

- SKNBS shall develop competences for the preparation technical regulations and to fulfil its role as the market surveillance for products authority.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, CAPACITY BUILDING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING

The SKNBS operates a Chemistry Services Laboratory and a Microbiology Laboratory and will soon also operate a permanent Metrology Laboratory. Through the CDB – CROSQ Strengthening of Regional Quality Infrastructure Programme, the SKNBS is currently receiving support for the strengthening of the technical capacities in mass metrology, with the aim to bring the mass laboratory to the state of readiness for accreditation / peer assessment.

This support includes the procurement of equipment and the provision of technical assistance to develop capabilities for the calibration and verification of weights.

In relation to this, the SKNBS is currently preparing the physical infrastructure as it relates to the metrology room to be fit for the reception and installation of the equipment and to ensure this equipment can be operated and maintained under proper conditions. The Bureau is fully committed to finalize the respective work with own funds and on time.

In terms of physical infrastructure, the SKNBS faces more and more challenges due to lack of physical space in the current building, which is a significant limiting factor for the expansion of services. Therefore, a new building has been planned and designed, and funds were approved.

The Bureau of Standards with the various areas of QI it covers is a hub for local businesses and society in terms of knowledge provision and technical support. Apart from the technical services, the provision of training and consultancy services is very important for the SKNBS in order to become a fully capable partner to local businesses and QI institutions.

The Government will:

- ensure that the physical infrastructure, including equipment, is and remains appropriate to offer the services required to meet the local and regional demand for testing and calibration services
- ensure that testing and metrology equipment with influence on the validity of testing and calibration results has valid metrological traceability and that this traceability is maintained at all times
- foster efforts to gain international recognition of the testing and calibration services provided by the SKNBS and local QI institutions
- support all efforts to strengthen the Bureau's organizational capacities and to increase its visibility and support capacity to local businesses
- support the SKNBS to become a fully capable partner to local businesses and society

Measures:

- Preparation and maintenance of the physical infrastructure, in particular the mass metrology room, for the proper installation and operation of the metrology equipment.
- Securing an annual budget line item to cover the costs for maintaining metrological traceability of testing and calibration equipment
- Driving forward the accreditation of the services of the chemical, microbiology and metrology laboratory according to ISO/IEC 17025
- Construction of a new building at the current site of the SKNBS will be driven forward with high priority to ensure adequate space to provide the required services.
- Updating the data and information on the demand for metrological services by conducting a demand survey among the local businesses and QI institutions.
- Achievement of certification according to ISO 9001 (SKNBS)
- Development of metrological capacities in new areas, such as electrical and dimensional quantities as well as thermometry

- Further development of the Bureau's website to provide information on national standards, including the provision of information and abstracts of standards online
- Strengthening of the National Accreditation Focal Point by hiring or assigning additional staff and increasing visibility of the focal point
- Establishing of logistics support for food sellers on the island of Nevis, i.e., installation of a contact point in Nevis operated by the SKNBS where food samples are collected from local food producers to be transported under proper conditions to the SKNBS for testing.
- Active participation in the Marketing Information Knowledge Management and Education (MIKE) Committee of CROSQ to further develop the Bureau's information and communication technologies.

ENABLING QUALITY CONSCIOUS AND PROACTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The creation of a quality culture in the country is a long-term goal. It is about all economic actors (companies, consumers, and public authorities), appreciating the value of quality and acting accordingly. Quality infrastructure helps to make the characteristics of products visible and enables buyers to make quality-conscious purchases. At the same time, a quality culture follows continuous improvement, which increases the competitiveness of the national economy and the quality of life of the population through innovation.

A quality culture can be promoted by sensitization and information activities. However, the benefit of QI requires more practical experience. The activities proposed in the implementation plan serve this purpose. The NQP addresses strategic sectors of the national economy. The policy aims to convince multipliers, such as those responsible for procurement, managers of public enterprises or political decision-makers, of the practical benefits of using the quality infrastructure.



Operationalisation of the Quality Policy



OPERATIONALISATION OF THE QUALITY POLICY

IMPLEMENTATION MANAGEMENT

The success of the quality policy depends to a large extent on its implementation. The implementation plan developed for the policy is the foundation for operationalising the policy. The oversight and coordination of the implementation of the policy is in the hands of the National Quality Council (NQC), to be formed. An Implementation Unit is set-up to be responsible for the operational implementation and monitoring of the policy.

Since the creation of the National Quality Council and the Implementation Unit itself are activities of the QP, the Project Committee and SKNBS assumes these functions on a provisional basis prior to the establishment of these two bodies. The Implementation Unit is headed by a professional coordinator who works with the National Quality Council for cross-ministerial coordination of the Implementation Plan.

Composition of the NQC:

- i. St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards
- ii. Tourism – St. Kitts and Nevis Tourism Association
- iii. Chamber of Commerce
- iv. Health
- v. Commodities – St. Kitts and Nevis Fisheries/Agro-processors Associations
- vi. Finance
- vii. Works

Chair – Minister of International Trade/designate

Co – Chair Chamber of Commerce (alternating between St. Kitts and Nevis Chapter)

Terms of Reference:

1. Promote the NQP and Implementation Plan
2. Monitor and evaluate Implementation Plan
3. Advise government on relevant policies and legislation
4. Responsible for resource mobilisation
5. Meet at least quarterly or more regularly as needed
6. Report to the Cabinet on the progress of implementation of the NQP
7. Annual report on the progress towards goals – assessment of the NQI issues
8. Review and advise on the NQP every two years or whenever new policies with trade and development implications are introduced.
9. Facilitate consultations with stakeholders as needed

FINANCING

The government of St. Kitts and Nevis allocates a budget line in the annual national budget for the implementation and management of the NQP. Additional funding may be obtained from other funding sources and donor agencies such as the 11th EDF, CROSO, CBD, Green Climate Fund, inter alia. Presentations to donors are part of the Implementation Plan.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication of the NQP is essential for its success. Especially important is consumer education and awareness. Communication of the NQP and Implementation targets users and multipliers (procurement officers) of the NQI.

Additionally, the NQP is communicated using a standard presentation to ensure uniformity of message and may be used at board meeting of BSOs, CSOs, Ministries and Consumer Groups and other private sector associations and groups. The NQP is published and online links made available on websites of key stakeholders.

MONITORING, LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

The development of the Quality Infrastructure is a continuous task. The changes in the global environment and the experience gained in implementing the National Quality Policy require regular updating and adaptation.

The Project Steering Committee is responsible for the effective development of the NQP. Until the Quality Council is established, the Project Steering Committee starts the work of implementation.

After its establishment, the National Quality Council is responsible for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In operational terms, monitoring lies within the SKNBS, assisted by the Implementation Coordinating Unit.

Role of the Implementation Coordinating Unit:

1. Monitoring of the Implementation Plan
2. Planning – development of the work plan
3. (a) Network all agencies/organisations/ ministries to implement the NQP & Implementation plan
1. Coordinate and advocate the NQP to agencies and organisations
4. Report to the NQC
5. Recommend 2022 budget support, that can be used for administrative support in the first instance

The Implementation Coordinating Unit will be housed in the SKNBS, in the interim it can be housed elsewhere.

The Implementation Plan contains a description of the activities, the results, and the time targets, and forms the basis for monitoring.

The implementation follows the logic of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, with periodic (annual) verification of progress against defined goals and milestones, with the identification of any necessary corrective action or adjustment.

The Implementation Plan contains two project types:

Quick wins refer to activities that can be carried out with existing resources to achieve short-term success. They serve to motivate the actors and point to areas of change needed.

Catalytic projects promote structural (operational) change. They require more extensive preparation, considerable resources, and political decisions.

The NQP itself is a living document and is revised at regular intervals at least every five years.

The effective implementation of the NQP requires the continued engagement of the relevant stakeholders, ongoing communication and ensuring that the required resources continue to be available. The national budget allocates funds for the management and monitoring of the NQP.

GLOSSARY

Accreditation Third-party verification of a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence and impartiality to carry out specific quality assessment tasks.

Calibration The determination, by comparison with a measurement standard, of the correct value of a reading on a measuring instrument.

CALIDENA A participatory gap analysis of quality in a specific value chain methodology developed by the German Metrology Institute (PTB) and the consultancy company Mesopartner.

Certification Third-party attestation that products, services, processes, management systems and persons conform to established standards.

Civil Society Society considered as a community of citizens; linked by common interests and collective activity, legal or otherwise, and seen as a social sphere separate from both the state and the economic market.

Code of Good Practice The Code of Good Practice, Annex 3 of the WTO TBT Agreement, provides disciplines, including those related to transparency, for the preparation, adoption, and application of standards by standardizing bodies. The Code's acceptance is voluntary and open to any standardizing body, whether central government, local government, or non-governmental and regional standardizing bodies.

Competitiveness A country's ability to sell goods and services (under free and fair conditions) in markets while maintaining and expanding the real incomes of its people over the long term.

Compulsory Standard A declared national standard, which has been accorded compulsory status by the Minister of Trade and Industry, in accordance with the Standards Act. A compulsory standard has the force of law. A compulsory standard fall under the definition of Technical Regulation of the WTO TBT Agreement and has the obligation to comply with the accords included in said agreement.

Conformity Assessment Demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, service, process, person, or body are fulfilled; typically conducted through quality assessment services such as inspection (desk and field reviews, physical examination, and performance analysis), laboratory testing and certification.

Consumer Protection Protection of the safety and interests of buyers of goods and services

against low quality or dangerous products that are not fit for its end use and advertisements that deceive people.

Demand-oriented A customer driven good or service.

Enquiry Point A focal point, established under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, where other WTO Members can request and obtain information and documentation on a member's technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures, whether impending or adopted, as well as on participation in bilateral or plurilateral standards-related agreements, international or regional standardizing bodies and conformity assessment systems.

Environmental Protection Any activity designed to maintain or restore the quality of environmental media through preventing the mission of pollutants or reducing the presence of polluting substances; initiatives relating to energy efficiency, renewable energy and the sustainable use of natural resources also play a role in this regard.

Good Regulatory Practice Good Regulatory Practice (GRP) are internationally recognized processes, systems, tools, and methods for improving the quality of new and existent regulations. GRP systematically implements public consultation and stakeholder engagement as well as impact analysis of Government proposals before they are implemented to make sure they address important problems and are fit for purpose and deliver what they are set out to achieve.

Goods Commodities such as are the subject of trade or commerce and include services, processes, and practices.

Health Protection A term used to encompass a set of activities within the Public Health function. It involves ensuring the safety and quality of food, water, air, and the general environment preventing the transmission of diseases.

Industrial Metrology The area of metrology which assures the accuracy of the instruments used and measurements made.

Innovation The implementation of a new or significantly improved product, service process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization, or external relations.

Inspection Examination of a product, process etc., and determination of its conformity with specific requirements or, on the basis of professional judgement, with general requirements, e.g., supply chain assessments, market surveillance etc.

Legal Metrology That area of metrology that concerns the regulation of weighing and measuring instruments used in commercial transactions.

Legitimate Objectives The WTO TBT Agreement specifies that technical regulations shall not be more trade-restrictive than necessary to fulfil a legitimate objective. Legitimate objectives specified under the TBT Agreement are, *inter alia*: national security requirements; the prevention of deceptive practices; protection of human health or safety, animal or plant life or health, or the environment. In assessing such risks, relevant elements of consideration are, *inter alia*: available scientific and technical information related to processing technology or intended end-uses of products.

Metrology Science of accurate, reliable, and traceable measurement: scientific (artefact standards), industrial (calibration) and legal (verification) metrology.

Productivity The effectiveness of productive effort, especially in industry, as measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input.

Quality Culture A culture of quality consciousness and continuous improvement.

Quality Infrastructure Institutions or Quality Institutions Organizations at the national and regional level, that provide quality infrastructure services such as Standards and Technical Regulations development, Accreditation, Metrology, Conformity Assessment and Quality Promotions. Institutions may come from the public, private or civil society sectors etc.

Quality Infrastructure Services or Quality-related Services (QI Services) Services provided by Quality Infrastructure Institutions.

Quality Infrastructure (National and Regional) The institutional framework, including its systems and people, involved in the development and implementation of standards and technical regulations, metrology, accreditation, conformity assessment services and the promotion of quality involved in strengthening the quality competitiveness of the goods and services produced or provided at the national and regional levels with the aim of: increasing and facilitating

trade, boosting industrial and State efficiency and effectiveness, supporting the development of the CSME, promoting consumer welfare and safety and contributing to energy security and the preservation of the environment. The five components of quality infrastructure – Standards & Technical Regulations, Metrology, Accreditation, Conformity Assessment and Quality Promotion (marketing & communication, information & awareness, education, etc.) – can be applied at the national level (National Quality Infrastructure) and complemented at the regional level – (Regional Quality Infrastructure).

Quality The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs (i.e., fit for purpose). It is demonstrated by the degree of customer satisfaction.

Standardization A framework or methodology to ensure that the process for formulation, publication and implementation of guidelines, rules and specifications for common and repeated use achieves uniformity in each context, discipline, or field. It includes transparency and consensus for the most efficient use of research, development, and production resources.

Standards Document approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines and characteristics for products or related processes and production methods, with which compliance is voluntary. It may also include or deal exclusively with terminologies, symbols, packaging, marking or labelling requirements as they apply to a product, process, or production method.

Sustainable Development Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; includes economic, social, environmental, and technological resilience as well as other factors.

Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) A category of nontariff barriers to trade or measures those countries use to regulate markets, protect their consumers, or preserve their natural resources (among other legitimate objectives), but they also can be used unnecessarily to discriminate against imports to protect domestic industries or restrict regional or international trade.

Technical Regulation Document which lays down product characteristics or their related processes and production methods, including the applicable administrative and conformity assessment provisions, with which compliance is mandatory, usually for consumer health and safety and environmental protection.

Testing Determination of one or more characteristics of an object of conformity assessment, according to a procedure e.g., analytical, calibration, medical etc.

**World Trade Organization (WTO)
Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement**

An agreement that aims to ensure that product regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures are non-discriminatory and do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade. At the same time, it recognizes World Trade Organization members' rights to implement non-discriminatory measures to achieve legitimate policy objectives, such as protection of human health and safety, or protection of the environment. The TBT agreement requires members in most circumstances to base their measures on international standards to facilitate trade. It provides a list of trade facilitation measures. Through its transparency provisions, it also aims to create a predictable trading environment.

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Annexes



ANNEX 1: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – YEAR 1

Table 1: Showing the initial steps for implementing the NQP in SKN

Actions	What	Who	When
Step 1	Media Campaign / Promotion	SKNBS, SKIS & NIS	By End of February 2022
Step 2	Constitute the Nat. Quality Council (incl. approval)	MITICAL & PSC	Constitution and approval by the end of March 2022
Step 3	Legislative and regulations review-to see what needs to be changed to implement the NQP	NQC	June - Dec 2022
Step 4	Review and action of current implementation activity items that are already covered in 2022 budget	Relevant Agencies and Departments, NQC	Before July 2022
Step 5	Preparation of budget line items	Relevant Agencies and Departments, NQC	Before July / Sept. 2022
Step 6	Report on summary of accomplished actions and plan for 2023	NQC	By October 2022

Source: Action plan developed at the Governance Training Workshop for PSC members 1st February 2022

ANNEX 2: PHOTOS

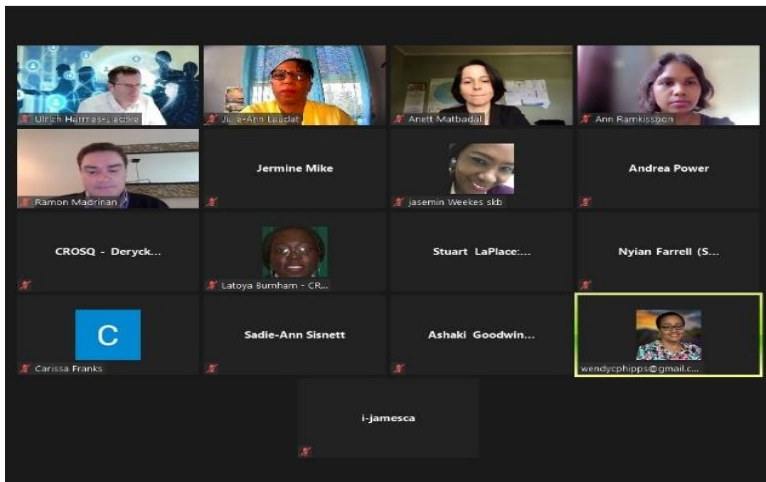


Figure 2: Project Kick Off Event

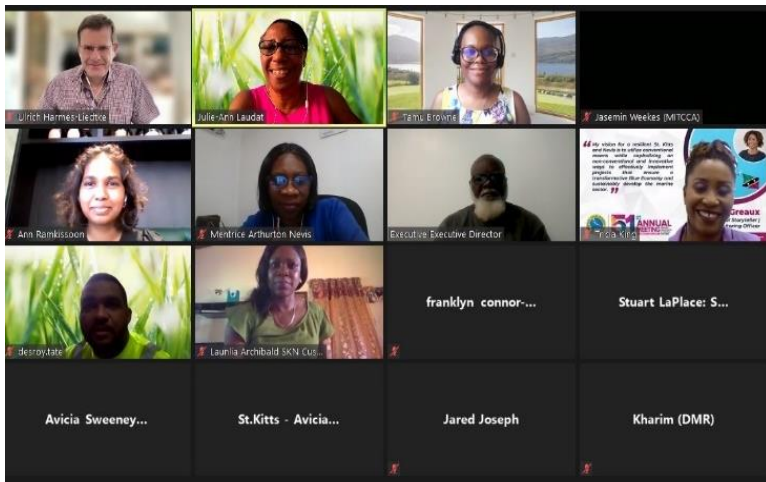


Figure 3: First Project Steering Committee Meeting

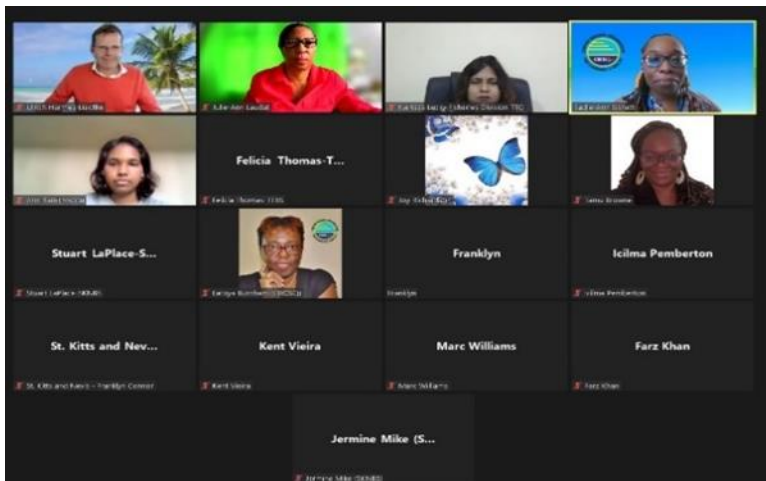


Figure 4: Fisheries Stakeholder Validation Workshop

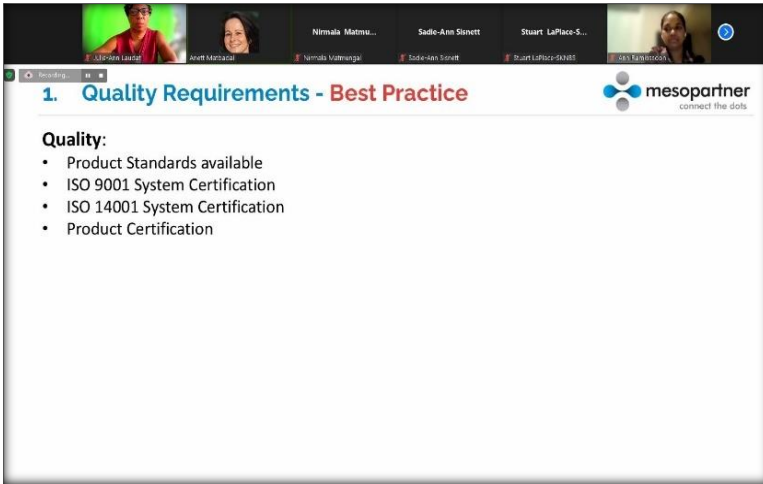


Figure 5: Light Manufacturing Stakeholders Validation Workshop

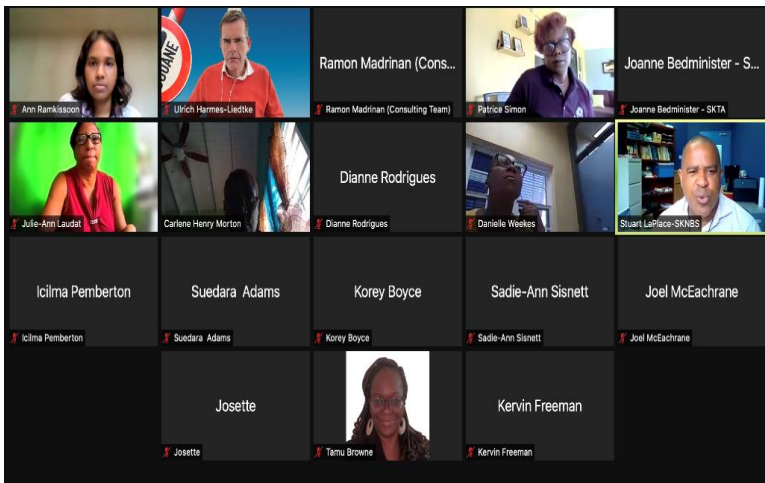


Figure 6: Tourism & Transport Stakeholders Validation Workshop

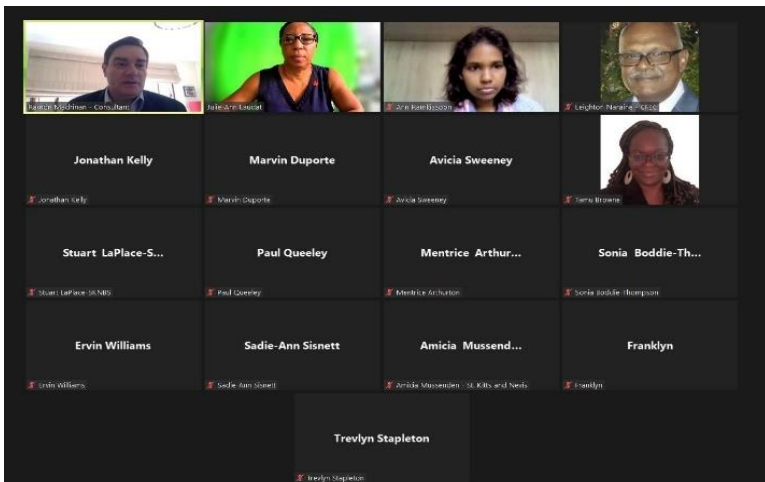


Figure 7: Regulators Training Workshop

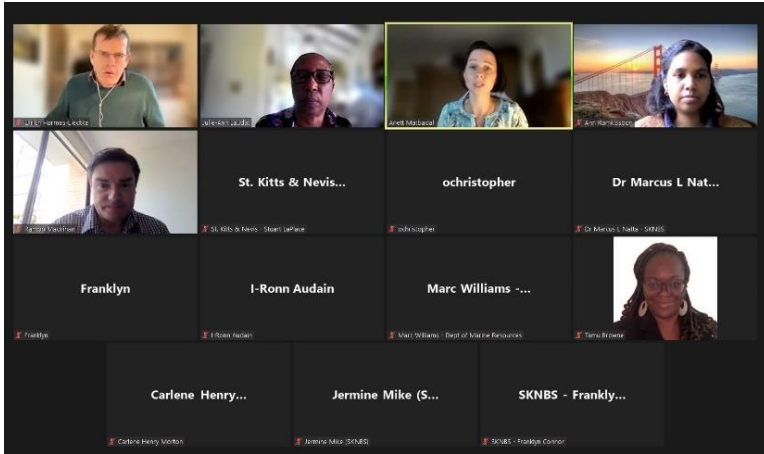


Figure 8: Draft NQP Stakeholders Validation Workshop

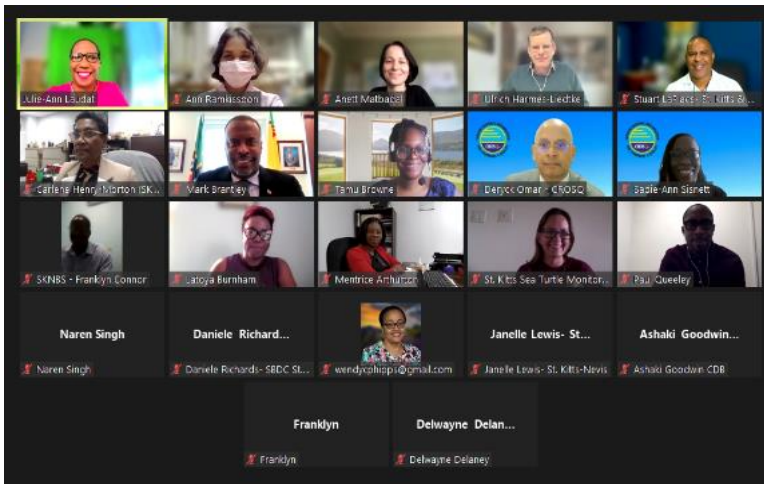


Figure 9: Governance Training Workshop and Project Close/Handover Event



Figure 10: Hon. Minister of International Trade speaks at Working for You TV Show

Government of St. Kitts-Nevis
WORKING For YOU

TOPIC: DEVELOPING A NATIONAL QUALITY POLICY TO IMPROVE THE NATIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Wednesday 9th February, 2022 Time: 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

Hon. Wendy Phipps
Minister of International Trade, Industry, Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Labour

Mr. Stuart Laplace
Director of St. Kitts and Nevis Bureau of Standards

Mr. Lesroy Williams
Host

Mr. Deryck Omar
CEO, Caricom Regional Organization for Standards and Quality, CROSQ

Dr. Ulrich Harmes-Liedtke
Economist and Consultant

Ms. Julie-Ann Laudat
Manager and Owner of JAL Training and Consultancy Services

Broadcast live: ZIZ Radio | Winn Fm | Sugar City FM **Streamed live: SKNIS Facebook and YouTube Pages**

Call in numbers: 466-2666 | 662-8674 | 767-4765 | 1-239-645-4500

Rebroadcast Thursday: Freedom FM @ 7:30 am | VON Radio @ 10:30 am

Figure 11: Flyer for Working For You TV Programme, promoting the NQP

ABOUT MESOPARTNER

Mesopartner PartG is a globally operating small-size partnership. The company collaborates closely with development practitioners globally. Through its global and regional network, Mesopartner draws on the skills of experts for support when needed. While Mesopartner is registered in Europe, the company established a local administrative unit in Basseterre, St. Kitts, for the duration of this project.

Mesopartner is a leading consultancy in the field of quality infrastructure in the Caribbean. The company has supported the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, and Suriname in developing their National Quality Policies. Additionally, Mesopartner has trained quality infrastructure and cluster experts in the Caribbean, supported the development of a technical regulations regime and a quality infrastructure information system in the Dominican Republic, and several quality-related value chain and cluster initiatives in CARIFORUM countries.

For consultancy of the National Quality Policy in St. Kitts and Nevis exclusively, Mesopartner has brought together an international and multidisciplinary team. The team consists of leading experts in quality infrastructure, trade, value chains, food safety and project management; with solid experience in the Latin American and Caribbean region, and knowledge of the sensitivity of the specific situation in the selected countries and the wider CARICOM. The team is also gender-diverse, with four of the seven consultants being female.

**Prepared by: Ulrich Harmes-Liedtke, Julie-Ann Laudat, Anett Matbadal,
Ramon Madrinan, Ann-Sara Ramkissoon, Juan Jose Oteiza and Tamu Petra Browne**

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GOVERNMENT OF ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INDUSTRY,
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