



COLOMBIA:

Strengthening the National Quality Subsystem through the cosmetics sector

Context

Colombia is one of the largest economies in Latin America; however, it is faced with internal and external challenges, and opportunities. Under the Productive Transformation Program (PTP), a public-private partnership, the cosmetic industry has been recognized as one of the country's sectors with high potential for growth. Therefore, Colombia aims to become a world leader by 2032, in the manufacturing and the exporting of natural ingredients-based cosmetics.

Although Colombia has begun to consolidate its position at regional level, and there is international recognition of the existence of high quality products, it has not managed to exploit its full export capacity. Weak sanitary and phyto-sanitary framework, low capacity for compliance with international standards and market requirements and lack of internationally recognized accredited laboratories and conformity assessment services have contributed to low competitiveness and export rejections. The country is also yet to exploit its natural ingredients as a factor of innovation and distinction on the international markets.

Main approach

UNIDO is supporting Colombia's efforts to integrate into the regional and multilateral trading system by enhancing its trade capacities and performance. This would be carried out through a quality programme aimed at the cosmetics sector's productive chain, which is expected to strengthen the National Quality Subsystem (NQS), enhance the technical capacity and improve compliance with international quality, private and sustainability standards. The project would develop local expertise with the adequate technical knowledge to provide quality-related advisory services to the sector during and after the project duration. Furthermore, it contributes to improving the quality of production and the competitiveness of exported natural ingredients-based cosmetics.

Impact and results

The technical capacities of Colombia's NQS key institutions are being strengthened to serve the cosmetic sector: the National Metrology Institute (NMI) is maintaining national measurement standards capable of providing a reliable and accurate measurement service, and maintaining internationally traceable calibration services; the National Accreditation Board (ONAC) is

facilitating independent attestation of the technical capabilities of the conformity assessment service providers to the satisfaction of the local and international markets and authorities; and the National Institute of Food and Drug Monitoring (INVIMA) is in the process of enhancing its capacity to perform inspection, surveillance and control.

Additionally, key functions providing conformity assessment are being strengthened to provide internationally recognized services. For example: Testing services that have the technical competence to test export products according to best international practices. Inspection services that ensure that staff is competent and knowledgeable on national legislation and inspection practices; and certification services for relevant international standards, that are available for products and management systems, through improved methodologies. These services support the cosmetic sector by demonstrating the quality of products independently from the manufacturer or the supplier.

Finally, the project works closely with key players (e.g. growers, producers/processors, exporters) to further enhance their capacity to comply with standards, technical regulations and market requirements along the natural ingredients value chain for cosmetic production. The support is being provided in collaboration with public and private sector institutions including chambers of commerce, sector associations, etc.

It is foreseen that based on the Government and private sector's strategy, together with the implementation of UNIDO programme, Colombia would increase the size of the cosmetic sector, it would multiply its exports, and would significantly increase the number of jobs, thus resulting in inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

At a glance

Project title: Quality Programme for the Cosmetics Sector in Colombia

Donors: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Productive Transformation Program (PTP)

Duration: 2015-2018

Budget: USD 2.7 million