

Making Voluntary Sustainability Standards Contribute to the SDGs

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"Voluntary Sustainability Standards, Trade and Sustainable Development"

By

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD




UNFSS

United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards

**3rd UNFSS Flagship
Download at: www.unfss.org**

Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS), Trade and Sustainable Development



A Platform of International Dialogue on Voluntary Sustainability Standards

UNFSS

- UNFSS is a **neutral, independent and credible platform to harness VSS potential to achieve SDG** by:
 - **Facilitating** developing countries access to global markets
 - **Stimulating** well-informed policy dialogue among key stakeholders on the national and international level
- UNFSS' **goal** is to make VSS a way to **improve the well-being and prosperity** of people in developing countries
- UNFSS functions by **pooling resources from five United Nations agencies**:



UNFSS' work response to a need....

- Developing countries **often have problems** with VSS because:
 - they can't find **credible** standards
 - compliance is **costly**
 - small-scale producers **risk being left out**
 - standards are not harmonized causing unnecessary **multiplication**
- UNFSS respond to these challenges through:
 - Informed policy dialogue: Example **International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards (New Dehli, September 17-18, 2018)**
 - Support for national initiatives: **India Private Sustainability Standards Platform**
 - Research and Analysis: **Flagship reports**



Flagship Report 1
Public Policy Issues
and Objectives



Flagship Report 2
VSS and the Role of
the Government



Flagship Report 3
VSS, Trade and
Sustainable Development



Key Findings of the 3rd Flagship

- 1. VSS can potentially be a catalyst of sustainable development**
 - Analysis reveals institutional complementarities between VSS and the SDGs
- 2. However, effectiveness depends on the institutional design factors of VSS systems**
 - Credibility is fundamental: rigorous standard-setting, monitoring and verification mechanism
- 3. VSS systems could be facilitators or barriers to trade**
 - To avoid being barriers and reduce costs they should do more to actively support suppliers and increase transparency
- 4. Concerns for multiplicity of VSS**
 - This increase compliance costs
- 5. Increasing interest of VSS in developing countries**
 - Through multi-stakeholder platforms and by collaborating with International Organizations as a channel to emphasize national priorities

VSS Move Towards Multi-Stakeholder Approach in Developing Countries

- National Platforms address challenges that producers, consumers, exporters face with regards to VSS, **namely awareness and information gaps.**
- They:
 - Facilitates dialogue
 - Adapts external standards to domestic conditions
 - Extends international networking and collaborations
 - Knowledge-Sharing: building an ecosystem for VSS
 - Links policy making with research and analysis
 - **Get Governments involved in the discussions**
- Examples of activities (Last two years):
 - Study “The Indian Story”
 - Qingdao, China Conference (more than 500 participants)
 - International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards, New Dehli, (again more than 500 participants)



INDIA

Consisting of Multi-Stakeholder Assembly, a Steering Council, Sectoral Committees and a Secretariat, hosted by Quality Council of India (QCI), with the Ministry of Commerce and Trade.

CHINA


The Secretariat is being run by the Standardization Administration of China in cooperation with the China Association for Standardization.

BRAZIL

The Platform is being run by the Brazilian National Institute of Metrology, Quality and Technology (INMETRO).

México

Just launched two months ago. Supported by the Direccion de Normas in the Ministry of Economy, but will be run each year by a different institution



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Thank You

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