

# 1 Introduction

Why is a functioning quality infrastructure (QI) crucial? To reap the benefits of world trade, countries must meet the quality standards of global markets. Increasingly, this requires suppliers to comply with standards, technical regulations, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures. But many countries lack the necessary QI to do so.

Helping countries to develop or strengthen their own quality and standards ecosystems—to diagnose, build, and reform the complex elements of an effective, modern QI—is the overarching goal of this toolkit.

Toward that end, Part 1 offers a primer about the importance of QI, comprising two modules:

- *Module 1: Executive Summary.* QI ecosystems are vital to overcoming technical barriers to trade while also serving the needs of governments, businesses, and consumers in many ways. Module 1 discusses these benefits and provides a quick start guide for understanding the full toolkit's workflow.

- *Module 2: Importance of QI Reform and Demand Assessment.* Without a competent and effective QI system, it may be difficult to enhance productivity; implement proper technical regulations (important for consumer protection and for the safety and health of the population, fauna and flora, and the environment); and innovate successfully, resulting in the country being less competitive in global markets. This then translates into challenges back home as a lack of socioeconomic development. Module 2 discusses in detail the importance of QI for improving market access and competitiveness, trade facilitation and integration into global value chains, innovation and technology diffusion, and productivity. It also examines the QI's role in consumer protection, health and safety, and environmental protection.

In addition, a country's QI demands begin the process toward both QI capacity building and the identification of effective reforms. Module 2 includes a discussion on how to identify the demand for and needs of important industrial sectors and export markets. It also helps to identify gaps between supply and demand for QI services and discusses specific activities to be pursued, including techniques for providing appropriate information, such as value chain studies and market surveys. Outlining the requirements for generic QI ecosystem capacity building is an important part of the holistic approach to demand assessment.