

Managing Quality in the Republic of Azerbaijan

A directory of services for SMEs



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About the paper

This quality management directory for Azerbaijan helps its small firms connect to national institutions that can help them navigate standards, conformity assessment procedures and services, while meeting the safety and technical standards for foreign markets.

It provides an overview of the national quality, standardization and conformity assessment system, including food safety and animal and plant health. It also has contact details of service providers.

It is a companion guide to *Export Quality Management: A guide for SMEs*, available at www.intracen.org/publications.

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For more information on export quality management services at ITC, see: www.intracen.org

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Foreword by Azerbaijan Standardization Institute (AZSTAND)

Standards, technical regulations and quality infrastructure play an important role in the strengthening and competitiveness of the national economy, particularly in the context of global trade.

Quality infrastructure – which includes the national quality policy, organizations for its implementation, regulatory framework, quality service providers, enterprises and consumers – serves as an important basis for ensuring the competitiveness of goods and services produced in Azerbaijan and facilitating their access to foreign markets. Azerbaijan is strengthening the quality of its national infrastructure as an important step towards building a thriving economy, which is the basis for citizens' prosperity, health and well-being.

The export of Azerbaijani products is greatly influenced by national organizations responsible for the quality and safety of products. These include the Ministry of Economy, State Service for Antimonopoly and Consumer Market Control, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Standardization Institute, Azerbaijan Accreditation Centre and Azerbaijan Institute of Metrology. The efficiency of these structures has a positive effect on promoting national exports and facilitating cross-border trade.

We believe that this guide will be a useful source for Azerbaijani companies and their foreign partners and will serve to improve and expand trade.



Namig Tagiyev

Director General

Azerbaijan Standardization Institute

Foreword by ITC

Today's competitive global trade environment demands that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) invest in productivity and quality. Having goods and services that can compete in international markets requires attention to standards and meeting the technical requirements behind these standards. For many SMEs, however, this can be a challenge – especially in view of the growing number of these standards, both public and private.

Governments impose a range of legitimate technical requirements to protect the health and safety of their citizens and to safeguard plant and animal life and the environment. Industry associations, multinationals and retailers also develop a range of 'voluntary' private standards to meet the increasingly discerning demands of consumers.

ITC surveys of businesses in more than 30 countries have shown that exporters and importers face many challenges related to non-tariff measures. Quality-related technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and related conformity assessment procedures are among the most significant challenges. This is especially the case for smaller businesses, which struggle with the cost of compliance and lack of transparency of both regulations and related procedures.

To ensure their competitiveness and participation in value chains, SMEs need up-to-date information about applicable technical requirements (i.e. related to quality, or sanitary and phytosanitary measures, or certification) in target markets. Then, SMEs must adapt their products and processes to satisfy market requirements and demonstrate compliance with these regulations. They must also check whether recognized conformity assessment services are available in their country, or whether they must turn to recognized but more costly foreign certification bodies. Gathering such information is expensive and burdensome for small businesses.

Given this context, ITC joined forces with the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan to help SMEs gain wider access to relevant quality management information. This work has been undertaken under the project 'Eastern Partnership: Ready to Trade – an EU4Business Initiative', implemented by ITC and funded by the European Union.

I am confident that this guide will be a useful resource and practical tool for SMEs in Azerbaijan in their efforts to improve competitiveness and increase their participation in international trade.



Pamela Coke-Hamilton
Executive Director
International Trade Centre

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The guide was drafted by Gunel Mammadova, ITC National Consultant in Quality Management under technical supervision and review of Ludovica Ghizzoni, ITC Adviser on Export Quality Management. The guide follows the structure developed by ITC. Natalie Domeisen and Anne Griffin (both ITC), who oversaw the editing and production process; Janet Hill, who edited the report; Franco Iacovino (ITC), who provided the graphic design and Serge Adeagbo (ITC), who provided graphic and printing support. Thanks also to Marnie McDonald, who assisted in the preliminary editing.

The guide was reviewed nationally by the different institutions that constitute the quality infrastructure in the Republic of Azerbaijan, including those forming the sanitary and phytosanitary system.

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This national directory of quality management services constitutes the companion to the guide *Export Quality Management: A Guide for Small and Medium-sized Exporters*, which was published jointly by ITC and the German national metrology institute, Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt.

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