



QCI hosts 3rd International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards

For Prelims: [Quality Council of India \(QCI\)](#), International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards, United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards, Good Agricultural Practices, [Open Network for Digital Commerce \(ONDC\)](#)

For Mains: Quality Council of India (QCI) and its Contribution, Food Safety and Standards

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

The [Quality Council of India \(QCI\)](#), an autonomous organization of the [Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade \(DPIIT\)](#), Ministry of Commerce and Industry hosted the 3rd **International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards (ICSTS)** in New Delhi.

- ICSTS, a two-day event, has been organized by the **India National Platform on Private Sustainability Standards (India PSS Platform)** and hosted by QCI in collaboration with the **United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS)**.
- The ICSTS aims to raise awareness and foster dialogue on the challenges and opportunities of **voluntary sustainability standards (VSS)**, which are tools to improve the environmental and social aspects of global value chains.

What are the Key Highlights of ICSTS?

- QCI and the **African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO)** signed a bilateral agreement to strengthen trade relations and harmonize standards, promoting global trade landscape.
- India has forged partnerships with Brazil and Mexico and has now extended cooperation with the **ARSO** regarding Voluntary Sustainability Standards.
 - Sustainability Standards are special rules that guarantee the products you buy **do not hurt the environment and the people who make them**.
- The [Open Network for Digital Commerce \(ONDC\)](#) initiative was highlighted as it is driving the digitalization initiative, revolutionizing e-commerce in India and making trade more accessible and efficient in the digital age.
 - This initiative aligns with international standards, ensuring data confidentiality and trustworthiness.
 - ONDC identified QCI to assess the digital Readiness of entities to smoothly join the ONDC Network's Seller App.
- At ICSTS, India Good Agricultural Practices (IndG.AP.) standards were compared to GLOBAL Good Agricultural Practices (GLOBALG.A.P.) standards through the **National Technical Working Group (NTWG)** mechanism and creation of **National Interpretation Guidelines (NIG)** also took place at the ICSTS.
 - This helps align Indian agricultural practices with global standards. The creation of **NIG**

provides guidelines for applying these standards in India.

- These efforts will **benefit around 12,000 farmers** by ensuring they meet international quality and sustainability standards.

Key Terms

- **India National Platform on Private Sustainability Standards (INPPSS):**
 - It was initiated under the Secretarial oversight of the **QCI**. It is a first-of-its-kind initiative in the world for addressing **PSS issues** in a national context.
 - It aims to facilitate dialogue between core public and private stakeholders on how to maximize the sustainable development benefits and market access opportunities.
- **United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS):**
 - UNFSS, is a platform that aims to promote the use of **voluntary sustainability standards (VSS)** for achieving [sustainable development goals \(SDGs\)](#).
 - **UNFSS is coordinated by five UN agencies:**
 - [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#), [International Trade Centre \(ITC\)](#), [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development \(UNCTAD\)](#), [United Nations Environment Programme \(UN Environment\)](#), [United Nations Industrial Development Organization \(UNIDO\)](#).
 - UNFSS produces reports, organizes events, and provides technical assistance on VSS-related issues.
- **India Good Agricultural Practices (IndG.AP.):**
 - IndG.AP, is a **certification scheme developed by the QCI** to promote the production of safe and quality agricultural products in India.
 - IndG.AP. covers various aspects of farming such as soil, water, crop health, environmental protection, worker welfare, and food safety.
- **GLOBAL Good Agricultural Practices (GLOBALG.A.P.):**
 - It is an internationally recognized standard that ensures quality management, safety, and traceability in the field of growing plants, vegetables, tubers, fruits, poultry, cattle, and aquatic products.
- **National Technical Working Group (NTWG):**
 - The NTWG is a group that bridges the **gap between global and local issues**. They identify adaptation and application challenges at a national level and develop national interpretation guidelines (NIGs). NIGs support cost-effective audit processes around the world.

What is the Quality Council of India (QCI)?

- **About:**
 - QCI is a **non-profit organization** registered under the **Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860**.
 - It was jointly established by the **Government of India** and the Indian Industry represented by the three premier industry associations, Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in 1997.
 - QCI was established to **promote and enhance quality standards across various sectors in India**.
 - It is responsible for accreditation, certification, and quality promotion in India.
 - The **DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce** and Industry was designated as the nodal point for all matters connected with quality and QCI to structure and help implement the Cabinet decision.
- **Members:**
 - QCI is governed by a Council of **39 members including the Chairperson and Secretary General**.
 - **Chairperson (Nominated by the Prime Minister of India)**.
 - The Council has an equal representation of Government, Industry and other Stakeholders.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. With reference to 'Quality Council of India (QCI)', consider the following statements: (2017)

1. QCI was set up jointly by the Government of India and the Indian Industry.
2. Chairman of QCI is appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendations of the industry to the Government.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (c)

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