

## EC Partners

The Ministry of Industry  
(Syria)

Syrian Enterprise and  
Business Centre  
(SEBC)

## Facts and Figures

- EC contribution:  
€12 million
- Duration: 2008-2011



EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION

# Economic Development

## Defining standards, increasing quality and improving safety in Syria

Quality and Standards Programme (QP)

*"The Quality Programme will help Syria's progress towards WTO membership, improve its business relationships and enhance trade with the EU and neighbouring countries. Within Syria, it will improve the safety, quality and overall competitiveness of local products."*

Daniela Clejanu, Quality Programme  
Team Leader



## Context

In its transition to a social market economy, the Syrian government is developing a stronger quality-related policy and legal framework in line with international standards. This will not only improve the quality of Syrian products in the domestic market, but also facilitate and increase exports.

## Objectives

- Improve quality infrastructure
- Help increase trade with the EU and internationally
- Support the harmonisation of technical legislation
- Raise the quality of Syrian products to an internationally competitive level.

## Impact

- Syrian laboratories received equipment and training: six testing & three calibration laboratories are now internationally accredited, with 20 more to follow.
- Syrian authorities received assistance in the process of legal harmonisation in technical regulations, accreditation, market surveillance and in the drafting of the National Standardisation Policy & Strategy, to help it meet WTO requirements, and also in the establishment of a National Quality Award based on the European model.
- Study visits have been made to the national standards bodies in Romania and Austria.

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### Quality and Standards Programme (QP)

EuropeAid

#### Communicating with stakeholders

The Syrian Arab Standards and Metrology Organisation (SASMO) is working to create a 'quality culture' in Syria in order to increase and facilitate exports, explains **Mr. Wafeek Al Jourdi**, Director of SASMO. *"It is difficult to convince industrialists and businessmen to work more on their products in order to compete with those from other countries. But exporting to open markets is a different picture from the domestic market - either you have quality products or you can't compete. We are thus currently working to raise this culture amongst Syrians."*

SASMO is the national agency responsible, amongst other activities, for developing national standards based on international best practices and accrediting Syrian products. The EU-funded Quality Programme has been working with the Agency since July 2009 to build staff capacities and improve the standardisation system.

Beyond the trainings, market studies, rehabilitation of laboratories, support establishing Syrian guidelines for standards and help getting ISO accreditation, the Quality Programme has also organised two study visits to the Romanian and Austrian Standards bodies. Here participants learnt, amongst other things, how to communicate with stakeholders, recalls **Ms. Tharah Koubaily**, member of the Standardisation Team at SASMO and participant in the study tours.

Indeed, an important part of the work of the Quality Programme has been to help establish a communication strategy for SASMO. *"One of the most important things is to change the current mentality. We need more openness and a greater adaptability to new ideas and new proposals in people who were originally unable to accept new ideas and ways of working"*, explains Mr. Wafeek.

*"The strategy is based on making stakeholders more aware of the standardization process and its benefits, be they economic, social or environmental"*, further elaborates **Nesreen al-Khammash**, a Quality Programme expert working with the standardization team. *"It also explains how to be part of, and influence the process. This will ultimately serve the needs of the community and society."*

Mr. Wafeek summarises: *"If a businessman bases his product on recognised national standards, he will later save time and avoid difficulties with customs. He will also improve his capacity to compete internationally. It's a difficult process, but a tangible one."*