




GHANA
STANDARDS
AUTHORITY



UK International
Development

Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

A photograph of a smiling Black woman with her hair in braids, wearing a white lab coat over a red and black patterned top. She is sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a laboratory or office setting.

Unlocking trade, empowering institutions, and protecting consumers in Ghana

The Standards Partnership programme

A BSI case study

Strengthening Ghana's national quality infrastructure through the Standards Partnership programme

The Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), headquartered in Accra, serves as the national standards body responsible for the development, publication, and promotion of standards across Ghana. As the guardian of product quality and safety for domestic and export markets, GSA plays a vital role in supporting Ghana's aspirations for economic growth and global competitiveness.

In 2022, Ghana became the first country to pilot the Standards Partnership (SP) programme. The SP is a collaboration between the UK's Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and BSI (British Standards Institution), and is a sister programme to the Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN).

The programme supports countries in strengthening their National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) to facilitate sustainable development and increase participation in international trade, particularly within the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), where Ghana holds a leading role.

The challenge: Building a culture of quality for international trade

Ghana's ambition to become a major business and manufacturing hub in Africa hinges on its ability to produce goods and services that meet international standards. The AfCFTA agreement presents a unique opportunity, projected to increase intra-African trade by over 50%. However, to seize this opportunity, Ghana needed to establish the right regulatory frameworks and technical capabilities.

Key challenges included:

- Establishing a culture of quality across Ghana's industries and value chains.
- Ensuring goods produced meet international safety and performance benchmarks.
- Building institutional capacity within GSA and expanding its reach across Ghana.
- Providing robust training for the team at GSA, including regulatory inspectors and technical staff.
- Supporting SMEs and producers in meeting export certification requirements.

Addressing these needs was essential not only for boosting trade but also to build long-term trust and confidence in Ghana's business environment.



The solution: A strategic partnership for quality infrastructure development

The launch of the SP in Ghana marked the start of a comprehensive, multi-year effort to build GSA's capabilities and modernize its infrastructure. Activities under the programme were broad-ranging and deeply strategic, including:

- **Capacity building for global alignment:**
To position GSA as a regional leader in quality assurance, staff were trained in key international standards: ISO 9001 (Quality), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), ISO 45001 (Occupational Health & Safety), ISO 17020 (Inspection Bodies), and ISO 17025 (Laboratory Competence). This was foundational for harmonizing GSA's operations with international norms and meeting obligations under trade agreements like AfCFTA.
- **Train-the-trainer for skills development:**
A national training programme for trading standards inspectors (TSIs) used a cascading,

train-the-trainer model, designed to reduce future reliance on external consultants, promote cost-efficiency, and embed ongoing learning within GSA. The model created a pipeline of internal trainers and regional champions for regulatory enforcement.

- **Integrated systems to improve performance:**
GSA implemented a single integrated management system across departments to reduce fragmentation, improve accountability, and strengthen decision-making. This strategic move aimed to increase internal efficiency and enable GSA to adapt more rapidly to emerging regulatory challenges.
- **Laboratory strengthening for public health and trade facilitation:**
The programme focused on improving laboratory systems that are essential for both consumer safety and trade. Investments in method validation, measurement uncertainty, and maintenance protocols enabled GSA to provide more timely, reliable test results, particularly for food safety and environmental health.



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The training we received has transformed how my team and I work. It has been a catalyst for empowerment, instilling confidence, knowing we play a vital role in protecting the public and viewing my profession as a voice for consumers - not just a gatekeeper, but an advocate for safety and quality.

Victor Kwansa,
Supervisor for the TSIs

The solution, continued..

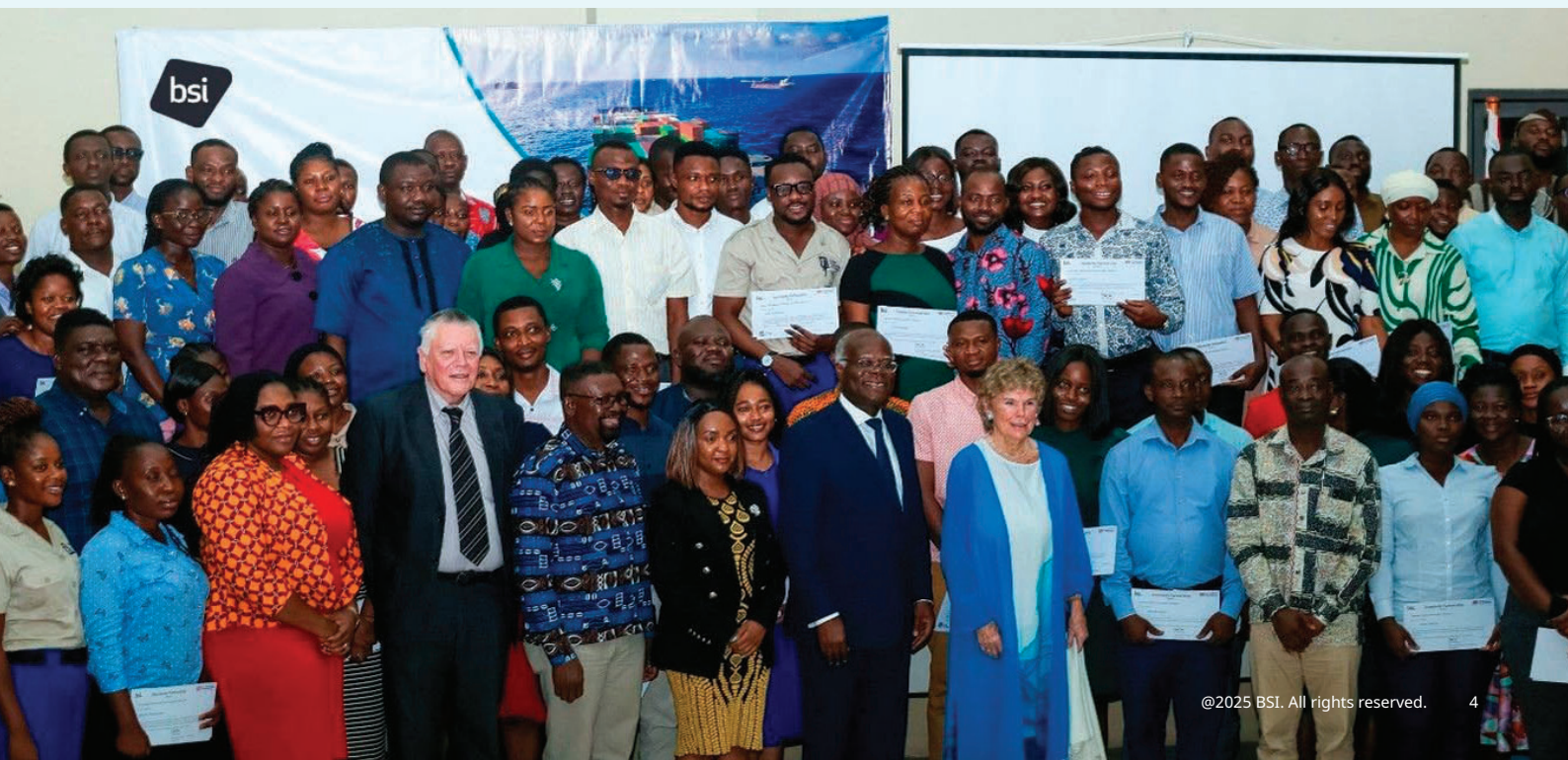
- **Market surveillance for consumer safety:**
Strengthening market surveillance functions was critical for enforcing standards and building regulatory credibility. By training inspectors to target non-compliant products, the programme helped GSA move from reactive enforcement to proactive, risk-based regulation, strengthening consumer protection and demonstrating GSA's authority in the marketplace.
- **Support for SMEs to drive inclusive growth:**
Targeted support was provided to help SMEs tap into new domestic and export markets. This intervention aimed to bridge the gap between informal production and formal certification and included critical food safety training and technical assistance.
- **Increase transparency and trust:**
GSA modernized critical governance documents and trained external chairs of standards committees. These actions were intended to improve stakeholder engagement, standard-setting legitimacy, and the credibility of Ghana's NQI.
- **Decentralization for nationwide impact:**
Recognizing the importance of reach, the programme supported the expansion of GSA's regional presence and trained staff outside Accra in NQI fundamentals. This ensured that quality services would be more accessible to businesses across the country.

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Training and upskilling our inspectors has been one of the most successful outcomes of the Standards Partnership programme. We now have a confident, fully qualified cohort improving business practices, safeguarding public health, and protecting consumers.

Their work is central to building a fair, high-standard trading environment - and many are now training the next generation to combat substandard goods across Ghana.

Jessica Nkansah
Director of Inspectorate, GSA



The impact: Unlocking trade, empowering institutions, and protecting consumers

Between 2022 and 2025, the SP has transformed GSA's capabilities, directly contributing to Ghana's economic development agenda. Key outcomes include:

- **A trained and empowered inspection workforce:** Over 340 TSIs were trained, the first cohort of its kind in Africa. Of these, many became internal trainers under a train-the-trainer model, embedding institutional knowledge and ensuring sustainability. In January 2024, over 120 inspectors were formally recognized at a national ceremony, elevating the professional standing of the inspection function.
- **Improved trade readiness and market access:** GSA's strengthened inspection, testing, and certification capabilities have improved Ghana's ability to meet international requirements. It's supporting exporters in accessing markets under AfCFTA and beyond, reducing barriers to trade.
- **Tackling unsafe goods to safeguard consumers:** GSA's more robust surveillance and enforcement systems have resulted in decisive action against substandard goods. One notable example was

the closure of a non-compliant cement factory - an outcome that reinforced GSA's regulatory authority and set a strong precedent for market accountability.

- **Boosting capacity to protect public health:** Laboratories are now better equipped to deliver reliable, ISO-compliant testing. Staff have been trained in equipment maintenance and calibration, reducing downtime and reliance on international servicing. The revitalization of the metal contaminants laboratory has enabled GSA to conduct accurate mercury analysis in fish, addressing a critical public health concern and supporting food safety.
- **Broader reach through decentralization:** GSA established regional offices and trained over 50 staff in the fundamentals of Ghana's NQI. This has expanded access to certification and consumer protection services in areas beyond Accra, making GSA's services more inclusive and responsive.
- **More resilient, self-sustaining institutions:** The shift to integrated systems, combined with internal capacity-building, has laid the foundation for sustainable institutional performance. Governance improvements and process reforms have positioned GSA to continue delivering quality assurance services long after the conclusion of the SP programme.

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I'm truly delighted by the magnitude of the progress made. This programme has been a transformative force for GSA and Ghana. At GSA, our capacity has grown significantly.

Our workforce has expanded from 900 to 1,200 skilled professionals - and that growth is continuing. Our teams are better equipped to serve the needs of Ghanaian businesses, protect consumers, and ensure products meet international standards.

We're now better positioned to lead in implementing the AfCFTA, promote a culture of quality and enable Ghana to be a competitive player in regional and global markets.



Professor Alex Dodoo Former GSA Director General and ARSO President Emeritus

Looking ahead: Working together for the good of the world

As the SP programme transitions into its next phase, the achievements in Ghana provide a blueprint for success. GSA's pioneering role has left a legacy of institutional strength, empowered professionals, and a robust NQI ready to support the country's economic ambitions.

GSA will continue building on successes, including:

- Mentoring SMEs towards food safety certification.
- Calibration training in metrology.
- Additional support for regional engagement with women-led SMEs.
- Completing further inspectorate training to ensure nationwide coverage.

Key highlights:



1,405

Ghanaians trained, equipping them with the knowledge for success.



82

Workshops delivered.



127

Ghanaian organizations trained, including women-owned SMEs.



14

Key international standards covered in activities.

Conclusion: A model for standardization excellence

The success of the SP programme in Ghana showcases what can be achieved through targeted technical cooperation and shared commitment.

GSA is now better positioned to protect its consumers, support its businesses, and champion a culture of quality that supports sustainable economic growth.

Ghana has not only laid the foundations for a resilient trade ecosystem. It has become a model for standardization excellence across Africa.

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The Standards Partnership has helped lay a strong foundation for prosperity - driven by standards, strengthened by partnership.

Professor Alex Dodoo

Former GSA Director General and ARSO President Emeritus

BSI,
The Acre, 90 Long Acre,
London, WC2E 9RA
United Kingdom
+44 345 080 9000
bsigroup.com

