

## 1. ASC Certification Brings Great Benefits to Catfish Traders

For years, improving the quality of export *Tra* (pangasius) fish products has drawn due attention from relevant authorities and *Tra* fish enterprises. A project coordinated by the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) has opened up a new strategy for improving Vietnamese *Tra* fish quality via supporting local seafood export processing enterprises to achieve Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification.

ASC certification will be granted to enterprises that responsibly raise *Tra* fish, which have minimised their adverse impact on the environment and communities, while ensuring good labour regulations. ASC's CEO Chris Ninnes said, "Aquaculture is the fastest growing food production sector in the world. However, the boom of the industry has caused a substantial impact on the environment and society; so ASC believes that sustainable fish farming activities provide an ideal starting point for entering the world market."

Some representatives from companies that have been certified the ASC shared that this label would create more opportunities when exporting their products to the European Union (EU), increase their presence and export value to the existing markets and help open the door to new markets. ASC-certified products can find markets easily as they prove their products were responsibly sourced.

As by February 2013, Vietnam had 14 companies granted ASC certification for their responsibly farmed pangasius, of which eight companies were certified in late 2012. ASC fish accounted for 10 percent of national farming. The production of ASC certified pangasius is expected to reach 50 percent of Vietnam's total supply by 2015. ([www.vietnambreakingnews.com](http://www.vietnambreakingnews.com), 09.09.13)



## 2. Bio-fuel Use Roadmap

The two most widely used types of bio-fuels are ethanol and biodiesel. Just a brief review, ethanol is an alcohol fuel derived from sugarcane, wheat, corn and biomass, thus including wasted cooking oil. It can be blended with conventional petroleum diesel to improve its octane level resulting in reduced greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, biodiesel is made from natural oils, such as animal fats or vegetable oils. Experts state that the main bio-fuels, ethanol and biodiesel, have a positive effect to the environment. However, each of them has its pros and cons. The utilisation of both ethanol and biodiesel will result to a decrease reliance on foreign conventional fossil fuels and a reduction in harmful and toxic emissions.



In Vietnam, the PetroVietnam Oil Corporation (PV Oil) launched petrol with five percent bio-ethanol content (E5 petrol) into the market for trial sale in August 2010. So far, the sales volume has been modest. There are currently only 3 of more than 10 business hubs

selling E5 petrol including PV Oil, Petec Trading & Investment Corporation (Petec), and the Ho Chi Minh City. One-member Limited Liability Oil & Gas Company Saigon Petro Co. Ltd. (Saigon Petro). A leader of the PV Oil Corporation said two of the three ethanol plants developed by PV Oil in Quang Ngai and Binh Phuoc had begun production in the second quarter of 2012. However, only 10 percent of the products are consumed locally and bio-fuel producers mainly export their products.

In November 2012, the Prime Minister of Vietnam has endorsed the schedule for sales of mixtures of biological and fossil fuels. E5 petrol will be officially sold in major cities and provinces (Hanoi, Haiphong, HCMC, Can Tho, Da Nang, Ba Ria-Vung Tau and Quang Ngai) from December 01, 2014 and available nationwide from December 01, 2015. Meanwhile, gasoline blended with 10 percent bio-ethanol (E10 petrol) will go on sale in these localities from December 01, 2016 and across the country from December 01, 2017.

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### 3. Consumer Affairs Authority in Sri Lanka gets Tough on Labelling

Authorities and consumer rights activists are calling for stronger labeling laws as Sri Lankan consumers are being completely kept in the dark about ingredients of the products they buy.

Apart from smoking cigarette, no other product has been subjected to rigorous labeling laws. Although most Sri Lankan consumers pay for packaging that does not make any sense as labeling laws in the country are toothless, they charge. The absence of adequate labeling laws has created a smokescreen that allows unscrupulous companies to keep mum on the ingredients of their products and escape health impacts.



The adverse effects of sugar, and sweetened drinks were exposed by *The Nation* – a Sri Lankan newspaper. Even milk powder imported from New Zealand was cast in a doubtful light. However, the ball stops there. What is concerning is that consumers in this country are unaware of basic consumer rights and are being taken advantage thereof.

Consumer rights activists assert that internationally accepted basic consumer rights should be strictly enforced in Sri Lanka. According to the Consumer Affairs Authority (CAA), it is tasked with the mission to

“safeguard consumer rights and interests through consumer empowerment, regulation of trade and promotion of healthy competition.”

*The Nation* highlighted the adverse effects of sugar, and how recent researches have validated the toxic nature of sugar. A study published early this year (2013) linked increased consumption of sugar with increased rates of diabetes by examining the data on sugar availability and the rate of diabetes in 175 countries over the past decade. These results were independent of rates of obesity. This study is the closest to obtaining causation, since it’s as technically impossible as “proving” tobacco caused cancers. Therefore, as a first step, it is reasonable to call for swift and rigorous efforts by the CAA to enforce consumer safety and right to information and consumer education with regards to consumer products and services.

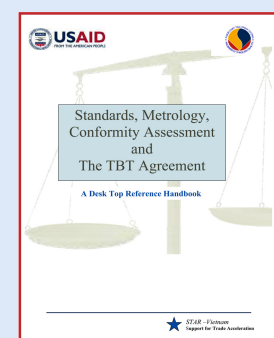
([www.nation.lk](http://www.nation.lk), 07.04.13)

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### 4. Handbook on Standards, Metrology, Conformity Assessment and the TBT Agreement

Trade is crucial for economic growth in developing countries. However, to expand international trade, countries cannot underestimate the importance of adopting and implementing international recognised and accepted metrology, accreditation, standardisation, and quality (MAS-Q) practices. These activities provide a vital link to global trade, market access and export competitiveness as they contribute to consumer confidence in product safety, quality, health and the environment.

Nevertheless, one of the main challenges facing the international trading system is the variation in certification, testing, inspection practices, and



standards used by different countries. Unless trade partners use similar or equivalent standards and conformity assessment procedures and recognise each other's certification results, the costly problem of discriminatory, non-transparent, and unnecessary obstacles to trade will persist. Conformity assessment is the internationally recognized procedure for demonstrating that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled, thus determining compliance.

The importance of standards and conformity assessment in both domestic and international trade was prominently noted in the 1994 Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Agreement recognises that harmonised standards and conformity assessment procedures can expedite or seriously hinder the free flow of goods in international commerce. It also requires that such procedures not be prepared, adopted, or applied with a view to or with the effect of creating unnecessary obstacles to trade.

With a view to increasing awareness and capacity building within the country, the Vietnamese Directorate for Standard and Quality of the Ministry of Science and Technology, with the technical assistance and support of the US Agency for International Development, has developed a handbook on metrology, standards, conformity assessment, and the TBT Agreement. The purpose of this handbook is to provide the reader with a general overview of the importance of MAS-Q as a tool to enhance trade facilitation, market access and export competitiveness in accordance with the WTO TBT Agreement.

To read this handbook, please visit [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADP635.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADP635.pdf).

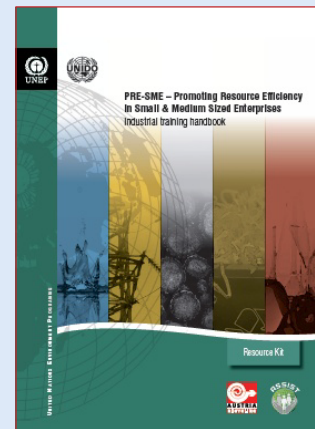
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## 5. Role of Standards: An UNIDO Guide for SMEs

In the globalised marketplace following the creation of the WTO, a key challenge facing developing countries is a lack of national capacity to overcome TBT and to comply with the requirements of agreements on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) conditions, which are now basic prerequisites for market access embedded in the global trading system. The WTO has adopted two important agreements in these areas: the Agreement on TBT and the Agreement on SPS Measures.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), within the framework of a recent project it implemented in the South Asian region, has introduced a guidebook on standards for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The purpose of this guide is to assist SMEs and other interested users to understand how to control product quality.

To read the guidebook, please visit [www.unido.org/fileadmin/media/documents/pdf/tcb\\_role\\_standards.pdf](http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/media/documents/pdf/tcb_role_standards.pdf).

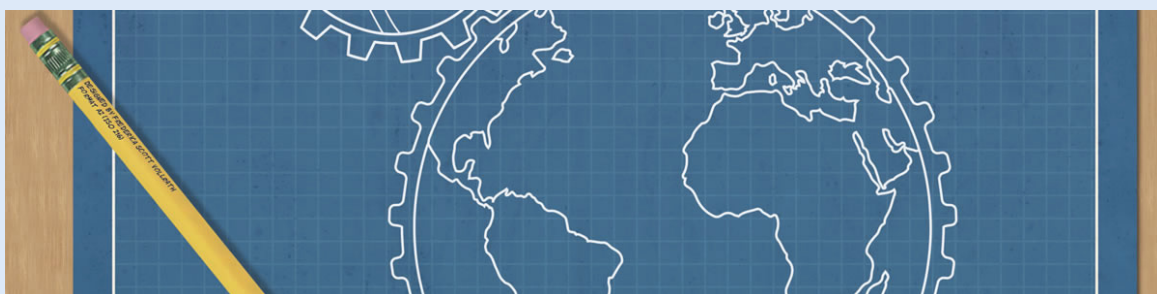


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## 6. 14 October 2013 – The World Standards Day

It has always been a changing world, but the pace of change today is accelerating still further. The international community is facing many new challenges, not least shifting global markets and serious economic issues around the world, as well as continuously evolving ones such as climate change or social responsibility.

In this complex environment, international standards (ISs) are powerful tools to lead positive change by detailing specifications that can open up global markets, create enabling business environments, spur economic growth and help mitigate and adapt to climate change. ISs represent the consensus view of the world's leading experts in industry sectors ranging from energy utilities and energy efficiency to





transportation, management systems, climate change, healthcare, safety and information and communication technology (ICT).

Volunteering their knowledge in service of the public interest, experts in these and many other subjects come together to create standards that share innovation with all the world's countries and so provide business, government and society with a solid platform for positive change.

ISs support rapid economic growth in developing countries by outlining best practices that enable them to avoid "reinventing the wheel". Moreover, they are ensuring that products, services and environments become more accessible to persons with disabilities. They are also applied as tools to help reduce climate change by improving energy efficiency and decreasing waste and greenhouse gas emissions. International standards bodies such as International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), ISO, and ITU provide cohesion to a myriad of national and regional standards; thereby harmonizing global best practices, eliminating technical barriers to trade, and fostering shared socio-economic advance. These benefits are ultimately all passed on to the consumer in the form of greater choice, increased quality and lower prices.

[www.iso.org/iso/world-standards-day2013](http://www.iso.org/iso/world-standards-day2013)

### Stakeholders Engagement in Standard Setting

**T**owards increasing awareness and engaging stakeholders in the standard setting process, a one-day seminar entitled "Stakeholders engagement in the standard setting process" was successfully organised in Hanoi, Vietnam on August 15, 2013 by Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) in cooperation with the Directorate for Standards, Metrology and Quality of Vietnam (Ministry of Science & Technology). About more than 60 participants from academic institutions, universities, industrial associations and media took part in the seminar and discussed actively on the issue. In view of the positive feedbacks received for this event, another seminar on the same subject will be organized in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam for stakeholders from the Southern region of the country to attend in October 2013.

The two events are being organised within the framework of a two-year programme entitled "Trade promotion through standardisation in the South & Southeast Asia regions" (SESA), led by the Swedish Standards Institute with support from Sida, engaging 8 countries, namely Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Vietnam between 2013-2014 for building the capacity of various stakeholders in developing countries with regards to standard development and standard implementation, both at the national, regional and global level.