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QUALITY COUNCIL®
OF INDIA
QCI
Creating an Ecosystem for Quality

PADD

Last-mile access,
First class Quality
FY 23-24

DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION

5th EDITION

The Project Analysis and Documentation Division (PADD) specializes in designing and implementing cutting-edge conformity assessment frameworks, ensuring regulatory compliance and quality excellence for governmental, inter-governmental, regional, and global organizations across diverse sectors.

INSIDE THIS EDITION

From Chairperson's Desk

Dear Friends,

It is my distinct privilege to introduce this fifth edition of PADD Insights. This newsletter is a reflection of the tireless efforts and steadfast commitment of the Project Analysis and Documentation Division (PADD) at the Quality Council of India (QCI) toward realizing the vision of a digitally empowered and self-reliant India by 2047.

The theme for this edition, 'Digital Transformation for Viksit Bharat 2047', resonates deeply with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's ambitious vision for a prosperous and inclusive India. PADD has been at the forefront of this transformative journey, actively driving initiatives that leverage digital technologies to enhance quality, foster innovation, and promote sustainability across diverse sectors.

Our journey over the past year has been marked by ground breaking initiatives, from developing robust certification schemes to advancing digital readiness frameworks and cybersecurity systems. Through strategic collaborations and capacity-building programs, we are equipping stakeholders with the tools and expertise needed to excel in a rapidly evolving landscape.

This edition showcases the relentless dedication of the PADD team, whose work continues to set benchmarks in quality and innovation. Their efforts, guided by the visionary leadership of Shri Chakravarthy T. Kannan, Secretary General, QCI, and the expertise of Dr. Manish Pande, Director & Head, PADD, reflect our shared commitment to creating a sustainable, inclusive, and digitally robust future.

I encourage you to delve into the rich content of this newsletter, which offers not only insights into our achievements but also a glimpse into the exciting possibilities that lie ahead. Together, let us continue this journey with a renewed focus on excellence and innovation, driving India toward the realization of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Warm Regards,

Shri Jaxay Shah
Chairperson, QCI

From Secretary General's Desk

Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to present the fifth edition the Project Analysis and Documentation Division (PADD) Insights, themes 'Digital Transformation for Viksit Bharat 2047.' This newsletter captures the essence of PADD's contribution to India's journey toward becoming a digitally empowered and globally competitive nation. Digital transformation is at the heart of this vision, as emphasized by our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, who envisions a future where technology empowers every citizen, bridges gaps, and drives inclusive growth. As we move towards Viksit Bharat 2047, digital transformation is not just about adopting technology—it is about reshaping governance, industries, and society to create a more connected, efficient, and resilient nation.

The PAD Division , a key pillar of the Quality Council of India (QCI), has consistently been at the forefront of this digital revolution. In FY 23 – 24, PADD has accelerated pivotal initiatives that strengthen the country's leadership in digital innovation, regulatory excellence, and global best practices:

- **Empowering MSMEs through Digital Readiness:** The launch of the DigiReady Certification (DRC) in partnership with ONDC has emerged as a pivotal tool in equipping businesses, particularly MS MEs, with the necessary digital capabilities to thrive in the digital economy.

- **Strengthening Cybersecurity and Digital Compliance:** With the increasing reliance on digital systems, PADD has played a crucial role in developing cybersecurity frameworks and voluntary sustainability standards, ensuring businesses adopt responsible and ethical digital governance.

- **Capacity Building for a Digital Future:** Through specialized training programs with MAURITAS, PADD has extended India's expertise in accreditation and digital conformity assessment, strengthening global trust in India's quality infrastructure.

- **Forging International Collaborations:** PADD's partnerships with organizations like UNIDO and ARSO have enhanced India's standing in the global quality ecosystem, driving innovation and shaping digital regulatory frameworks.

These achievements stand as a testament to the visionary leadership of Shri Jaxay Shah, Chairperson, QCI, whose guidance continues to inspire us, and the unwavering dedication of the PADD team, led by Dr. Manish Pande. Their commitment to excellence remains a driving force in India's digital transformation journey.

This edition reflects our collective efforts and unwavering commitment to advancing national priorities. As you explore its insights, I invite you to reflect on the transformative power of digital technologies in shaping India's future. With every framework, certification, and initiative, we are not just embracing the digital revolution—we are leading it.

Warm Regards,

**Shri Chakravarthy T. Kannan
Secretary-General, Quality Council of India**

From the Director's Desk

Welcome to the fifth edition of PADD Insights! The past year has been an enriching one for PADD, with our team passionately contributing to key projects and initiatives. This edition of the newsletter highlights the breadth of our division's achievements and provides insights into ongoing schemes and innovative projects. The theme for this edition is 'Digital Transformation for Viksit Bharat 2047', reflecting our commitment to driving India's digital journey toward a prosperous and inclusive future.

Digital transformation is reshaping every sector, and PADD is at the forefront of this shift, actively engaging in initiatives that contribute to the government's vision for a self-reliant, digitally empowered India by 2047. From developing robust cybersecurity frameworks to advancing certification schemes, we are ensuring that the quality and standards we uphold serve as cornerstones of this digital evolution.

This progress would not have been possible without the visionary leadership of Shri Jaxay Shah, Chairperson, and Shri Chakravarthy T. Kannan, Secretary General of QCI. Their unwavering guidance has been instrumental in steering PADD's journey toward excellence and innovation.

In this edition, we have an exclusive interview with Shri Kunal Gupta, VP, Technology, Magicpin who shares his thoughts on the role of digital transformation in shaping the future of India. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to him for his valuable insights.

Moreover, PADD continues to lead the way in designing and implementing certification schemes across various sectors, supporting digital readiness and capacity building across India. Our work spans diverse areas, from cybersecurity to sustainable development, ensuring that our nation's digital growth is inclusive and sustainable.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our team, stakeholders, and the leadership at QCI for their unwavering support. Together, we are building resilient systems, creating innovative solutions, and fostering a culture of excellence that aligns with the a spirations of a progressive India.

As you explore this edition, I invite you to join us on this journey of transformation and share your valuable feedback.

Warm Regards,

Dr. Manish Pande
Director & Head, PADD

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fifth edition of PADD Insights – newsletter of the Project Analysis and Documentation Division (PADD), Quality Council of India. It is my privilege to present this edition as we shine a light on the theme, "Digital Transformation for Viksit Bharat 2047".

This year has been pivotal for PADD, with achievements spanning key areas such as sustainability, digital readiness, cybersecurity, and heritage preservation. As a division, we take pride in delivering impactful projects that contribute to India's development goals. Through this newsletter, we aim to capture the essence of our initiatives and the stories behind them.

This progress has been made possible through the visionary leadership of Shri Jaxay Shah, Chairperson; Shri Chakravarthy T. Kannan, Secretary General; and Dr. Manish Pande, Director & Head, PADD. Their guidance has been a source of inspiration, helping us navigate challenges and achieve milestones.

This edition not only offers updates on ongoing projects but also introduces readers to our latest advancements, including the DigiReady Certification initiative and the development of cybersecurity frameworks.

As we chart a course toward a digitally empowered nation, I am inspired by the dedication of our team and the trust of our stakeholders. Together, we are breaking barriers and driving change that aligns with our vision of a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous India.

Your feedback and suggestions are invaluable as we strive to make PADD Insights more engaging and informative. Please feel free to connect with us to share your thoughts or ideas for future editions.

Happy Reading!

Warm Regards,

Arushi Lohani
Associate Manager, PADD

Behind the Impact:
Meet the Minds of Team PADD

Dr. Manish Pande,
Director & Head

Ms. Hema Kashyap,
Assistant Director

Ms. Albi Abraham
Assistant Director

Dr. Priyanka Sarkar,
Project Manager

Ms. Kamla Joshi,
Administrative Officer

Mr. Shivesh Sharma,
Accreditation Officer

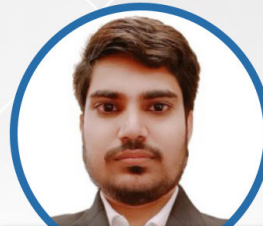**Mr. Mangalaram Jangaiah,**
Associate Manager

Mr. Guruvayurappan S,
Associate Manager

Ms. Arushi Lohani,
Associate Manager

Ms. Mamta Shah,
Analyst

Mr. Surjeet,
Coordinator

ABOUT PROJECT ANALYSIS AND DOCUMENTATION DIVISION (PADD)

Project Analysis and Documentation Division (PADD): Pioneering Quality for National and Global Impact

Vision: Delivering quality across sectors by design and development of conformity assessment frameworks leveraging accreditation.

Mission: To steer quality initiatives of regional, national and global relevance towards facilitation of last-mile access to quality products and services.

Objectives: At the core of PADD are a set of values that seeks to achieve the defined mission.

We strive to achieve our mission by focusing on the following objectives:

- Development of conformity assessment frameworks across sectors, in line with international standards and best practices
- Provision of technical support to reguatory ecosystem and industry bodies for effective implementation of national and international initiatives
- Awareness amongst users through large-scale training and capacity building programmes to build capacities in the areas of conformity assessment
- Work cohesively through assimilating innovative approaches and expertise to deliver outcomes and drive quality at the cutting-edge
- Delivering integrated solutions through leading-edge research and dissemination of its result in relevant publication, reports and trade journals
- Multi-stakeholder led initiatives focused on diversified business mix that includes enhancing achievement of sustainable development goals and creating positive societal impact to achieve consensus on conformity assessment solutions for bet ter acceptance

The PAD Division of the Quality Council of India (QCI) serves as a driving force in the design, development, and implementation of voluntary conformity assessment frameworks across various sectors. With a strong commitment to delivering quality and fostering innovation, PADD leads initiatives that support both national and international stakeholders, ranging from governmental ministries to inter-governmental organizations, such as the FAO of the UN, UNFSS, UNCTAD, UNIDO, ARSO, SAARC Agriculture Centre, ICRISAT, ITTO, UNDP, GLOBALG.A.P., IRRI etc.

As an integral part of QCI, PADD's mission is to ensure the highest standards of quality, safety, and sustainability, cutting across diverse sectors including agriculture, healthcare, aviation, cybersecurity, and bio-trade. PADD also actively contributes to sustainable development goals by aligning projects with global best practices and addressing pressing global issues like climate change and social equity.

In this edition, we bring to light some of the Division's most impactful projects, from certification schemes in agriculture and healthcare to digital readiness tools and cybersecurity frameworks, showcasing PADD's enduring commitment to shaping a brighter, more sustainable future.

THEME FOR THE EDITION: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR VIKSIT BHARAT 2047

Unlocking Digital Readiness Across Industries: A Comprehensive Certification Approach

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, businesses are continually adapting to technological advancements to remain

competitive. The DigiReady Certification (DRC) initiative, a collaborative effort between the Quality Council of India (QCI) and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), emerges as a pivotal tool in equipping businesses, particularly MSMEs, with the necessary digital capabilities to thrive in the digital economy.

On February 8, 2024, the DigiReady Certification portal was officially launched, marking a significant stride towards fostering digital inclusion in the MSME sector. At this landmark event, special recognition was given to the successful onboarding of women entrepreneurs and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), in line with the initiative's commitment to empowering all segments of society.

Launch of 'Digi Ready Certification' on 8 Feb 2024

Shri Jaxay Shah, Chairperson, QCI, and Shri Thampy Koshy, MD & CEO, ONDC, have played key roles in spearheading this initiative. As emphasized by Shri Jaxay Shah, the DRC initiative aligns with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of empowering MSMEs and promoting digital transactions as part of the 'Panch Pran' and 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayaas' ethos. By embracing these principles, the DRC aims to build a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, fostering an inclusive and empowered digital economy.

First DRC issued to women entrepreneurs from Bihar & Empowered FPOs of Andhra Pradesh

The DRC portal offers a structured framework that assesses and certifies businesses across sectors, ensuring they meet the digital standards required for engaging in e-commerce. Key components include digital infrastructure, product catalogue management, payment systems, and grievance redressal mechanisms. By leveraging this online self-assessment tool, MSMEs can evaluate their preparedness to seamlessly onboard as sellers on the ONDC platform, thereby expanding their digital capabilities and business potential.

A significant aspect of the DRC initiative lies in its integration of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for seamless verification processes. APIs for GST, Udyam, PAN, Aadhaar, FSSAI, and FDA have been integrated to streamline onboarding, eliminating the need for manual document collection and making it easier for businesses to embrace digital commerce. The portal is also designed to facilitate the onboarding of GeM sellers, thanks to the guidance of the Addl. CEO of GeM.

As of now, over 2,800 entities have been onboarded onto the DRC portal, with more than 740 certificates issued to date. An inventory of certified sellers has been created, connecting them to various Network Partners (NPs) on the ONDC, showcasing the initiative's ability to create success stories and facilitate business growth.

Moreover, DRC offers a user-friendly interface through web and mobile platforms in multiple languages, ensuring accessibility for MSMEs across diverse regions. The inclusion of women entrepreneurs, FPOs, and tribal businesses has been a priority. The first DRC certificate was awarded to women entrepreneurs from Bihar, and FPOs in Andhra Pradesh have also benefited from the program. Additionally, tribal entrepreneurs were registered at Aadhi Mahotsav, demonstrating the initiative's commitment to inclusivity.

The DRC initiative also emphasizes digital hygiene and safety standards. The integration of hygiene ratings ensures that businesses not only meet digital criteria but also adhere to quality and safety standards. This holistic approach guarantees that certified businesses are trustworthy and reliable.

The initiative has garnered support from various stakeholders, including FSSAI, which welcomed the DRC for food vendors and expressed openness to the initiative. QCI has also engaged with state governments, organizations like TRIFED, EPCH, NASVI, and the Directorate of MSMEs, promoting the DRC initiative at events such as Aadhi Mahotsav and Bharat Tex'24.

To further bolster its reach, DRC has developed a capacity-building model in both English and Hindi, with plans to expand the platform's offerings to 12 additional languages. This ensures that businesses across the country, regardless of region or language, can participate and thrive in the digital economy.

In conclusion, the DigiReady Certification (DRC) initiative is a significant stride toward empowering businesses and fostering digital inclusion. By certifying MSMEs' digital readiness and providing them access to platforms like ONDC, the initiative accelerates business growth, innovation, and inclusivity. Through its API-driven, user-friendly portal, and capacity-building programs, DRC ensures that businesses, regardless of their size or sector, are well-equipped to succeed in the digital age.

FEATURE OF THE EDITION

Sh. Kunal Gupta,

Vice President, Technology, Magicpin

Theme: Digital Transformation for Viksit Bharat 2047

Sh. Kunal Gupta, Vice President, Technology at Magicpin, is a key figure in driving digital transformation in India's retail and e-commerce sector. With extensive experience in technology-driven solutions, he has played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between traditional businesses and digital commerce. In this exclusive interview, he shares insights on the evolving landscape of digital transformation, the role of MSMEs, and the significance of initiatives like the Digital Readiness Certification (DRC) by QCI.

1. **Digital Transformation and E-commerce**

    How do you view the current state of digital transformation in India's retail and e-com merce sector? What role do you think local businesses play in this rapidly changing digi tal landscape?

    The digital transformation in India's retail and e-commerce sector is at an inflection point. With widespread internet penetra tion, affordable smartphones, and initiatives like UPI, the landscape has evolved signifi cantly in the past few years.

    The pandemic accelerated this shift, push ing both consumers and businesses to adopt online-first approaches. Today, we see e-commerce giants leveraging technolo gy to enhance customer experience through AI-driven personalization, supply chain opti mization, and seamless payment systems.

    Local businesses play a critical role in this transformation. As a large part of India's re tail still happens in local neighborhoods, these businesses are integral to bridging the gap between online and offline

commerce. Many lcal businesses are adopting hybrid models, such as listing their products on e-comerce platforms while maintaining their physical stores. Initiatives like ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) are also empowering these local businesses and democratizing access to digital tools and resources.

With the increased digital penetration across India, how important do you think it is for MSMEs and local sellers to adopt digital tools for their business operations?

It is essential for MSMEs and local sellers to adopt digital tools to thrive in today's landscape. Digital adoption enables businesses to expand their reach, enhance customer experience, and compete with larger enterprises. As quick commerce gains momentum in India, local businesses must embrace phygital (physical + digital) innovations to remain relevant and future-ready.

2. Magicpin's Role in the Digital Transformation

In what ways is Magicpin helping local businesses bridge the gap between traditional retail methods and the emerging digital eco system?

Indian markets are incredibly diverse, each with its own cultural nuances, making it a complex landscape to navigate. Many neighborhood businesses remain laggards in their digital adoption journey. One of Magicpin's biggest challenges has been to create bespoke integrations tailored to these merchants' needs, enabling them to become discoverable and seamlessly bring their catalog and inventory online.

Magicpin helps retailers grow their business by being their technology partners. We drive offline footfall by gamifying customer engagement through rewards and points. We offer actionable data on customer preferences and sales trends.

3. Synergy Between Magicpin and DRC Initiative:

How does Magicpin perceive the DRC initiative and its role in further accelerating the digitization of MSMEs and local merchants in India's e-commerce ecosystem?

The Digital Readiness Certification (DRC) is a great initiative that addresses critical challenges faced by MSMEs and local sellers in adopting digital tools. The API-based integrations for GST, Udhyam, PAN, and FSSAI verifications simplify onboarding, eliminating paperwork and enabling sellers to transition seamlessly into the digital economy. The stamp of certification enhances credibility, builds trust among customers and partners, and opens doors to broader market opportunities via platforms like ONDC. By providing a self-assessment tool, sellers can evaluate their readiness across key areas like catalog management, digital infrastructure, payments, and grievance handling.

For magicpin, the DRC complements its mission to empower local businesses by bridging the gap between traditional practices and the digital ecosystem. Certified sellers will benefit from streamlined processes, operational efficiency, and increased visibility. With access to verified seller data, NPs like magicpin can optimize their onboarding and integration processes, saving time and resources. This enables smoother workflows, faster merchant activation, and stronger partnerships across the network.

4. Future of E-commerce and Local Merchants

What advice would you give to local retailers or MSMEs who are yet to embrace digital transformation?

The future of local retail in India over the next 5-10 years looks incredibly promising, with initiatives like ONDC and DRC driving

the transformation. Local retailers will increasingly adopt phygital (physical + digital) models, blending the convenience of e-commerce with the authenticity of in-store experiences. Tools like Magicpin will empower MSMEs by enhancing their digital capabilities, enabling them to reach broader audiences and compete effectively with larger players.

To local retailers and MSMEs yet to embrace digital transformation, my advice is simple: start now to stay relevant. Begin by adopting essential tools like digital payment systems and catalog management, and build phygital experiences for your customers.

This interview highlights the pivotal role of digital transformation in shaping the future of India's retail sector. As India moves toward Viksit Bharat 2047, initiatives like the Digital Readiness Certification (DRC) and industry leaders like Magicpin will play a crucial role in empowering local businesses and fostering a digitally inclusive economy.

ACTIVITIES SPOTLIGHT

Shaping a Sustainable Future: Advancing Global Trade Through Voluntary Standards

The Third International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards (ICSTS), jointly organized by the Quality Council of India (QCI) and the United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS), took place in New Delhi from November 2-3, 2023. The event brought together over 400 participants, including representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, UN bodies, international organizations, and various industry sectors. The convention served as a platform to discuss the pivotal role of sustainability standards in advancing global sustainability goals, with a particular focus on voluntary sustainability standards (VSS).

Sustainability standards have emerged as a central governance tool for Global Value Chains (GVCs), particularly in export-oriented economies. However, their adoption presents challenges for developing countries, potentially excluding exporters unable to meet compliance. As India strives to become a global manufacturing leader, it must demonstrate a commitment to sustainable trade and ease of doing business to better integrate its industries into global value chains.

The convention also aligned with India's G20 Presidency theme, 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or 'One Earth, One Family, One Future,' emphasizing the importance of international collaboration in promoting sustainability within global value chains. The convention aimed to capture diverse perspectives on sustainable trade and foster a quality-driven approach toward building an Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

The India National Platform on Private Sustainability Standards (INPPSS) is the first national initiative to address challenges related to private sustainability standards (PSS). Launched in March 2016 with the support of UNFSS, the platform facilitates dialogue between public and private stakeholders on the adoption of VSS for market access opportunities.

Over the years, INPPSS has developed sustainability schemes across various sectors, entering international cooperation agreements with standards bodies in Brazil, Mexico, and Africa. The 3rd ICSTS aimed to create a multi-stakeholder, intergovernmental dialogue forum on sustainability standards, promoting the role of VSS in achieving sustainable development.

The convention began with a welcome address by Mr. Jaxay Shah, Chairperson of QCI, who emphasized the core principles of sustainability and the need for resilient global value chains. He highlighted the creation of the India National Platform on Private Sustainability Standards and the country's potential leadership in adopting inclusive PSS.

Dr. Harsha Vardhana Singh, Chair of the India PSS Platform and Former Deputy Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), delivered the keynote address. He raised concerns about the misuse of sustainability standards to restrict market access and called for dialogue and capacity-building efforts to promote equitable adoption of PSS.

In a guest address, Mr. Pedro Manuel Moreno, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, underscored the importance of VSS in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He acknowledged the challenges faced by stakeholders in developing countries, including high compliance costs and regulatory fragmentation, and highlighted the need for national platforms to address these issues.

Guest Address Mr. Pedro Manuel Moreno_DSG_UNCTAD

The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Mr. Rajesh Maheshwari, who, as Secretary General of QCI at the time, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the participants, panelists, and supporters for their invaluable contributions to the success of the convention.

Several key ceremonies were held during the convention, marking important milestones in the journey toward sustainable trade and standards:

Launch of UNIDO White Paper: Dr. Virpi Stucki, Chief of the Division of Fair Production, Sustainability Standards, and Trade at UNIDO, unveiled the white paper titled 'Sustainable Supply Chains: Solutions for step-by-step integration of industrializing countries into sustainable value chains.' The paper emphasizes the need for collective action, systemic support, and sustainable business models to foster inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

Launch of UNIDO White Paper

Benchmarking Recognition Letter from GLOBALG.A.P.: The India Good Agricultural Practices (IndG.A.P.) Certification Scheme, initiated by QCI, was benchmarked to GLOBALG.A.P., ensuring international recognition and market access for Indian produce. Dr. Manish Pande, Director and Head of PADD, QCI, received the recognition letter from Mr. Ignacio Antequera of GLOBALG.A.P., signifying the successful completion of the benchmarking process.

Declaration of Cooperation with the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO): QCI signed a cooperation agreement with ARSO to collaborate on sustainability standards, including the EcoMark Africa initiative. This partnership aims to promote sustainability across sectors in Africa, with a focus on traditional medicine and achieving "zero defects and zero effects" in production processes.

Declaration of Cooperation in Sustainability Standards Ecosystem with ARSO

Throughout the convention, various panels explored critical topics related to sustainable trade and standards. One of the key discussions focused on "Sustainability Standards as a Tool for Advancing Global Sustainability Goals." The panel highlighted how VSS can drive sustainable practices in global value chains, with inputs from experts such as Dr. Ralf Peters from UNCTAD and Dr. Axel Marx from the University of Leuven.

Another significant panel addressed the impact of due diligence regulations on global trade, particularly in the context of European Union legislation. Experts,

including Mr. Joseph Wozniak from the International Trade Centre (ITC), discussed the importance of stakeholder collaboration and the role of technology in ensuring compliance with these regulations.

A fireside chat on "Strengthening Global Sustainability Governance through VSS" featured industry leaders who emphasized the need for collaborative governance and financial mechanisms to support sustainability initiatives. Additionally, discussions on sustainability in agriculture, forestry, and public procurement underscored the importance of integrating sustainable practices across sectors.

The convention concluded with a set of r ecommendations aimed at advancing sustainability through the adoption of VSS and other measures. Key recommendations included:

1. **Strengthening Voluntary Sustainability Standards:** Promoting the development and ac cessibility of VSS to ensure transparency and inclusivity for small-scale producers and MS MEs.
2. **Enhancing Stakeholder Collaboration:** Fos tering partnerships between governments, businesses, and international organizations to address sustainability challenges.
3. **Leveraging Technology for Sustainability:** Utilizing advanced technologies such as IoT and data analytics to enhance transparency and efficiency in supply chains.
4. **Supporting Sustainable Public Procurement:** Encouraging governments to prioritize eco-labelled and certified products in their procurement processes.
5. **Promoting Circular Economy Principles:** Em phasizing the importance of reusing, recy cling, and regenerating materials to mini mize waste.

The convention identified several key collaborations to drive sustainability efforts. QCI will collaborate with UNIDO on the development of the Sustainable Supply Chain Rapid Scan Toolbox and work closely with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) to enhance the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS). QCI will also support the African Organization for

Standardization (ARSO) in benchmarking AfricaGAP to promote sustainable agricultural practices across Africa.

The Third International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards successfully highlighted the importance of sustainability standards in fostering global development. By promoting VSS, enhancing stakeholder collaboration, and leveraging technology, the convention underscored the critical role of standards in driving sustainable trade and ensuring inclusive growth. The event marked a significant milestone in advancing the global sustainability agenda, setting the stage for continued collaboration and progress in the years to come.

Promoting Inclusive Tourism: Accessibility Mapping of 145 ASI Monuments Across India

In a significant stride toward promoting inclusivity and enhancing the visitor experience, the Project Analysis and Documentation Division (PADD) of the Quality Council of India (QCI) successfully conducted the Accessibility Mapping and Star Rating of 143 monuments under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). This initiative is a testament to the commitment of both QCI and ASI to create accessible spaces for visitors of all abilities, contributing to the broader goal of making India's cultural heritage more inclusive and accessible to all.

The project aims to evaluate the accessibility of ASI-protected monuments using a comprehensive checklist based on the principles of Universal Design, ensuring compliance with accessibility standards outlined in national and international guidelines. It also seeks to propose policy recommendations to enhance accessibility features across these heritage sites, thereby promoting inclusive tourism.

The assessment involves mapping tangible (physical infrastructure) and intangible (communication and human assistance) accessibility components, ultimately providing star ratings for each monument. The findings and recommendations from this project offer actionable insights to bridge gaps in accessibility and create monuments that are universally accessible.

In the second phase of the project, PADD covered 143 ASI monuments across India, including iconic sites such as forts, temples, mosques, caves, and stepwells. A revised checklist categorized accessibility features into five broad areas, assessing elements like community infrastructure, entrance areas, signage, human assistance, and emergency provisions. The star rating system incentivized improvements and recognized monuments excelling in creating accessible environments.

Access Audit conducted at Sarnath circle, Agra circle under Accessibility and Mapping Project on 14-17 September 2023, U.P

Key deliverables include:

- Submission of a comprehensive report and dashboard detailing the accessibility mapping of 143 monuments.
- Development of customized recommendations for each monument, addressing both immediate improvements and long-term accessibility plans.
- Implementation of competency mapping of traditional craftsmen and a proposed Certification Scheme for Recognition of Artisans, fostering heritage preservation and promoting inclusivity.

As part of the initiative, the project also emphasized inclusive tourism, ensuring that historical monuments are accessible to visitors with disabilities and those with special needs. The accessibility mapping exercise highlights the importance of preserving heritage while accommodating diverse visitors, allowing everyone to experience India's rich cultural legacy.

The initiative contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), underscoring the role of inclusive tourism in driving sustainable economic growth.

Moving forward, QCI and ASI will continue to collaborate on Phase III, with a focus on enhancing accessibility features based on the findings from the previous phases. This includes improving digital access, sensory pathways, and human assistance at various sites. The project also opens up new avenues for leveraging the Certification Scheme for Artisans, ensuring that traditional craftsmanship is recognized and sustained through inclusive heritage conservation efforts.

In conclusion, the Accessibility Mapping of ASI monuments represents a milestone in inclusive tourism and heritage preservation. By creating accessible experiences for all, QCI and ASI are paving the way for a future where India's cultural heritage is not only preserved but also celebrated by everyone, regardless of their abilities.

ACCESSIBILITY MAPPING AND STAR RATING OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS (ASI) A Report
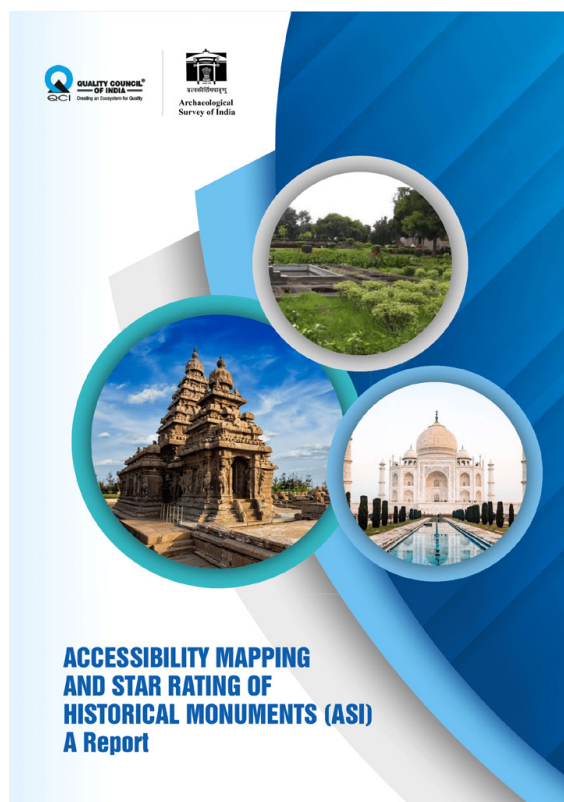
Development of Conformity Assessment System and Resources for Protection of Critical Information Infrastructure (CII)

In today's digital age, cybersecurity has emerged as a critical necessity for protecting the backbone of national infrastructure. The ever-evolving cyber threats, from malware to sophisticated cyber-attacks, have highlighted the need for a robust system to safeguard critical sectors. In this context, the Project Analysis and Documentation Division (PADD) of the Quality Council of India (QCI) has been at the forefront, contributing to the development of comprehensive cybersecurity frameworks aimed at safeguarding Critical Information Infrastructure (CII).

A significant milestone in these efforts was achieved on 31st March 2024, during the 4th Steering Committee Meeting of the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) in New Delhi. Chaired by the Former National Cyber Security Coordinator, PMO, Government of India, the meeting culminated in the approval of seven pivotal schemes for the cybersecurity sector. These schemes represent a major step forward in bolstering national cybersecurity measures and enhancing the resilience of critical infrastructure against emerging cyber threats.

Key Highlights of the Approved Schemes

The seven schemes developed in collaboration with NCIIPC focus on addressing the three pillars of cybersecurity—processes, people, and technology—within Critical Sector Entities (CSEs). The goal is to create a resilient cybersecurity framework that can withstand the ever-growing cyber threat landscape. The schemes include:

1. Certification Scheme for Cyber Security Management Systems (CSMS): A comprehensive framework designed to certify CSEs based on their cybersecurity management systems. This scheme ensures that organizations implement robust cybersecurity measures aligned with national regulations and global best practices.

2. Inspection Scheme for Information Technology and Industrial Control Systems (IT/ICS): This inspection scheme covers the assessment of IT and ICS systems to ensure they meet the stringent security requirements necessary for critical information infrastructure.

3. Personnel Certification Scheme for Cyber Security Professionals: This scheme focuses on certifying cybersecurity professionals based on their skills and expertise, ensuring that the workforce is equipped to handle and mitigate advanced cyber threats.

4. Accreditation Scheme for IT/ICS Consultancy Organzations (COs): Designed to certify IT and ICS consultancy organizations, this scheme ensures that entities providing cybersecurity consultancy services meet national standards and can deliver high-quality advisory services to CSEs.

5. Accreditation Scheme for IT/ICS Training Bodies (TBs): This scheme accredits training bodies that provide cybersecurity education and training. It emphasizes continuous upskilling and capacity building to keep pace with the rapidly evolving cybersecurity landscape.

6. Conformity Assessment Framework (CAF) for CSEs: PADD, in collaboration with NCIIPC, developed a rigorous Conformity Assessment Framework that ensures CSEs comply with cybersecurity requirements, focusing on critical processes, personnel, and technology.

7. Supplementary and Additional Technical Criteria for CSEs: These criteria provide additional layers of cybersecurity requirements, enhancing the existing frameworks for protecting CSEs from emerging and sophisticated cyber threats.

PADD has played a pivotal role in developing these schemes, ensuring that they align with national legal mandates and global cybersecurity standards. By leveraging a multi-stakeholder consultation process, PADD has ensured that the frameworks are inclusive, adaptable, and resilient. The schemes not only enhance cybersecurity measures but also contribute to capacity building by standardizing the skills and certifications required for cybersecurity professionals and consultancy organizations.

As the nation moves towards a more digital future, with growing reliance on digital

infrastructure, the protection of Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) becomes paramount. The newly approved schemes underscore the government's commitment to ensuring that the country's most critical sectors, including power generation, banking, telecommunications, and government services, remain secure from cyber threats.

In the coming months, PADD will continue its efforts to implement these schemes, supporting organizations in achieving cyber resilience through robust certification and training frameworks. This initiative also aligns with India's broader goals of Digital Transformation for Viksit Bharat 2047, ensuring a safe and secure digital future for the country.

The development of the Conformity Assessment System for the Protection of CII, driven by PADD and NCIIPC, marks a significant milestone in India's cybersecurity landscape. The approval of the seven schemes is a testament to the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders to safeguard the nation's critical infrastructure. By fostering a skilled and certified cybersecurity workforce and building resilience into the country's CSEs, India is taking vital steps toward a more secure and robust digital future.

SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

A. VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

1. Voluntary Certification Scheme for Medicinal Plant Produce (VCS-MPP)

i. QCI, at the behest of National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPB), Government of India, has developed and designed a voluntary certification scheme for medicinal plant produce to introduce Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Field Collection Practices (GFCP) for medicinal plants.

ii. A total of 100 trainings conducted Pan-India

with 6000+ participants since the inception of the project.

iii. Developed Package of Practices (PoPs) for 95 species; demonstration plots and certified in 30 locations.

Gramachethana Farmer Producers Co. Ltd. was certified under VCSMPP as Level – 1, Option – 2, GAP on 1 July 2024

GFCP training workshop at Shillong, Meghalaya on 23 April 2024

2. AYUSH Mark Scheme

i. At the behest of the then Department of AYUSH, a voluntary product certification scheme for AYUSH products to enhance consumer confidence was designed by the Quality Council of India. The Scheme has two levels of certification: Standard and Premium.

ii. Till date a total of 5657 products are under the AYUSH Mark with a total of 70 manufacturers certified under the scheme

iii. PADD representative participated in the Second International Conference & Exhibition (IACE) at Dubai, 13-15 January 2024.

HoD, PADD participated in Second International Conference & Exhibition (IACE) at Dubai, 13-15 January 2024

iv. Head PADD addresses the AYUSH Knowledge Session, World Food India on "Revolutionizing Nutrition: Ayush Food Innovations for a Sustainable World," focusing on quality, compliance, and the role of AYUSH AAHAR that may be integrated into AYUSH Mark Scheme.

Revolutionizing Nutrition: Head PADD addresses the World Food India on AYUSH AAHAR and its role in sustainable nutrition under the AYUSH Mark Scheme.

3. **Voluntary Certification Scheme for Traditional Community Healthcare Providers (VCS-TCHP)**

   i. The Scheme offers a uniform and standardized assessment framework for TCHPs who manage various streams of health services (jaundice, common ailments, poisonous bites, bone setting, joint pains, and traditional birth attendants) based on their traditional knowledge, experience, and expertise.

   ii. A total of 2503 TCHPs certified under the Scheme till date with the Government of Chhattisgarh adding to endorsing of the scheme in addition to the earlier states – Goa and Tamil Nadu.

4. **India Good Agricultural Practices (IndG.A.P.) Certification Scheme**

   i. An initiative focused on enhancing food safety, produce quality, and resource optimization in agriculture, ensuring better market access and improved livelihoods for small and marginal farmers through adherence to globally recognized standards.

   ii. Finalized National Interpretation Guidelines for Risk Assessment on Social Practice (GRASP) and IFA, with ongoing support from GLOBALG.A.P.

   iii. Head PADD has been nominated as the Chair of the panel on Good Agriculture Practices, FAD22/ Panel I to upgrade the IS 15930 (Part 1): 2011 Requirements for Good Agricultural Practices – IndiaGap.

   iv. The Division successfully conducted a 3-day virtual training program on Quality Management Systems (QMS), Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS), and ISO 19011 elements for IndG.A.P./VCSMPP compliance from 17th to 19th July 2024.

   v. The training saw active participation from stakeholders representing 5 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and professionals from Aditi Organic Certification Body, Andhra Pradesh State Seed Certification Authority, Osmania University, Spice Board, Humane Society, and TQ Cert.

   vi. The Division also conducted a 3-day virtual training program for 118 officers from the State Agriculture Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, on Quality Management Systems (QMS), Food Safety Management Systems

(FSMS), and ISO 19011 elements for IndGAP compliance. The sessions were held on two occasions: from August 28th to 30th, 2024, and from September 9th to 11th, 2024.

PADD finalized National Interpretation Guidelines for Risk Assessment on Social Practice (GRASP) and IFA
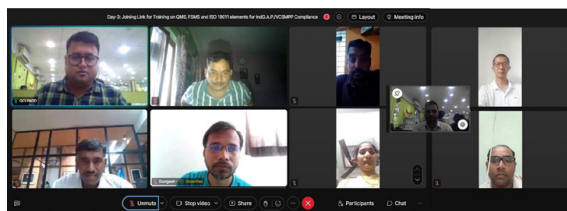
PADD, QCI successfully conducted a 3-day virtual training program on QMS, FSMS, & ISO 19011 elements for IndG.A.P./VCSMPP compliance from 17th to 19th July 2024

5. Certification Scheme for UAS (CSUAS)

i. QCI at the behest of Ministry of Civil Aviation launched the Certification Scheme for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).

ii. The Scheme has been notified by Ministry of Civil Aviation in Gazette on January 26, 2022.

iii. National Test House, Ghaziabad takes lead as first government body to receive approval as a Certification Body from QCI on 22nd December 2023 to start Type Certification of UAS.

iv. A total of 97 Type Certificates (TC) have been issue since the launch of the Scheme.

v. PADD representative joined the fireside chat on Drone Regulation at the Natioal Conference on Drones organised by

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in association with the Ministry of Civil Aviation on 16 April 2024.

National Test House, Ghaziabad takes lead as first government body to receive approval as a CB from QCI on 22nd December 2023

HoD, PADD discusses ISO 17067 for Ease of Doing Business and leveraging accreditation for global market access at the National Conference on Drones by @CII_INFRA.

Division conducted Hygiene Rating Auditor Training on 13 November 2024

6. Recognition of Hygiene Rating Audit Agencies (HRAA)

i. PADD developed a scheme for approval of Hygiene Rating Audit Agencies (HRAAs)with an aim to help consumers make informed decisions regarding food outlets where they prefer to eat by ecouraging businesses to improve hygiene and safety standards. The reognised agency will verify compliance with food hygiene and safety procedures laid down by the Food Safety and Stadards Authority of India (FSSAI).

ii. A total of 62233 Hygiene Rating Scheme (HRS) audits conducted till date by these HRAAs.

iii. 8 HRAA auditors training cum examinations were held during the reporting period.

## 7. Indian Certification of Medical Devices (IC MED) Scheme

i. To fill the then regulatory vacuum in quality certification space for medical devices in the country, the Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMED) in collaboration with the Quality Council of India (QCI) has rolled out a voluntary quality certification scheme for medical devices.

ii. The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC), an autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India is now approved as a Certification Body under the ICMED Scheme.

iii. While the ICMED was focused on QMS, QCI has upgraded the scheme to ICMED 13485 Plus that now offers certification to the individual medical devices based on their product performance.

iv. ICMED 13485 Plus scheme now has aproved Zenith Quality Assessors Pvt. Ltd.

B. PROJECTS

1. IndG.A.P. certification for spices under STDF

i. The Spices Board has granted QCI a project under the STDF, to enhance the competitiveness of Indian spices in international markets. This initiative involves the implementation of best practices and followed by comprehensive audits and to ensure compliance.

ii. HoD, PADD addressed the session at the International Seminar on Spices (ISSK 2024) organised by Kerala Agricultural University on "Elements and Global Recognition of IndG.A.P.: Conformity Assessment System for Accessing Global Markets.
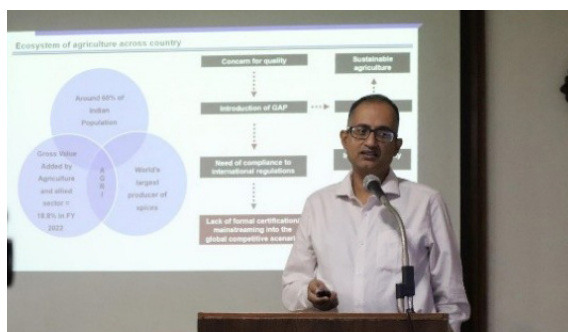
HoD, PADD at ISSK 2024: Discussing IndG.A.P. for Global Market Access

2. Research study on categorization of work areas and competency mapping of traditional craftsmen

i. Project awarded by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Ministry of Culture to undertake a research study on catgorisation of work areas and comptency mapping of Traditional Craftsmen of India.

ii. Key Informant interviews and FGDSs conducted with stone artisans and lime and mortar artisans at Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikari and Deeg palace covering stone work, In - lay work, dome restoration, lakhori brick work and jali work.

iii. Research Study report submitted to Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) detailing the activities undertaken as per the scope of the project.

ASI_ Research Study Project_FGDs conducted at Taj Mahal on 13th Feb 2024

C. NGCMA GLP Cell

i. National Good Laboratory Practices Compliance Monitoring Authority (NGCMA) entered into an MoU with the Quality Council of India on December 31, 2013 for the effective implementation of Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) certification programme. PADD assists the GLP program of the NGCMA.

ii. Assisted 11 GLP Inspections, 1 Training and 1 Brainstorming meeting in the reporting period, 1 Verification Inspection, 1 Extension in Scope Inspection, 2 Recertification Inspection, 4 Surveillance Cum Extension in Scope In spection, 2 Surveillance Inspection and 1 Pre Inspection.

Refresher Training Course for GLP Inspectors
January 30 & 31, 2024

D.NEW INITIATIVES – Business development

1. **Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme:**

   i. QCI is one of the members of Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council.

   ii. QCI serving as the knowledge partner for the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) in promoting and piloting the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS), developing conformity assessment frameworks, and building the capacity of certification bodies.

   iii. QCI has inked MoU with IIFM, Bhopal on 5 August, 2024 to advance Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme – PRAMAAN, owned by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

   iv. QCI has taken part in two of its sentisation workshop in Jaipur to address the needs of handicraft exporters and in Guwahati to address the needs of the private industry.

   v. QCI represents itself in the IFWC Council and the technical committee constituted under it.

QCI inked MoU with IIFM, Bhopal on 5 August, 2024 to advance Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme – PRAMAAN, owned by MoEF&CC

HoD, PADD addressed the session at the Multi-Sectoral Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (PRAMAAN) under the Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) Program

Visit to farmers field to understand the Tree Outside Forest (ToF) Plantation under IFWCS

2. Conformity Assessment Framework to build Digital Competencies:

A project grant received from National e-Governance Division (NeGD) for the design and development of Conformity Assessment Framework to build Digital Competencies of government officials.

These initiatives reflect PADD's commitment to promoting sustainable practices, enhancing digital competencies, and empowering various stakeholders through targeted training and certification programs.

Thank you for your continued support!

PADD is evolving, and there's so much more on the horizon. In the upcoming months, we're excited to introduce training workshops, webinars, new focus areas, and innovative initiatives.

Here's your chance to feature in our next edition of PADD-Insights!

At PADD, we've been actively engaging with the evolving landscape of cybersecurity and policymaking. Our next edition will focus on the theme: **Strengthening Policy Frameworks and Regulations for a Resilient Cyber Infrastructure in Viksit Bharat.**

We invite thought leaders, policymakers, and experts to contribute insights on how robust cybersecurity policies can shape the future of governance and digital resilience. Please send your contributions to **padd_info@qcin.org**, with a copy to **manish.pande@qcin.org**, by April 15, 2025.

We're excited to hear your thoughts and showcase the incredible work happening at PADD!

Head Office:

Institution of Engineers Building, ll Floor, 2- Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi - 770002, India

Divisional Address:

Indian Council for Child Welfare, 2nd Floor, 4, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi - 2, India

For any queries, write to:

Ms. Kamla Joshi - **kamla@qcin.org**

Facebook: **@QualityCouncilofIndia**
Twitter: **@QualityCouncil / @PADD_QCI**
Linkdeln: **https://in.linkedin.com/in/quality-council-of-india-02076988**