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Quality Council of India (QCI)

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A body the government doesn't own accredits the hospitals and labs the government relies on.



A pathology lab accredited by NABL, one of QCI's five boards. NABL accredits testing and calibration labs. Photo: CC BY 4.0.

01 Set UpSet up jointly by government and industry.
02 FundingIt funds itself, not the government.
03 ChairmanThe PM picks the Chairman, on industry's advice.
04 Five BoardsNABCB, NABET, NABH, NABL, NBQP.

QCI
: Quality Council of India. An autonomous non-profit society, registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

NABL
: A QCI board. It accredits Indian testing and calibration labs.

NABH

A QCI board. It accredits Indian hospitals, since 2006.

From a Small Society to a National Quality Push

QCI began as a small accreditation society. Three decades later, it runs a nationwide quality push, reaching MSMEs, hospitals, and schools.

What Are the Key Milestones?

- **Founding:** QCI is registered as an autonomous, non-profit society, under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- **2006:** QCI sets up NABH, its board that accredits hospitals.
- **2016:** QCI launches ZED Certification, under Make in India.
- **Feb 2024:** QCI launches DigiReady Certification, with the Open Network for Digital Commerce.
- **24 Dec 2025:** QCI announces next-generation quality reforms, including the Q Mark and Quality Setu initiatives.
- **23 Feb 2026:** QCI and DPIIT hold the first National Quality Conclave, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- **9 Jul 2026:** QCI and NSIC sign a five-year MoU, to strengthen quality and market access for MSMEs.

> **Quick check 1.** QCI was registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Set Up Jointly by Government and Industry

- QCI is an autonomous, non-profit society. It was registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

- It was set up jointly, by the Government of India and Indian industry.
- Industry was represented by CII, FICCI, and ASSOCHAM.

Administrative Control, Funding, and Five Boards

- QCI works under a central government department, called DPIIT. This sits in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- A 38-member Governing Body runs QCI. It gives government, industry, and other groups an equal say.
- The Chairman of QCI is appointed by the Prime Minister, on the recommendation of industry to the government.
- QCI is not funded by the government. It runs as a self-sustaining body, funded through its own fees and services.
- QCI works through five accreditation boards: NABCB, NABET, NABH, NABL, and the National Board for Quality Promotion.

Watch this trap: QCI is not a government department, and it is not government-funded. It is a self-sustaining society, set up jointly with industry.

> **Quick check 2.** QCI is directly funded by the Government of India. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What Each Accreditation Board Does

- **NABL:** It accredits testing and calibration labs, and links them to global bodies, like ILAC and APLAC.
- **NABH:** It accredits hospitals and other healthcare providers, across India. It was set up in 2006.
- **NABET:** It accredits schools and vocational training providers, and assesses their teaching standards.
- **ZED Certification:** It rates small factories, on quality and on how clean they run. It launched in 2016, under Make in India.
- **DigiReady Certification:** Checks whether a small business is ready to sell online. It launched in February 2024, with the Open Network for Digital Commerce.



The QCI logo on display at a National Quality Conclave in New Delhi. Photo: Government Open Data License – India.

> **Quick check 3.** NABH accredits testing and calibration laboratories. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

The Netherlands Model

- QCI's model borrows from the Netherlands. There, one outside group ran the country's accreditation work.
- That group had state support, but the state did not own it. India copied this idea for its own use.

Authority Rests on Trust, Not Law

- QCI isn't a government department. So its authority rests on trust, not law.
- Businesses and hospitals choose to seek its accreditation. They do this to prove quality to customers and regulators.
- QCI's five boards work independently, each within its own domain.
- Policy and oversight still stay centralised, through the shared Governing Body.
- See MSMEs and Industrial Policy for the wider policy landscape QCI's accreditation work fits into.

> **Quick check 4.** Businesses and hospitals are legally required to seek QCI accreditation. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Exam Point of View

UPSC CSP 2017 — QCI's Setup and Chairman Appointment

> **Quick check 5.** QCI's Chairman is appointed by the Prime Minister, on industry's recommendation. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Current Affairs

Next-Generation Quality Reforms

- On 24 December 2025, QCI announced a set of next-generation quality reforms. This came ahead of India's "Viksit Bharat 2047" vision.
- It unveiled "Q Mark – Desh ka Haq," a QR-coded quality mark. This lets citizens verify a lab, hospital, or MSME, and helps eliminate fake certificates.
- It also launched Quality Setu, an online help-desk for complaints and feedback. It announced a Quality Passport too, to help Indian products access export markets.
- Plans for 2026 include training 1 lakh MSMEs and Self-Help Groups under ODOP, and skilling 5,000 laboratory personnel.

QCOs are a separate tool, issued under the BIS Act. See QCO Rollback 2025-26.

The First National Quality Conclave

- QCI and DPIIT held the first National Quality Conclave, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 23 February 2026.

- Union Minister Piyush Goyal spoke there. He named “zero defect, zero effect” and equal opportunity as key pillars of India’s growth story.
- He urged sectors like textiles, leather, and pharma, to focus on process improvement and workforce skilling.

A New Pact With NSIC

- QCI and the National Small Industries Corporation signed a five-year MoU, on 9 July 2026.
- It aims to strengthen quality, competitiveness, and market access, for MSMEs.
- The pact links QCI’s ZED Certification with NSIC’s MSME Global Mart, TEAM Initiative, and Single Point Registration Scheme.
- A Joint Coordination Committee will guide the rollout. It has members from both organisations, and meets every quarter.
- Must Know QCI is a self-funded, non-profit society. Government and industry set it up jointly. It is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and it now runs five accreditation boards.
- Good to Know NABL, NABH, and NABET cover labs, hospitals, and education. ZED and DigiReady cover MSME manufacturing and e-commerce readiness.
- Current Affairs The 2026 Q Mark, Quality Setu, and Quality Passport initiatives extend QCI’s reach, alongside a new five-year MoU with NSIC.

Q: When was QCI set up, and under what law?

A: It was registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Q: Who funds QCI?

A: QCI is self-sustaining. It is not funded by the government.

Q: Which board accredits hospitals?

A: NABH, the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers.

Q: What did QCI sign with NSIC in July 2026?

A: A five-year MoU, to strengthen quality and market access for MSMEs.

Test Yourself

Practice MCQs

1. In what year was the Quality Council of India (QCI) registered as an autonomous, non-profit society?

A. 2006

B. 1996

C. 1988

D. 2016

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.** QCI was registered in 1996, under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. ↑ Q1

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2
3. **False.** ↑ 3
4. **False.** ↑ 4
5. **False.** ↑ 5

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