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# The Gendered Impact of Standards

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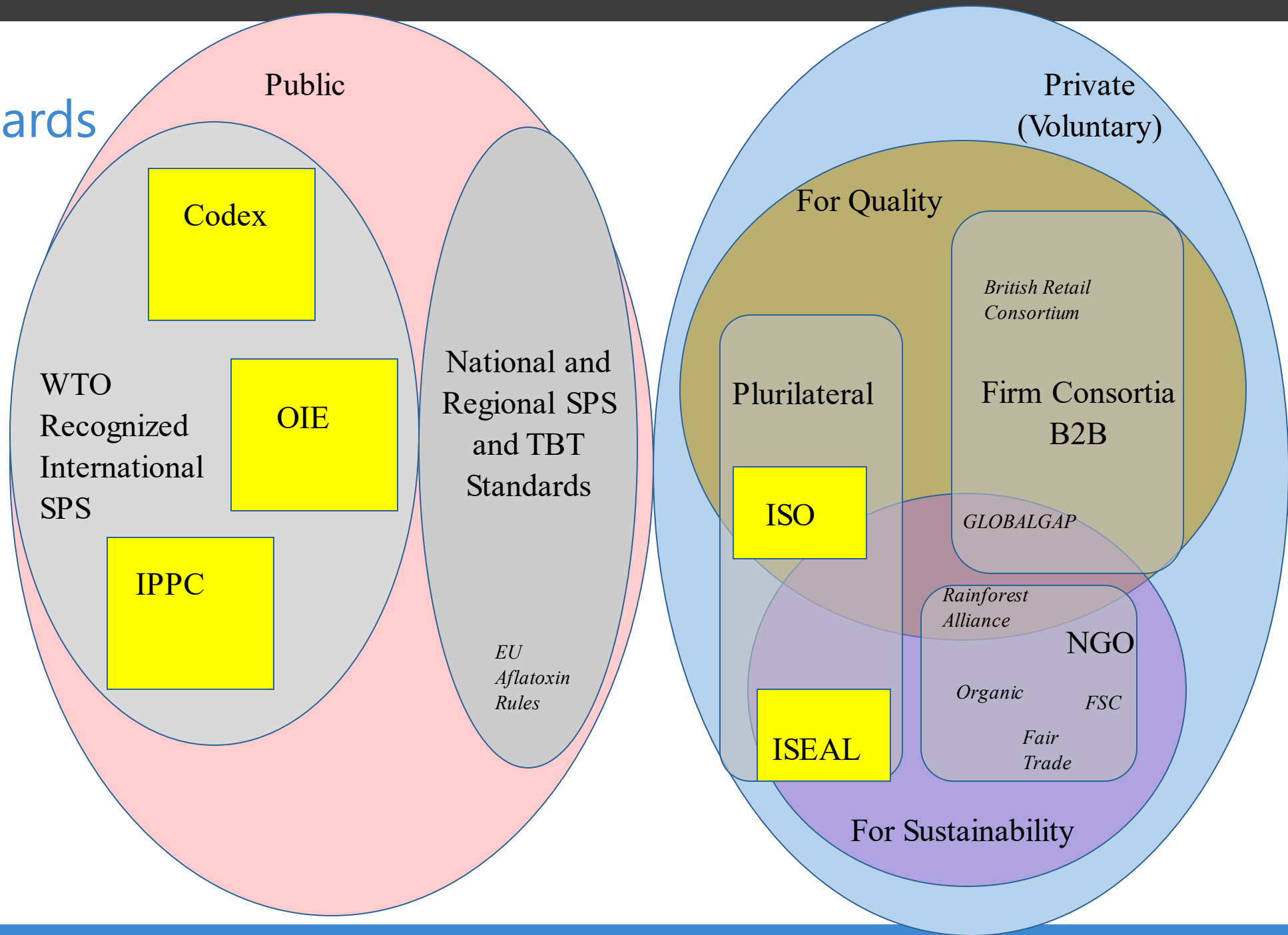
# International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) Programme of Work on Standards

- About ICTSD
  - Geneva-based not-for-profit organisation that conducts policy-oriented research and holds dialogues to advance sustainable development through trade-related policy-making
- Reporting on standards since 1996 through *Bridges* periodicals
- Programmatic work fostering inclusive economic transformation
- Two recent projects on standards and sustainable development:
  - Private Sustainability Standards, Trade and Sustainable Development (2017): 3 papers
  - Gender, Standards and Trade (2018): 3 papers

## ICTSD's Ongoing Work on Gender, Standards and Trade

- Research part of ICTSD project “New Thinking on Trade and Gender”
- Funded by Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia
- Current research on standards, gender and trade:
  - SPS, gender and trade
  - Voluntary sustainability standards, gender and trade
  - Standards, gender and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Being consolidated into a background paper on gender, standards and trade for WTO/WB Global Report on Trade and Gender
- Complemented by regional engagement (dialogues, dissemination)

# A World of Standards



## Standards Impact on Women as Producers (1)

- High costs of compliance
- Difficulty accessing resources for compliance (e.g. information, finance)
- May lack skills required to benefit from standards (e.g. literacy, numeracy)
- Risk of exclusion from standard-governed global value chains (GVCs), or
- Changes in women's position in GVCs



# Impact of SPS Measures on South Asian Shrimp Sector



## Standards Impact on Women as Producers (2)

- Adoption may improve women's access to land, credit, technology
- Positive effects on health, safety, education
- Increase in workload disproportionately affects women
- Some positive impacts on hired labour
- Opportunities for ongoing upgrading in GVCs to improve livelihoods



# Standards Impact on Women as Consumers, Caregivers, and Citizens

- As consumers:
  - safety of food, cosmetics, medicines, cars, bikes
- As mothers, wives and caregivers:
  - some VSS provide for childcare
  - Some evidence of reduced domestic violence
  - Improved household dynamics, inc. increase female decision-making
- As citizens:
  - Membership in producer organizations boosts voice, collective action
  - Can facilitate power over production management decisions



# Insights from ICTSD research on Gender, Standards and Trade

- Standards have gendered impacts
- Need women's voices in standards setting, documents & organization
- Gender-sensitive technical assistance and measurement can boost progress towards SDG5
- Trade policy-makers can help through gender-sensitive SPS, TBT, government procurement rules
- Options for mainstreaming gender in standard-setting organizations

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**Thank you**



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[www.ictsd.org](http://www.ictsd.org)