

South–East Europe

Direct Beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia–Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244/1999), Montenegro, and Serbia;

Indirect Beneficiaries/Supporters: Croatia, Greece, Slovenia, and Turkey

Promotion of regional cooperation in South East Europe in the field of quality infrastructure

Summary of the Evaluation Report

Project Data

Project No.:	2006.2039.3
PTB No.:	FV 95211
Amount of the German Contribution:	800.000 EURO
Period of current Phase:	12/09 – 11/12
Total Period:	9 years
Evaluation Period:	12/06 – 11/12)
Type of Evaluation:	Mid–term review
PTB Working Group:	Q.51
Responsible Project Coordinator:	Stefanie Reichertz
Evaluator:	Uwe Weihert

This report was elaborated by an independent evaluator for the PTB. It only does reflect the evaluator's opinions and conclusions.

Project Description

Since the collapse of the former Soviet Union and severe regional armed conflicts, an important part of the region of South East Europe (SEE) has experienced a profound process of transformation concentrating mainly on reconstruction and macroeconomic stabilization. Without exception, all SEE-countries strive to participate in the benefits emanating from the opportunities offered by the common market of the EU. Some are already members, while others wish to become candidates for future integration. In either way the challenge lies in the compliance with European laws, directives, norms and regulation in order to be granted the desired market access. In that respect, a functioning quality infrastructure becomes a key area for the EU-integration.

In this context the project "Promotion of regional cooperation in South East Europe in the field of quality infrastructure" has been operating since the end of 2006 (1.phase 2006-2009, 2. phase 2009-2012). Through its orientation towards the areas of accreditation and metrology the project's intention is to facilitate actively the EU-integration of the participating countries. Its regional networking approach seeks to promote mutual learning, information exchange and establish a more efficient use of given technical capacities, ideally leading to a certain division of labor within the SEE quality infrastructure.

Assessment of the project

From an overall perspective the project displays a coherent concept, mixing classical and innovative elements in its implementation strategy. Some qualitative weaknesses in the system of objectives and indicators are made up by a very good overall performance with respect to the set of DAC-criteria.

Concept and Impact chain

Several key elements compose the profile of the project.

- The *regional approach* strives not only for efficiency in implementation, but aspires to establish regional networking solutions in order to overcome the SEEs national budget constraints in developing a full-fledged QI-system of their own vis-à-vis while attending to a restricted market for QI-demand. Cross-border sharing QI-knowledge and resources is more easily developed within a regional approach.
- The *focus on contributing to the EU-Integration* allows making use of the energy of change the SEE countries have around this major development aim.
- By *concentrating on the meso level*, that is, the institutional level as main intervention area the project took a realistic approach toward implementation.
- A clear cut *QI-technical orientation* left other issues in the background ground, but served the interests and needs of the QI-institutions best during the first phases.
- From the methodical perspective the project concept is dominated by a *capacity development approach*, which focuses primarily on improving the level of competencies of the QI-personnel of the national organizations in metrology and accreditation and through that the level of performance of the institutions.
- Within the capacity development approach and as a particularly effective way to foster regional cooperation the project concept has integrated the modality of *triangular coopera-*

tion, taking advantage of the existing heterogeneity in QI development in the region. Through this modality the more advanced participating countries contribute actively by hosting events and bringing in their expertise in favor of the less advanced countries.

The concept is embedded in a logic and realistic impact chain, typical for the effects of QI services, and which connects the activities of the project with its objective and the aspired development goals.

Relevance

The issue of quality infrastructure is rarely directly addressed in strategy documents of the different SEE countries. The high relevance of the project derives specially from the unanimously shared development priority to join the EU as a member state or the thorough exploration of its markets for those that are already members. Both aspirations can only be made reality through a functioning QI-system as fulfillment of EU directives and regulations is a *conditio-sine-qua-non*. At the same time the project is strengthening primarily nationally recognized institutions, operating under mandates sustained by national legislation.

Effectiveness

The contents of the project's indicators cover achievements regarding technical performance, intensified network participation and improvements in the level of effective coordination of the QI institutions in accreditation and metrology. All indicators will be met until the end of the current phase, which evidences the project's good level effectiveness.

Development policy impacts

The impact logic at the level of development goals reads as follows: market access ⇒ improved competitiveness ⇒ fulfilled conditions for the EU accession ⇒ employment and income generation ⇒ reduction of poverty. The contribution of the project to these effects through strengthening the competencies of the regional QI system can be regarded as realistic.

Efficiency

Several aspects contribute to the high level performance concerning the project's efficiency. As a regionally driven project its fundamental implementation philosophy is based on the exchange of experience, joint learning, networking, cross-border utilization of services and therefore the sharing of resources. The triangular implementation modality makes additional resources available through the commitments of stronger partner countries, hosting training and meeting events and making available their expertise in specific areas. Close coordination and a certain division of labor with other donor initiatives bring additional gains and avoid unnecessary duplications. Last but not least, PTB's concept to coach development initiatives without locally stationed long-term technical personnel adds decisively to the project's high efficiency.

Sustainability

Through the combination of several elements, the project is achieving good results in terms of sustainability. On one side, it is the project's clear contribution to high ranking development priorities of the SEE countries which create a genuine interest in integrating the knowledge and the competencies generated through the offered activities. This is additionally reinforced by anchoring these competencies within the pertinent national QI –authorities. The increasing institutionalization of regional networking approaches adds to the sustainability of the project activities.

Overall assessment

(1) criterion	(2) assessment of crite- rion	(3) weighting of criterion	(4) = (2)x (3) weighted Assess- ment
1) relevance	1	3	3
2) effectiveness	2	2	4
3) Impact	2	2	4
4) efficiency	1	3	3
5) sustainability	1	2	2
Mean of weighted criteria 1- 5			1

Recommendations

- (1) From a strategic perspective it is suggested to use the third phase to consolidate, enrich and anchor the gradually evolving culture of cooperation. In order to enhance this process the integration of new media should be considered. All the hereafter mentioned suggested options from improvement should be carried out in a way to contribute and add value to the development of a regional cooperation culture.
- (2) A stronger impact orientation of the necessary new set of objectives and indicators for the up-coming final project phase can be taken advantage of to further spur the initiated visioning process within the EURAMET / WELMEC Focus Group and carry it beyond the currently formulated Regional Strategy Paper for Metrology (Vision 2015).
- (3) Along this spirit of vision and cooperation culture the evaluation mission suggests to amplify the scope of training subjects beyond the typical technical topics of accreditation and metrology. The organizations of both fields are confronted with increasing dynamism of their activities which will further augment as their countries draw closer to the European market. This implies challenges as growing organizations will face the need for knowledge in strategy building, management, communication and M&E. The momentum of their own change process will speed up and know-how on learning and information systems becomes essential to be able to adapt to a fast changing environment. Their role as advisors to national authorities will become more demanding in the process of economic and ecological development and require new competencies. Hence these issues should be picked up in the capacity development approach of the project.
- (4) The ongoing process of institutionalization can be further enriched by providing knowledge on cooperation management like additional cooperation formats, the harmonization of cross-border arrangements, the construction of networking strategies, the use

and the contents of codes of conducts, etc. to allow the QI institutions to further develop their cooperation network and networking modalities.

- (5) In the same direction goes the proposal to document the existing steering structure with its rules and procedures in order to create a point of reference for future cooperation opportunities with other donors.
- (6) The need to define new indicators for the final phase is an opportunity to improve the existing impact monitoring system and implement it in cooperation with the partner institutions. The latter will enable them to draw enhance their M&E-knowledge in favor of their own monitoring needs. The impact information provided can at the same time be used to enhance the visibility of the networking initiatives within the QI community and vis-à-vis national authorities.
- (7) As a final suggestion, basic knowledge management activities should be undertaken to safeguard relevant learning experiences from the implementation process and draw good practice conclusions useful for the networking process. This line of action would also allow imparting basic knowledge on the systematization of learning within interested partner institutions.



Imprint

Published by

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