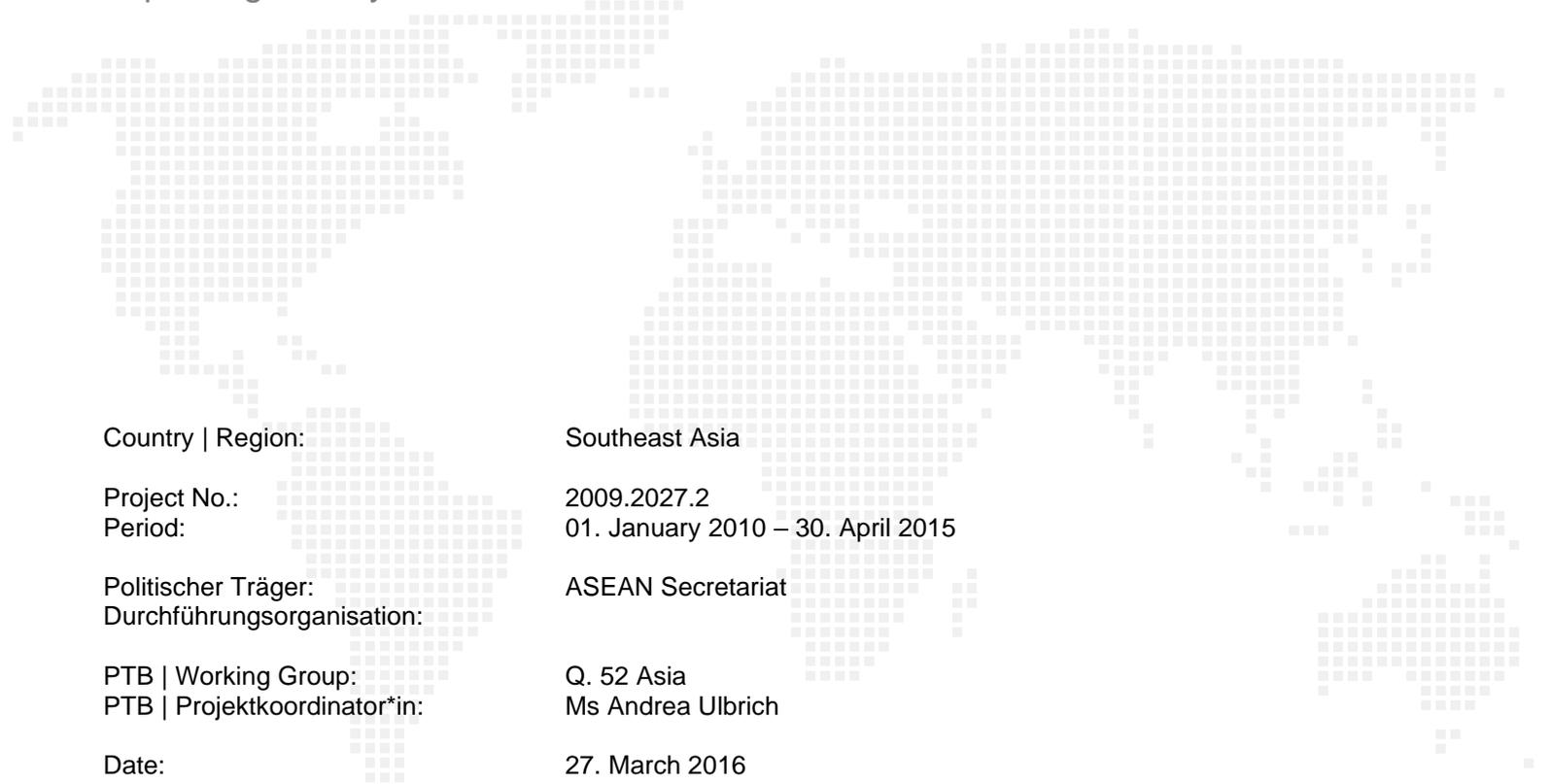


# EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Key evaluator: Ms. Suzana Lange  
Technical evaluator: Dr Manfred Kochsiek and  
Mr. Wolfgang Breidenstein

## Improving Quality Infrastructure in ASEAN



Country | Region: Southeast Asia  
Project No.: 2009.2027.2  
Period: 01. January 2010 – 30. April 2015  
Politischer Träger: ASEAN Secretariat  
Durchführungsorganisation:  
PTB | Working Group: Q. 52 Asia  
PTB | Projektkoordinator\*in: Ms Andrea Ulbrich  
Date: 27. March 2016

This evaluation is an independent assessment. The content represents the view of the reviewer and does not have to agree with the view of PTB.

## Abbreviations

<b>ACCSQ</b>	ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality
<b>AEC</b>	ASEAN Economic Community
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of South East Asian Nations
<b>AMS</b>	ASEAN Member State
<b>BMZ</b>	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>CLM</b>	Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>QI</b>	Quality Infrastructure
<b>WG</b>	Working Group

## 1. Project Description

The evaluation concerns the project „Improving Quality Infrastructure in ASEAN“, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The first project, with a funding amount of EUR 1.5 million and a project duration of three years, started in January 2010. It was prolonged first until April 2014, and then again until April 30th, 2015.

The lead executing agency for the project is the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. The primary implementing partner is the ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality (ACCSQ), and its related bodies, the Working Group on Standards and Mutual Recognition Arrangements (WG 1), the Working Group on Conformity Assessment (WG 2), and the Working Group on Legal Metrology (WG 3). To a lesser extent, selected ACCSQ Product Working Groups were also supported by the cooperation. ASEAN Member States are: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The target groups of the project are producers and consumers demanding services from the Quality Infrastructure (QI) institutions in the ASEAN Member States.

The ASEAN Member States committed to creating an ASEAN single market and production base (AEC) by December 31st, 2015 to stimulate economic development via the consolidation of intraregional trade and international competitiveness. In 2007, the ASEAN Member States adopted the AEC Blueprint 2015, a central strategy document defining priorities to transform ASEAN into a single market and production base. Measures for the reduction of non-tariff barriers to trade are listed among the priorities in this AEC Blueprint. Therein is stated a need for harmonization of technical rules and standards with international standards and the establishment of uniform testing and certification procedures.

In the less developed countries Cambodia, Laos PDR and Myanmar (CLM), there is a lack of a quality infrastructure (QI), e.g. in metrology, testing, quality management and standardization, and inadequate structures for accreditation and certification to offer demand-oriented services for industry. In the more developed countries, individual QI components have been created which are partly internationally recognized but not well coordinated yet.

One of the biggest challenges for ASEAN is the heterogeneity of its members. There is a risk that the less developed countries will not be able to benefit from the regional cooperation as much as the more developed ASEAN Member States. In response to this concern, ASEAN created the Initiative for ASEAN Integration in 2000, which aims to reduce regional disparities.

The objective of the project „Improving Quality Infrastructure in ASEAN encompasses two goals, one on the regional level and one on the national level: “ACCSQ's policy and strategy, as well as its institutional work, fulfil the requirements of the regional economic integration process; Quality Infrastructure institutions are improving their performance.”

From 2010 - April 2015, four indicators were defined in the BMZ offer.

1. ASEAN QI-relevant policy and strategy papers are adapted to modified framework conditions and meet the requirements placed on the development of a demand-oriented QI.
2. The annual plans of the relevant ASEAN bodies are oriented on the QI-relevant policy and strategy papers and their implementation is regularly observed.
3. The range of the QI services which are internationally recognized has increased.
4. The needs of industry are increasingly considered at the institutional level and for the elaboration of business plans or business models for the QI sector.

To support ASEAN in reaching its goals, the project combined support activities on the regional level (guidelines, networking, exchange of good practices, harmonization, strategy consulting) with specific support for the implementation of activities on the national level, especially for the less developed CLM countries. A further element was raising awareness of the relevance of QI for ASEAN at political and economic level.

This project was continued with a second phase in May 2015, under the umbrella programmed "ASEAN Single Market" together with two GIZ projects.

## **2. Assessment of the project**

For reasons of efficiency and due to the regional nature of the cooperation with ASEAN, PTB decided not to organize a field visit for data collection or presentation of results to stakeholders by the evaluators, but to conduct a desk evaluation instead.

This evaluation report is mainly based on findings from a series of telephone interviews conducted in January 2016 with various stakeholders of the project. In total, 29 interviews with ASEAN Member States representatives, ACCSQ Working Group (Co-) Chairs, staff of the ASEAN Secretariat, PTB staff / and external experts were scheduled in the period January 5th-19th, 2016. The interviews were based on an interview guideline that was made available to the interview partners in advance as part of the evaluation inception report. Depending on the background of the interview partners, some questions were deleted, or other more technical questions added. The interviews also left room for open discussion and additional issues.

The main evaluator, Ms. Suzana Lange, is an external independent consultant for quality assurance of international cooperation projects. She is a member of the German Evaluation Society DeGEval and follows the DeGeval evaluation standards. She was partly supported by Dr. Manfred Kochsiek, former Vice-President of PTB and former OIML President, as the technical expert for legal metrology and Mr. Wolfgang Breidenstein, assessor of the German

Accreditation Body, DAkkS, as the technical expert on the implementation of accreditation systems.

The evaluators assessed the first completed phase of the project on the basis of internationally recognized criteria of the OECD Development Committee DAC. Additionally, success factors of the management model Capacity WORKS were used to evaluate this project, taking also into consideration recent developments in the second phase to increase the utility of this evaluation.

To have a critical amount of project activities from which to draw lessons learned and to save resources, the evaluation concentrates on the components of legal metrology and accreditation where a majority of project activities were implemented and omits the component of standardization and the cooperation with Product Working Groups.

## **2.1 Status of the change process**

The most important result in the area of accreditation was the stimulation of the “ASEAN helps ASEAN” concept: The project initiated a pragmatic and collaborative step-by-step approach in the setup of an accreditation system in the CLM countries that showed very good results. Additionally, this led to a formalized cooperation framework between ASEAN member states and to hands-on practical training and exchange between peers.

The most important result in the area of legal metrology was the shift of orientation towards an internationally recognized system instead of an ASEAN internal alignment. ASEAN member states are more ready to expose themselves to international best practices and standards. New laws and ASEAN guidelines are in line with international recommendations.

### **Relevance**

The DAC criterion “Relevance” examines the compliance of the project with the overarching policies and strategies of the partners and the German government:

The project is in line with ASEAN policy such as the AEC Blueprint, ATIGA, other agreements and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration, as well as with Germany’s development policy, such as the BMZ Asia Concept and QI strategy. The German experience from EU integration and PTB’s access to international networks are appreciated by the partners. The project tries to align itself with the goals of ACCSQ and its Working Groups. The goal of developing a coherent consulting strategy is constrained due to restricted access of external experts to strategic documents and meetings of ASEAN bodies. The project’s initial approach was demand driven rather than strategic or based on thorough assessment of the ASEAN Member States needs. However, this improved during the project implementation.

The relevance is rated as 2 (good).

### **Effectiveness**

The DAC criterion “Effectiveness” evaluates the achievement of project objectives based on the indicators defined in the BMZ offer:

The project goal is “ACCSQ's policy and strategy, as well as its institutional work, fulfil the requirements of the regional economic integration process; Quality Infrastructure institutions are improving their performance.” The four project indicators leave some room for interpretation and flexibility to the project, as they are not really specific and measurable. No baseline quantifiable objectives and methods of measurement are defined in the BMZ offer or the annual project reports.

Nevertheless, it can be stated that the project made good progress in selected areas using both a top-down approach (Indicator 1) and a bottom-up approach (Indicator 2). There is still a long process to attaining international recognition of CLM Quality Infrastructure services, but the project successfully supported them in institutional capacity building, especially in the area of accreditation (Indicator 3). The project supported ASEAN on different levels. However, the main focus was on public sector experts with less attention paid to other stakeholders such as the private sector (Indicator 4).

The effectiveness of the project is rated with good (2).

### **Impact**

The DAC criterion “Impact” relates to the contribution of the project to overarching development goals by making plausible attributions.

The project has contributed to the integration of ASEAN (Member States) into the international system of metrology and accreditation. Several interview partners observed a shift of preference from alignment between ASEAN Member States to alignment with internationally recognized standards since the start of the project. The concerted action in CLM countries, especially in the accreditation component, narrows the development gap in QI. It cannot be clearly established whether the project has impact in trade facilitation or consumer protection. In any case, the related processes take very long time and the project made steps in the right direction, e.g. by harmonization efforts through common guidelines and benchmarking activities.

The impact is rated between satisfactory and good, moving closer to good (2).

### **Efficiency**

The DAC criterion “Efficiency” concerns the appropriateness of resources and modes of delivery in relation to the outputs and results achieved.

The project resources are quite limited compared to the very broad project goal, which increases the coordination effort for all stakeholders. The project had a slow start due to a delay in the official cooperation framework and limited initiative/responsiveness. Activities accelerated from 2012 onwards and the efficiency of the project improved accordingly. The budget was to a large extent spent on trainings and consultancy, with an increasing participation of co-trainers from the region. The potential of key experts was not fully exploited.

The efficiency is rated with satisfactory (3).

### **Sustainability**

The DAC criterion “Sustainability” evaluates whether the results achieved are likely to be lasting. The project’s stimulation of the “ASEAN helps ASEAN” concept is positive for the sustainability of the project. It is not clear which activities conducted on the regional level really trickled down to the national level or whether further support would have been needed to implement the reforms. The project initiated a long process of institutional capacity building that has to be further supported by other cooperation projects.

The sustainability is rated as satisfactory (3).

## **2.2 Success factors for the observed results and change processes**

### **Strategy**

The project covers a broad range of topics and is very flexible in its approach. The planning workshop in 2012, which brought together all stakeholders, was perceived as helpful to get a common understanding of the project. PTB’s added value consists particularly in technical advice and to some extent in strategic guidance, while considering other donor activities e.g. coordinating tasks with the EU

- ARISE project. Presence and trust are prerequisites for overcoming the challenge of confidentiality of a political partner organization.

Currently achieved: 50%, potentially achievable: 80%

### **Cooperation**

A significant amount of time had to be spent on coordination with other actors, as the PTB ASEAN project covers a cooperation with ten countries in different areas. Partners and other donors expect a closer cooperation between projects on national and regional level to create synergies. The informal exchange on a working level practiced so far might encounter its limits.

Currently achieved: 70%, potentially achievable: 90%

### **Steering structure**

The steering structure on the regional level is more scaled down than originally foreseen in PTB ASEAN agreements. Project indicators should be operationalized to be used for the continuous steering and monitoring of the project. The Strategic Work Plan developed in the planning workshop is the basis for common activities and has been followed to a certain extent. ASEAN Member States own initiatives or involvement in development of initiatives are limited. On the national level, the steering structure appears to be rather informal. The presence of a local Project Officer will probably make communication and coordination easier. The officer’s responsibilities could be further extended after an initial orientation and acclimatization phase.

Currently achieved: 70%, potentially achievable: 100%

### **Processes**

The project managed to identify activities that satisfy the very diverse support needs of ASEAN Member States. “ASEAN helps ASEAN” approaches such as triangular cooperation and involvement of local experts as trainers were very much appreciated by partners. The selection process for participation in project activities did not always result in participants who fulfilled all predefined requirements. In addition to theoretical trainings, there is a need for practical field visits, on-the-job trainings and benchmarking activities. To increase the outreach, Train-The-Trainer approaches and national workshops have been conducted.

Currently achieved: 80%, potentially achievable: 100%

### **Learning and innovation**

The project collects feedback from participants directly after project activities, but not after a longer period of time. The goal of and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of project activities are not clearly defined in the individual project proposal. The checklist follow-up survey in WG 3 for monitoring the implementation of regional outputs on a national level are positive examples.

Maintaining contact with and between involved experts could be improved. Awareness-raising activities for politicians, industry and the general public have been organized in CLM countries but not on the regional level.

Currently achieved: 70%, potentially achievable: 90%

## **3. Learning processes and learning experience**

PTB identified three aspects to be analyzed as relevant for the continuation of the project:

a) The challenge of the partner organization’s diplomatic character for project cooperation and monitoring.

During the project, one of the main obstacles encountered by PTB experts to developing a coherent consulting strategy was the restricted access to ASEAN meetings and information. Whereas it is understandable that some internal discussions have to be held behind closed doors, the concrete rules for cooperation with dialogue partners seem to be applied in a very diverse way in different ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. Exchange and flow of information – in a formal or informal way - is apparently easier with a permanent presence of technical advisors in the ASEAN Secretariat or Member States who are able to build up trustworthy day-to-day working relations with their peers.

Dialogues and discussions take place not only in meetings, but also during breaks, in between sessions and in workshops. The disadvantage of this informal exchange is that opinions are subjective and do not necessarily reflect a common denominator of ASEAN Member States or constitute reliable decisions.

b) The consequences of the inclusion of the project into a BMZ Program in order to create synergies, in its follow up phase the project is part of the German Program “Single Market”, together with two other GIZ projects, which started later than the PTB project.

According to the interview partners, so far there have been no working contacts on a content level. The approaches of PTB and GIZ (horizontal versus sectoral, public sector versus private sector partners) are complementary in theory and reinforce each other, but it will be difficult to prove this impact without closer collaboration on a working level. There is some cooperation among the projects on administrative level, e.g. shared office space, which can be extended if necessary.

Up to now, there has been an informal exchange of information, but no formalized cooperation mechanism. Occasions for common reporting might be used for a structured exchange regarding achievements, approaches and experiences. Inconveniences such as greater communication efforts, might be compensated by advantages, such as a common positioning. It appears that there is no real added value in a common external representation, e.g. to increase visibility or coordination.

c) The advantages and disadvantages of contracting local staff

It is much appreciated by project partners that PTB makes use of local expertise for project activities and it is encouraged to do so even more. Engaging local experts with international experts is the preferred mode of delivery for trainings. Expertise present in the region is made available and further developed. Local trainers from ASEAN countries have, according to interview partners, a better understanding of the culture and needs of beneficiaries.

Since 2015, the project has commissioned a local Project Officer based in the ASEAN Secretariat, which received a very positive feedback. Both for practical reasons and for intercultural reasons, it was expected that a local Project Officer might ease communication and coordination between project partners, provided he has sufficient decision-making power.

It is a challenge for a project that is managed from Germany to have a high visibility, liaison and coordination with all stakeholders. This challenge might (only) partly be facilitated by the presence of a non-technical expert. Project partners expect an easier access to project information, documentation and reporting with the help of the local Project Officer. The Project Officer could also follow up on project decisions and events and monitor the country-level implementation to a certain extent.

#### **4. Recommendations**

##### Recommendations for the Partners

-The selection process for participants in project activities should be enforced to ensure that participants fulfil certain criteria.

-Practical field visits, on-the-job trainings and benchmarking activities between ASEAN Member States are beneficial and should be explored further, in addition to theoretical trainings. For instance, regional meetings could be used to get practical insights into QI in host AMS.

-Project initiatives were mainly developed by PTB. ASEAN Member States own initiatives or Member States' involvement in early stages of project development should be further encouraged, in Working Group meetings, both by ASEAN and PTB staff.

-The recruitment and contracting of local experts could be carried out by ASEAN in a systematic way, e.g. by creating a database of ASEAN Member States experts or the circulation of Terms of

Reference for local experts in the respective Working Group.

#### Recommendations for the Project Team (ASEAN Secretariat and PTB)

-The mechanisms for the identification of ASEAN Member States Quality Infrastructure needs could be improved to ensure a systematic and systemic project approach.

-The collection of workshop participants' feedback should be extended in time and scope.

-The goal of and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of project activities should be defined in detail in the project proposal.

-The WG 3 NAWI Checklist and the ACPPR Train-The-Trainer follow-up survey monitoring the implementation of regional outputs on the national level are positive examples for result-oriented monitoring, which should be replicated and further developed in future project activities.

-Project indicators should be operationalized to be used for the continuous steering and monitoring of the project. This applies also for the strategic steering of the project on ACCSQ level.

-The tasks and responsibilities of the local Project Officer could be further extended after an initial orientation and acclimatization phase.

-Although it is reasonable to channel cooperation through the project coordinators, some direct communication between all involved project staff from both sides might be helpful for a comprehensive common understanding of all project components.

#### Recommendations for the PTB Department "Technical Cooperation"

-The project indicators should be discussed and operationalized with partners and used for common strategic monitoring and steering of the project.

-The development, revision, kick-off and annual reporting of the common program could be used for an exchange with other implementing organizations/ projects structured along the common program indicators.

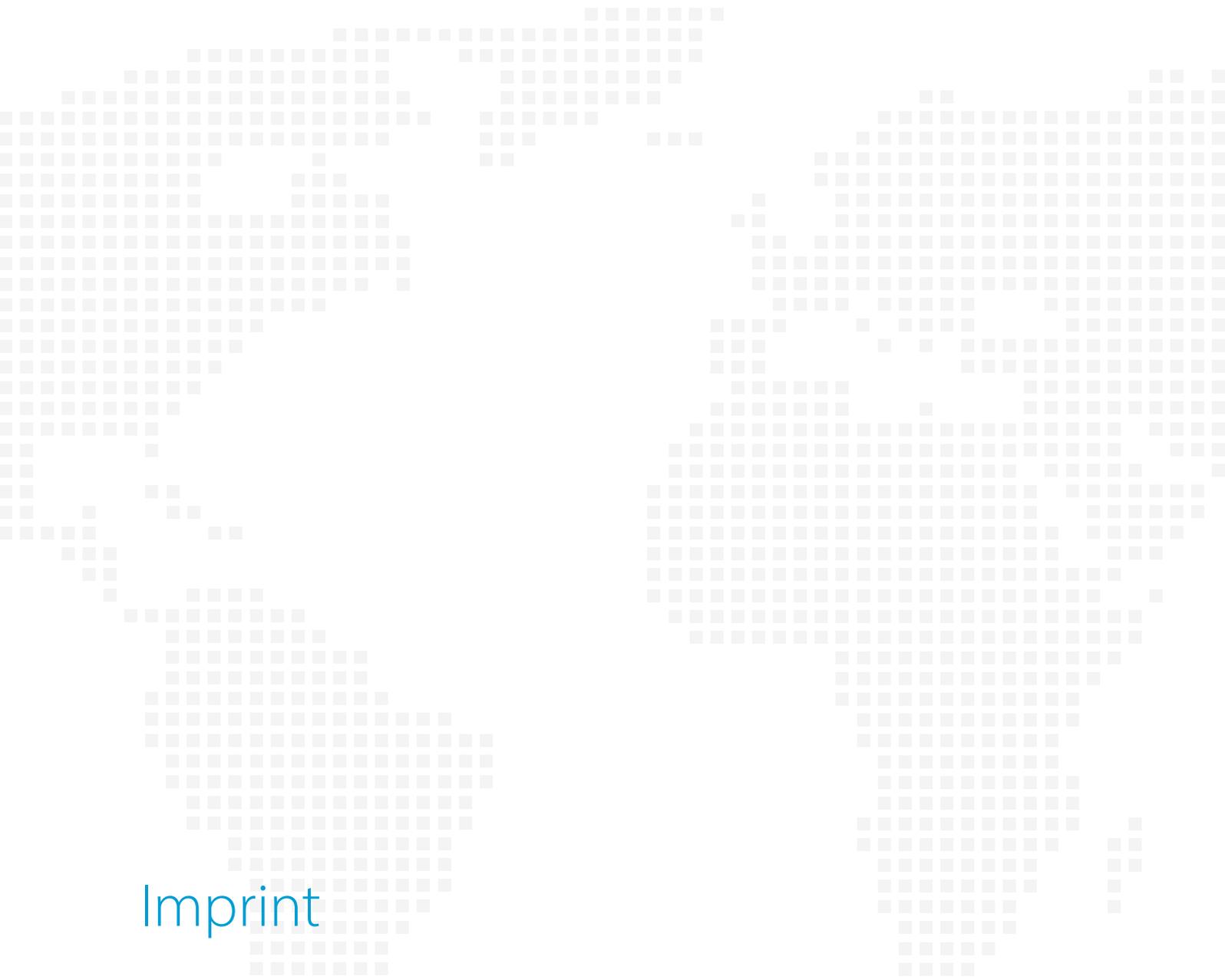
-The decision not to second long-term technical advisers should be reconsidered on a case-by-case basis if PTB wants to have better access to processes within political organizations, to respond to big capacity development needs, or to support fast reform processes in partner countries.

-Partners and external stakeholders expect more coordination and synergy between national and regional projects than is currently the case. Different consultancy approaches of donors cannot be reconciled on working level only. Involvement of relevant officials at a higher level is needed to resolve the divergence in approaches and ensure synergies

between projects.

-PTB could provide support – including experience and networks – for awareness-raising activities targeted at politicians, industry and the general public on regional level.

-“ASEAN helps ASEAN” approaches such as triangular cooperation and involvement of local experts as trainers were very much appreciated by partners and should be further explored.



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