Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
Braunschweig und Berlin
Nationales Metrologieinstitut

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION – SHORT REPORT

Evaluator: Oliver Karkoschka

Strengthening the Quality Infrastructure, Cambodia

Country | Region:	Cambodia
Project number:	2015.2066.7
Project term:	January 2018 – December 2020
Political Partner:	Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation
Implementing agencies:	National Metrology Centre, Institute of Standards of Cambodia, Industrial Laboratory Centre of Cambodia, Department for Accreditation
PTB | Section:	Asia, 9.32
PTB | Project coordinator:	Nitja Rehani (until 02/2020) and Cora Roos (from 03/2020)

Date: 18. October 2020

This is an independent evaluation. The contents represent the view of the evaluator and cannot be taken to reflect the views of PTB.

List of abbreviations

BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
MISTI	Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee
PTB	Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
QI	Quality Infrastructure
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises

1. Project Description

The evaluation object is the PTB project “Strengthening Quality Infrastructure” in Cambodia which is implemented from January 2018 until December 2021, with a budget of 800.000 EUR financed by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). A prolongation for one year is under discussion. The Cambodian political partner is the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation. The project is jointly implemented by PTB and the National Metrology Centre, the Institute of Standards of Cambodia, the Industrial Laboratory Centre of Cambodia, the Department for Accreditation, Business Membership Organisations and others.

The project objective is as follows: “Improved quality assurance services contribute to sustainable development by the example of agricultural value chains”. Three indicators were identified to measure the degree of its achievement:

1. Two concepts jointly elaborated by the institutions of the quality infrastructure are used in the areas of the quality infrastructure that are mentioned in the Industrial Development Policy (IDP).
2. Three new metrological services have been introduced (training, consultation and/or calibration) and are used.
3. Three case studies document the use of quality assurance services for trade and consumer protection.

The project strategy is based on the assumption that increased quality awareness of the producing sector and consumers leads to an increased demand of quality assurance services. Improved services corresponding to international good practices and offered by institutions responsible for quality assurance lead to improved quality of products and increased productivity of the domestic sector. This increases competitiveness and enhances the opportunities for domestic enterprises to participate in regional and/or international value chains. This contributes to sustainable economic growth and secures jobs and income.

For the implementation, three outputs were identified:

1. The cooperation and coordination of the quality infrastructure network have been sustainably strengthened.
2. The quality assurance services offered by the institutions have been extended.
3. Selected deficits of quality assurance services are tackled by the private and the public sectors.

Target groups of the project are users of quality infrastructure (QI) services, in particular enterprises in the agricultural sector as well as consumers of agricultural products.

2. Assessment of the project

The success of the project is assessed along the five international OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability. The rating uses a scale from “Highly successful” (1) - “highly unsuccessful” (6). (see 2.1)

The assessment of the design and implementation of the project will be analysed using five success factors: strategy, cooperation, steering structure, processes and learning and innovation (see 2.2). Each success factor is rated on a scale from 0% - 100%.

2.1 Status of the change process

The assessment of the project is based on the OECD-DAC criteria using a scale from “Highly successful” (1) - “highly unsuccessful” (6). The five criteria are assessed as follows:

Relevance	successful (2)
Effectiveness	moderately successful (3)
Impact	moderately successful (3)
Efficiency	moderately successful (3)
Sustainability	moderately successful (3)

Relevance

The project is well geared to contributing to the partners objectives, expressed in partner country's strategies and the key development policies like strengthening the productivity and competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SME) by developing the quality of products. The project objective corresponds also with high political priorities. The project is very relevant to solve key issues with regards to the quality culture and business development for SME. It is also entirely in line with the sectoral policy of the BMZ and its specific orientations for development cooperation in Cambodia. Overall, the relevance of the project fully meets expectations.

Mark: successful (2)

Effectiveness

The target values of the indicators will be achieved by the end of the project between approximately 50% (indicator 1) and 100% (indicator 3). In general, the project managed to achieve at least part of the intended ambitious results. It has to be considered that there were several difficulties and various challenges (see 2.2) which have hindered a smooth implementation. However, there was room for the project to address the challenges more explicitly. The following table gives an overview about the three indicators and their level of achievement:

Outcome indicator	**Degree of fulfilment (in %)***	**Appraisal (A-C)****	**Justification for degree of fulfilment**
Indicator 1: Two concepts elaborated jointly by the institutions of the quality	50%	A	The strategy of the project did not focus on concepts. Main importance was given to the

infrastructure are used in the areas of the quality infrastructure that are mentioned in the Industrial Development Policy (section 6.3B). *Initial value: 0 concepts, Target value: 2 concepts*			coordination of the QI and the cooperation between QI institutions.
Indicator 2: Three new metrological services have been introduced (training, consultation and/or calibration) and are used. *Initial value: 3 services. Target value: 6 services*	90%	B: The term "used" can imply only a very poor degree of usage	Neither the monitoring system nor the interviews gave much evidence about the indicator. However, by the end of the project, three new services will have been offered. It is supposed that they are / will also be used.
Indicator 3: The fact that the private sector and public stakeholders make use of quality assurance services for trade and consumer protection is documented by means of three case studies. *Initial value: 0 case studies. Target value: 3 case studies*	100%	A	It is probable that the private sector makes use of quality assurance services for trade, particularly as the intended extent is not specified. The case studies might be documented with a delay due to COVID-19.

*: The percentage is an estimation of the achievement at the end of the project
**: Appraisal: A = adequate indicator; B = slight objections; C = poor indicator, to be revised if possible
Mark: moderately successful (3)

Impact

The strategy of the project combines the three dimensions of impacts: economic, social and ecological impacts. Some relevant preconditions for the achievement of impacts are the starting cooperation among the QI institutions, between QI and the private sector as well as new testing services for specific agricultural products. These changes are still on a small scale. It is not realistic to expect that the project has already contributed in a perceivable manner to the intended impacts. The progress is nevertheless slightly smaller than one could have expected. One reason is that the project did not conceive capacity development in a coherent manner combining measures at the level of individuals, organisations and the entire QI system. This reduced the potential for more results and limited the institutionalisation e.g. of the visits of QI

institutions to SME under Output 1. As a consequence, the positive results dominate but impacts are slightly below expectations.

Mark: moderately successful (3)

Efficiency

The project has several strengths of efficiency which are mostly related to working with national facilitators and regional trainers as well as due to a good cooperation with other projects and donors. The deployment of international short-term experts and staff/consultants for project coordination were generally less efficient . Important prerequisites for a high efficiency as a certain continuation of the process and action by the partners between their visits were not always met. Other elements of implementation regarding the strategy, the cooperation and steering (see 2.2) were also not conducive and have reduced the efficiency.

Mark: moderately successful (3)

Sustainability

Relatively speaking, the developed capacities at the level of individuals in laboratories are the ones with the highest degree of sustainability. The developed testing services for pesticide residues are very probable to be sustainable. The sustainability of other capacities related to output 2 is probable and still depend on various factors including the further application of the developed capacities to gain experience, soft skills such as confidence as well as organisational decisions and processes, even if services are integrated into the pricelists. Other results at the level of cooperation systems as the QI network or the relations between QI institutions and QI users are not yet sustainable.

It was not realistic to expect a high degree of sustainability of results at the end of the project. However, the fact that the project did not specifically observe and if feasible also address the risk factors such as political and organisational conditions did not fully exploit the possible degree of sustainability.

Mark: moderately successful (3)

2.2 Success factors for the observed results and change processes

Strategy

All relevant partners organisations were involved in the project preparation; however, they did not play an active role in analysing the situation, developing and assessing different strategic options and identifying the intended results. Relevant stakeholders and important factors of the specific context in Cambodia have been taken into account. The ambitious strategy was not sufficiently based on and linked to the specific views, motivation and perceived priorities of some stakeholders and their organisations/institutions. The interviews revealed that several partners and international and regional PTB experts were not sufficiently aware about the intended results and general elements of the strategy.

Level of achievement: 50%

Cooperation

PTB managed to identify and involve all relevant stakeholders and the project partners were well defined. Conflicts among the stakeholders did not play a major role and if, they were sufficiently addressed. Working relations were developed, but suffer from different understandings about the project and each other's roles, responsibilities and contributions. Some partners mainly in output 1 and partly in output 2 assumed rather a passive role and have a waiting attitude following the PTB's activities without showing sufficient initiative, commitment and ownership of the project. This is one key factor limiting the success of the project. They miss a clear roadmap and a result-oriented implementation.

Level of achievement: 60%

Steering structure

The steering structure was well composed and it fulfilled the function of mutual information of the participants about the implemented activities, some of the challenges in implementation and some outlook about the planned activities. As the entire implementation, also the planning was done at the first place by PTB, partners were informed. The steering structure did not fulfil other important functions such as the discussion of the degree of achievement of the intended results and strategic decisions or adjusting the strategic planning. The opportunity to discuss the perceptions about ownership, roles and responsibilities or communication within the project was not used. Also, general roles and responsibilities or other major strategic challenges in implementation were not discussed and clarified.
Level of achievement: 45%

Processes

The project did not make use of the potential of Capacity WORKS to analyse the relevant processes in the context of the project. The project internal processes have been developed implicitly along the activities without systematically relating the processes to intended results, to each other or to cooperation, learning, support, etc. An orientation was not developed on what kind of processes and changes are required to achieve the intended results, how the contributions and results of the project are to be integrated into the QI-system and institutionalised (permanent cooperation system) and what kind of capacity development, partner contributions and changes are required for sustainable results. Level of achievement: 40%

Learning and innovation

Learning objectives were identified in the context of specific trainings but not at the level of organisations, networks, major results, outputs or for the entire project. The project introduced important innovations such as the beginning of an understanding of deficits of the QI system and the understanding that QI is not mostly regulation and control but also is able to develop competitivity of the private sector. The exchanges among the QI institutions as well as between

QI institutions and the private sector were also innovative and some learning experiences were documented for the further process. The respective learning experiences from the facilitation of these social innovations or several other very relevant issues as e.g. how to work effectively with hierarchical systems in a bilateral project were not analysed or documented.
Level of achievement: 40%

3. Learning processes and learning experience

The multi-level approach was appropriate also for the new bilateral project. However, more important than the approach itself is the combination of an effective implementation approach favouring ownership and commitment of the partners through joint planning, their active role and the orientation of the implementation towards the desired results. A joint steering by partners and PTB and functions of the steering structure which go beyond the operational level such as an exchange about the intended results, intermediary steps to achieve the results, roles and contribution of PTB and each partner or a joint monitoring would have been favourable.

A prerequisite for the efficient deployment of short-term experts is to ensure a minimum level of commitment of the partners involved and a minimum of dynamics and action of the responsible stakeholders between the expert missions.

The understanding of Capacity WORKS as a set of tools and probably other factors did not allow to use it as an additional resource to address important challenges of the project. It would have helped to find potential alternatives to challenges and factors which have blocked the introduction and application of technical innovations and which have hindered the achievement of some results. Certainly, there is no guarantee of success but to gain more experiences and to widen the scope of action by PTB.

There were no specific considerations regarding the coordination of capacity development measures at the three levels in the project. Above all, neglecting in many cases to address the organisational level had negative effects on effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Changes at the organisational level were part of the result matrix itself (Outcome indicator 2, Output 2.2) as well as essential factors for the success of intended and agreed results at the level of society (outcome indicators 1 and 3, outputs 1 and 3). Without appropriate and beneficial capacity development activities (or at least no hindering processes) at the level of the concerned organisations, these results cannot be achieved. The success of trainings in particular the use of developed capacities by staff also depends to a high degree on appropriate conditions and frequently also changes at the level of the organisations (see also recommendations). A systematic discussion of these issues, which does not necessarily require a lot of resources, could have provided a clear added value in the project.

4. Recommendations

Recommendations for the planning team for the follow-on project comprehend to put more emphasis on the quality of involvement of relevant partners and organisations in the review process. The team should encourage their active role in analysing the situation, the challenges, strategic considerations and identifying opportunities and desired results. This could be done by entering into a dialogue with the key partners before the mission and asking them to prepare

a draft of their reflections including operational level, strategic level, how project results are embedded in organisational processes and improvements, their interests and motivation, roles and contribution in implementation, learning experiences from the current project, etc. It is also suggested to focus the follow-on project more on the strengthening of the cooperation between QI institutions and the private sector.

Recommendations to the project team include the testing of different interventions and attitudes in order to enhance an active role of partners, commitment and ownership. This entails also the reflection of experiences and addressing perceived challenges also by working with Capacity WORKS. It is also suggested to reflect experiences of the way of implementation, cooperation and communication including the involvement of other perceptions e.g. local staff/consultants. This includes also the request of feedback, reflection of experiences and opinions from partners. Not only about the technical aspects but also about roles, commitment, communication, etc. An exchange and clarification between PTB and partners about each other's role would also be beneficial.

Recommendations to the Section Asia focus on the discussion of the general understanding of roles, responsibilities and ownership in projects. It could also be beneficial to discuss and exchange on the understanding of Capacity WORKS and specific questions concerning capacity development at the level of organisations for a coherent implementation towards the intended results.

Imprint

Published by
Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
Bundesallee 100
38116 Braunschweig
Germany

Responsible
9.01 Processes of International Cooperation
evaluierung-9.3@ptb.de
www.evaluierung.ptb.de