

EXTERNAL EVALUATION – SHORT REPORT

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Quality Infrastructure for the Promotion of Trade and Consumer Protection

Country | Region: Middle East (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories)

Project No.: 2017.2083.8
Period: 01 September 2017 - 31 August 2020

Executing Agency: PTB
Implementing Partners: Jordan National Metrology Institute (RSS/JNMI)
Amman Chamber of Industry, Jordan (ACI)
Palestine Standards Institution (PSI)
Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA)
Industrial Research Institute, Lebanon (IRI)
Ministry of Economy and Trade, Lebanon (MOET)
National Institute of Standards, Egypt (NIS)

PTB | Working Group: MENA, 9.34
PTB | Project Coordinator: Carl Felix Wolff

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This report was elaborated by independent evaluators for the PTB. It reflects exclusively the evaluators' opinions and conclusions.

List of abbreviations

ACI	Amman Chamber of Industry
BMZ	<i>Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung</i> German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CMC	Calibration and Measurement Capability
FPCCIA	Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
MOET	Ministry of Economy and Trade, Lebanon
NIS	National Institute of Standards, Egypt
NMI	National Metrology Institute
QI	Quality Infrastructure
RSS-JNMI	Jordan National Metrology Institute of the Royal Scientific Society

1. Project Description

The subject of this evaluation is the regional PTB project “Quality Infrastructure for the Promotion of Trade and Consumer Protection” funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ*) with a budget of 1,500,000 EUR. The evaluation covers the period between the start of the project (September 2017) until the time of the evaluation mission (May/June 2020), with a projection of the likely impact until the end of the implementation period. While the project was originally foreseen to end in August 2020, it will probably be extended until February 2021 due to the Covid-19 crisis.

The project aims at improving the conditions for the increased utilisation of quality infrastructure (QI) services, in particular those related to metrology, with a perspective to promote trade and consumer protection in the Middle East (project objective). It operates in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. The target groups are consumers and the manufacturing sector in the form of small and medium-sized enterprises.

As a multi-country project without relevant regional organisation, it has no political partner. The project cooperates with several implementing partners:

- Jordan National Metrology Institute of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS/JNMI)
- Amman Chamber of Industry, Jordan (ACI)
- Palestine Standards Institution (PSI)
- Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA)
- Industrial Research Institute, Lebanon (IRI)
- Ministry of Economy and Trade, Lebanon (MOET)
- National Institute of Standards, Egypt (NIS)

In all four countries in which the project has been operating, fulfilling the quality standards of export markets is a major challenge for expanding exports. Producers tend to lack knowledge on market requirements and quality standards. Moreover, not all QI services required are offered within the countries. At the same time, the protection of consumers is gaining in importance.

The project responds to these challenges through interventions grouped in three outputs: Output A focuses on providing information on export market requirements to companies from two sectors in the Palestinian territories (furniture, leather/shoes) and three sectors in Jordan (Dead Sea cosmetics, electric household appliances, garment). The main intervention has been the establishment of an online platform combined with several workshops with private sector representatives and companies during the preparation of this platform. Output B followed a two-fold approach by, on the one hand, supporting the introduction of new or improved calibration services in the National Metrology Institutes (NMIs) of Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt and, on the other hand, facilitating regional exchange of experience and mutual learning among the four NMIs. Furthermore, Lebanon was supported in drawing up legislation related to metrology. In Output C, the capacities of NMIs to engage in a dialogue with the private sector were increased.

2. Assessment of the project

The evaluation was carried out in May/June 2020. Its objective is to contribute to the project's accountability towards BMZ as funding party and to facilitate learning from the experiences gained during project implementation. The results will inform the design of the future bilateral PTB projects in Jordan and Egypt. The methods used were a systematic review of project-related documents followed by 20 remote interviews with a wide range of stakeholders: PTB staff and consultants (5), partner organisations (7), private sector associations and clusters (2), user of metrology services (1), other development cooperation projects (4) and a service provider for project implementation (1). The evaluators could gain a good insight into the project through the data which was either available in documents or collected in interviews.

2.1 Status of the change process

Five OECD/DAC criteria serve as basis to assess the status of the change process:

- Relevance: Is the project doing the right things?
- Effectiveness: Is the project achieving its objectives?
- Efficiency: How well are resources being used?
- Impact: What difference does the project make?
- Sustainability: Will the benefits last?

The following grading scheme is applied:

1	2	3	4	5	6
highly successful	successful	moderately successful	moderately unsuccessful	unsuccessful	highly unsuccessful

Relevance

The interviewees confirmed that the lack of information on quality requirements of export markets addressed in Output A has posed a significant challenge to exporting companies in the Palestinian territories and Jordan. The sectors selected generally appear very relevant, with some minor concerns in the cases of furniture in the Palestinian territories (limited domestic value-addition; high transportation costs) and electric household appliances in Jordan (low international competitiveness).

The metrological services to be introduced or improved in Output B appear very well chosen. In Lebanon, the project also supported the drafting of secondary legislation for transposing EU directives. There are doubts that this is in line with the needs of the Lebanon metrology system since it would require rather radical changes which the country does not seem to be ready for. Output B also facilitated the collaboration between countries among sub-sets of NMIs which appears very relevant.

Output C has aimed at improving the dialogue between the private sector and NMIs. Before the start of the project, NMIs used rather informal and ad-hoc formats for their dialogue with the private sector. NMIs seem to feel that the potential benefits of a more structured dialogue which the project has attempted to stimulate do not justify the required additional effort. Accordingly, the relevance – at least the relevance perceived by partners – of Output C has been significantly lower than that of the other two Outputs.

The project’s objective is in line with partner country strategies and with the German trade-related strategy “Free and fair trade as a driver for development”.

The relevance of the project is rated highly successful (1.4).

Effectiveness

The result matrix is quite complex. This is partly due to the relatively high number of intervention areas which it addresses. Furthermore, it appears that some interventions carried out within the outputs are not reflected in the outcome indicators, leading to some sort of logical gap between these two levels. For example, the whole Output C appears only loosely linked to the level of outcome indicators.

<i>Outcome indicator</i>	<i>Justification</i>
1. 40 responsible persons at management level in exporting companies in Jordan and the Palestinian territories confirm that levels of awareness regarding quality requirements have increased.	The survey intended to assess this indicator has not yet been carried out. However, it is assumed that around 200 exporting companies have been reached indirectly through various activities in the Palestinian territories and Jordan. Many of them are likely to report an increased level of awareness. Expected degree of fulfilment: 100%
2. The number of metrological services utilised within the duration of the project across borders between the participating countries has increased by 5.	So far, two cross-border metrological services have been provided (peer-assessment of the temperature laboratory of the Lebanese NMI by a Jordanian expert; interlaboratory comparison on power calibration between the Egyptian and Jordanian NMIs). Two more interlaboratory comparisons (Lebanon – Egypt, Palestinian territories – Jordan) are likely to be carried out by the end of the project. Expected degree of fulfilment: 80%
3. At least customers in Lebanon and Jordan utilise 30 times the new or improved selected metrological services until August 2020.	The following improved services have already been utilised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jordan: temperature and electrical measurements: 30 usages • Lebanon: temperature calibration: 82 usages

	<p>By the end of the project period, new services are expected to be introduced and utilised in Lebanon (tank calibration/verification) and Egypt (production of pH certified reference materials).</p> <p>Expected degree of fulfilment: 100%</p>
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The effectiveness of the project is rated successful (2.0).

Impact

In Output A, the project has contributed to change through the better provision of quality-related information on key export markets. Several interviewees pointed out that Russian-language information on Eurasian Economic Union countries is now for the first time available and easily accessible in English and even Arabic language. This is an important achievement.

In Output B, the new or improved metrology services are likely to have a positive impact on trade and consumer protection. For example, in Jordan, the improved services will contribute to the more precise measurement of power consumption, leading to improvements for consumers and, in the longer term, increased competitiveness on international markets. What is particularly remarkable is that the Jordan NMI managed to not only introduce these new services but already had them accredited. Also, the cross-border services facilitated by the project (peer-assessment and interlaboratory comparisons) are likely to have a significant positive impact by fostering accreditation of metrology services and access to international markets. The metrology-related legislation supported in Lebanon cannot be expected to be implemented anytime soon. The impact of the project in this respect will probably be limited.

In Output C, a number of activities were recently initiated (business lunch events, surveys on the demand for metrology services) or are planned (training for NMIs on the use of social media) which will result in some (limited) impact.

The impact of the project is rated successful (2.0).

Efficiency

The project has been implemented by a very small number of staff. All in all, a high number of activities were carried out with the resources given. The project has coordinated its activities well with other projects, for example with the bilateral PTB project in the Palestinian territories and the GIZ project "Trade for Employment" in Jordan.

Some of the processes took a rather long time to result in effective action. For example, the online platforms containing export market information (Output A) were only launched in February 2020. While the national support activities in Output B have generally advanced in a quick manner, the introduction of the new service in Egypt was a rather difficult process which led to delays. The most important delays were experienced in Output C, resulting in activities being launched only at the start of the third year of the project.

The efficiency of the project is rated successful (2.3).

Sustainability

Some elements of the project's work have been mainstreamed into the partner system: In Output A, the information platforms were handed over to the two partner organisations. In Output B, new or improved metrology services will complement the range of services provided by NMIs. It is likely that these services will be in demand. By leveraging fees for the utilisation of these services, NMIs will likely be able and willing to maintain the equipment and provide the service sustainably.

In most cases, the project was able to react to possible risks that could influence the longer-term sustainability of its results. However, the sustainability of the market information platform is still questionable. The trainings which were conducted or are planned are important, combined with the high degree of ownership demonstrated in particular by the partner organisation in the Palestinian territories. However, only if the platforms prove to be useful for companies will the partner organisations put the necessary resources into maintaining them. The usefulness for companies, in turn, depends on their ability to "digest" the information from the platforms and to use it as basis for accessing new markets. In the case of Jordan, the project countered this risk by cooperating with the GIZ project "Trade for Employment". In the Palestinian territories, no such additional support seems to be available at the moment.

The only major risk regarding the sustainability of metrology services concerns the Egyptian NMI that seems to lack a clear strategic vision for putting the new service into use. It might still require more pro-active support from the project team compared with what has been offered so far.

The sustainability of the project is rated successful (2.5).

2.2 Success factors for the observed results and change processes

The evaluation assessed the project also in terms of the five Capacity WORKS success factors Strategy, Cooperation, Steering, Processes, and Learning and Innovation. These success factors were defined within German Development Cooperation as part of its "Capacity WORKS" tool for managing the implementation of development projects. They are graded on a scale from 0% (not fulfilled at all) to 100% (fully fulfilled).

Strategy

The strategy of the project is based on its predecessor project "Quality infrastructure in support to sustainable economic development and trade capacities" which operated in six Middle Eastern countries. In line with the recommendations of the evaluation of this predecessor project, the number of countries was reduced, and a separate output was devoted to the dialogue between NMIs and the private sector. Yet, it seems that the impact of the project could have been further increased by focusing on a smaller number of interventions. While there are

good arguments for involving different stakeholders in different countries, a lesser degree of complexity would have been more appropriate for such a relatively small project managed from Germany.

The seven key partner organisations are very much aware of the project's strategy. The project strategy was generally well implemented.

The factor "Strategy" is rated with 80%.

Cooperation

All seven partner organisations are relevant for the intervention areas which have been supported. The roles among partners and the project team have been clearly assigned and shared in an appropriate manner, with a very high degree of ownership of most partners. Originally, the project started out with two partner organisations involved in Output A in the Palestinian territories, FPCCIA and Paltrade, but Paltrade decided to leave the project during its first year of implementation.

While there appears to be no lines of conflict between the seven partner organisations, some potentially conflictual relationships exist among organisations involved in the promotion of exports in the Palestinian territories and Jordan. The project team has to some degree taken this situation into account by involving Paltrade in key events. The same cannot be said concerning Jordan. There, the project seems to have focused solely on ACI without taking into account their position and interest vis-à-vis other organisations, such as the two export promotion agencies Jetco and the just recently created "Jordan Exports".

The factor "Cooperation" is rated with 80%.

Steering structure

The steering committee has met once a year. Participation was generally very good. The complexity of the structure seems appropriate. The current state of achievement of the indicators was discussed at every steering committee meeting. Possible future activities were presented by the project team or proposed by the partner organisations and further defined with inputs from partners. Discussion appears to have been frank and active, with partners openly voicing their concerns when needed. Appropriate steering impulses were obtained in these discussions.

The factor "Steering" is rated with 90%.

Processes

On-going processes of the partner system were partly analysed by the project (sector selection in Output A), partly already well known from its predecessor project (NMIs in Output B). By contrast, the processes supported in Output C – the dialogue between NMIs and the private sector – were less well known at the start of the project and were also not profoundly analysed.

Doubts remain whether the project had a full and in-depth understanding of the political context of the metrology-related legislation supported in Output B.

Generally speaking, the processes established within the project (results-based monitoring, coordination within the project team, communication with the partner) suited their purpose. Digital means of communication were, however, not applied by the whole project team. While this seems not to have had any negative impact so far, it might become a challenge due to Covid-19. The project team generally seems to have had good working relations with its partners.

The factor “Processes” is rated with 70%.

Learning and innovation

With the digital market information platform, an innovative tool was introduced in Output A. The new or improved metrology services (Output B) are innovations for the three involved countries since they had not yet been offered and used there. The training on social media (planned for Output C) has innovative elements since it aims at strengthening the capacities of NMIs in using digital means for communicating with their clients.

Reports summarising the progress achieved and highlighting the experiences made were drawn up at regular intervals. Valuable experiences and insights have been collected in these reports. Apart from that, the project did not document lessons learned in a more structured manner. However, the yearly team meetings offered an occasion to exchange on the lessons learned and draw conclusions from them. The same can be said on the frank discussions in the steering committee where valuable feedback was received.

The factor “Learning and innovation” is rated with 75%.

3. Learning processes and learning experience

A larger scale learning process initiated by the project concerns the elaboration of the market information platform in Output A. This was done in an inclusive and participatory manner in close exchange with companies. In Output B, peer learning among the four NMIs was facilitated. The two more advanced NMIs – those of Egypt and Jordan - served as role model and trainer. This approach generally proved very valuable.

The project made the experience that it is hard to agree on meaningful activities with the partners, if the problem to which these activities ought to respond is not perceived as a priority. This was the case in Output C where NMIs did not regard the situation regarding the dialogue with clients as urgent enough to justify measures which would require more significant inputs from their part. Through closer involvement of partners during the formulation of the project, this could maybe have been avoided.

4. Recommendations

Recommendations to partners

- **The Lebanese MOET** should update the horizontal Metrology Law in compliance with the international recommendations. In case it plans to establish a legal metrology system in compliance with the EU system, additional secondary legislation is needed. It should accelerate the designation of an NMI as it is one of the most crucial requirements for establishing a proper metrology system in the country.
- Once the new system for production of pH certified reference materials is set up, **the Egyptian NMI NIS** should start the process for submitting the respective Calibration and Measurement Capability (CMCs) to become internationally recognized and able to provide the respective services in the region. Furthermore, it is recommended to increase the number and fields of CMCs (e.g. temperature, electrical energy).

Recommendations to the project team

- In **Output A**, the project should accompany its two partner organisations closely in marketing the platform to its members. The planned training of export quality advisors should focus on how they can advise companies on using the information available on the platform. In many cases, companies will need additional support for interpreting this information and for successfully turning it into new export activities. The project could either support their two partner organisations in providing such advisory services themselves or in linking up companies with specialised consultants or lawyers who could do so. In Jordan, the project should ensure that its partner organisation is involved in the design of the new overarching export promotion platform to be established as part of the GIZ project “Trade for Employment”.
- In **Output B**, the project should intensify its support to the Egyptian NMI during the remaining project period, with the objective of launching its new metrology service. Concerning cross-border activities, it could be worthwhile to facilitate the creation of a regional network of peer evaluators among the NMIs of the participating countries.
- Considering the challenges encountered in **Output C**, it is recommended to focus on supporting the improvement of existing dialogue processes instead of trying to introduce new formats. A (quick) assessment of existing structures could be carried out, before designing support measures adapted to the individual needs of each of the four countries.

Recommendations to PTB's "International Cooperation" department

- Two new bilateral projects are foreseen as follow-up projects. The following points should be taken into account when further conceptualising them:
 - In **Jordan**, it was already decided to support metrological services related to water and water meters. While the current project focused on supporting RSS-JNMI as the Jordan NMI, the future project should also cooperate closely with

- the Jordan Standard and Metrology Organisation (JSMO) as institution responsible for legal metrology.
- In **Egypt**, the new project is designed to support sustainable economic development more generally. Since the Egyptian NMI seems to have only a limited number of CMCs, any support towards this aim (training, development of quality system, participation in interlaboratory comparisons with their peers), might be worth considering.
 - For future regional projects, in particular for multicounty projects not attached to a regional organisation, it is advisable to limit cooperation to a relatively small number of partners – in fact to fewer than in the case of this project. This would be important for keeping the projects manageable, especially for an organisation like PTB which operates from Germany without own staff in the region.



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