

# EXTERNAL EVALUATION – SHORT REPORT

Key evaluator: Lutz Neumann

Strengthening Accreditation Networks in Asia Pacific (SANAP II)



Country | Region: Asia

Project number: 95321 / 2017.2202.4  
Implementation period: March 2018 – February 2021

Executing agency: Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB)  
Implementing partner: Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC)

PTB | Section: 9.32 Asia  
PTB | Project coordinator: Cora Roos

Date: 19 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**

<b>APAC</b>	Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation
<b>APEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>APLAC</b>	Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
<b>BMZ</b>	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
<b>CAB</b>	Conformity assessment body
<b>DeGEval</b>	Evaluation Society Germany Gesellschaft für Evaluation e.V.
<b>ISTE</b>	International short-term expert
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>MRA</b>	Mutual Recognition Arrangement
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PAC</b>	Pacific Accreditation Cooperation
<b>PTB</b>	National Metrology Institute, Germany Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
<b>QI</b>	Quality Infrastructure
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers

## 1. Project Description

The project 'Strengthening Accreditation Networks in Asia Pacific (SANAP II)' (03/2018 – 02/2021, 1,000,000 EUR) is mandated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, and jointly implemented by the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) and the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC).

APAC member institutions include Accreditation Bodies, accreditation focal points and other organizations that have an interest in accredited conformity assessment results.

APAC is a regional accreditation cooperation with membership that includes accreditation bodies, accreditation focal points and other organizations that have an interest in accredited conformity assessment results. APAC is recognized by APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) as one of four APEC Specialist Regional Bodies (SRBs) that support the work of the APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance; however, it enlists a larger group of member states than APEC. According to the internationally recognized principle "Tested, inspected, certified once – accepted everywhere", the recognition of equivalency and validity of accredited reports and certificates via APAC eliminates technical barriers to trade.

At the time of the evaluation, APAC had 45 Full Member accreditation bodies from 27 countries, and 21 Associate Members from 18 countries. Of these, 25 (56%) of the Full Members are from developing economies, representing 21 economies (78% of the total); 15 (71%) of the Associate Members are from developing economies, representing 14 countries (78% of the total).

APAC has members from countries such as USA, Canada, India, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and Australia where more than one Accreditation Body co-exists in the economy.

The strategic approach of SANAP II entails to increase the benefit of developing economies from their membership in APAC and to overall strengthen the basis of developing economies' internationally recognized Accreditation Bodies. Commissioned by BMZ, PTB has been supporting the strengthening of Accreditation Bodies in Asia-Pacific for several years even before SANAP II. From 2008 until 2014, the project "Strengthening regional quality infrastructure networks in the Asia-Pacific Region" (2006.2039.3) covered metrology and accreditation. From 2015 until 2018, accreditation-specific aspects at APLAC (Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and PAC (Pacific Accreditation Cooperation) were covered by SANAP I "Strengthening Accreditation Networks in Asia Pacific". SANAP II focuses not on the entire membership of APAC, but on members from economies that are categorized as developing economies and cover several membership categories of APAC:

- Full members: accreditation bodies from India, Indonesia, Iran, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.
- Associate members: accreditation bodies/focal points from Cambodia, Iran, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Associate Members are Accreditation Bodies that have not yet become a signatory to the APAC mutual recognition arrangement (MRA).

- Potential members: accreditation bodies/focal points from Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal and Laos.

## 2. Assessment of the project

The design, results chain, objectives, and indicators are assessed as logical and technically coherent and adequate to the given situation. Due to the restrictions that come along with the global COVID-19 crisis, the measure has been facing delays in three of four output areas.

Tools of the management model Capacity Works tools have not been applied. The planning, steering, and implementing of the activities has worked in practice.

The analysis based on the OECD-DAC criteria shows that the project achieved positive ratings for relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability, whereas some assessment aspects in all criteria were rated average.

Owing to the average number of points (2.4), the project is given the overall rating: "successful".

### 2.1 Status of the change process

In the following, the OECD/DAC criteria relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability are assessed according to the BMZ document "Evaluierungskriterien für die deutsche bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit". The grading scheme can be found in Annex 1.

#### Relevance

An internationally recognized quality infrastructure that includes accreditation as a key component is widely considered as a prerequisite for continuous and robust growth of economies. The design of SANAP II fits to the definition of the core problem that not all APAC members are able to equally benefit from their membership. The developing economies are assessed in the project proposal as being clearly behind, both in terms of internationally recognized accreditation bodies and in the thematic diversity of the accreditation ranges, compared to industrialized and emerging economies. Their conformity assessment bodies are either unable to obtain accreditation or they have to purchase an accreditation at great expense from abroad.

The findings from the evaluation support the theory of change and the results model (see annex for graph). SANAP II focuses consistently on four output areas:

Output 1 (Strategy): APAC offers its members from developing countries strategic support.

Output 2 (Policy): APAC offers services relating to those fields where accreditation plays a significant role (e.g. energy efficiency, food safety, foods certified as "organic", medicine and health).

Output 3 (International recognition): APAC receives support to increase the number of international mutual recognition arrangements (MRA) among members from developing countries.

Output 4 (Innovation): APAC supports its members from developing countries by applying cross-border capacity development programmes.

The outputs of the project are used by potential and actual members of APAC from developing economies to integrate themselves into the regional accreditation network.

Within the first year of the implementation of the project, in January 2019, APLAC and PAC formed a union to become APAC. APAC published the "APAC Strategic Plan 2019-2021" focusing on crucial aspects of capacity development, with which SANAP II is found to be in line. The merger made the project even more relevant to unfold the potential of the integration of developing economies. Streamlined and more efficient structures of the regional accreditation networks provide a better counterpart structure for the SANAP II approach and in particular for the planning and implementation of training and capacity building measures. However, the APAC strategy did not match fully the emphasis that SANAP puts on promoting the integration of developing economies. Therefore, the project's objective as measured by outcome indicator #1 is not fully in line with the 2019-21 APAC strategy. APAC primarily promotes services to members and upgrades in membership category and does not pursue a developmental approach for non-Member Accreditation Bodies in developing economies.

On an outcome level, the project's objective is set as: "APAC is strengthened, to support the ecologically sustainable economic and social development of its members from developing countries." SANAP II is relevant for the implementation of the commissioning German ministry's strategic reference framework "The BMZ's New Asia Policy – Using Asia's Dynamism" (BMZ Paper 5, 2015). Furthermore, improvement and harmonization of quality infrastructure for regional economic integration promotes the development of free and fair trade as set out in the BMZ strategy "Aid for Trade" (BMZ Paper 07, 2017).

Interviewees from key stakeholders ranked the relevance of the SANAP II for their work highly.

The changes of orientation that had been made after SANAP I, made SANAP II more relevant. Overall, interviewees assessed SANAP II as more specific compared to the predecessor. In SANAP II, annual surveys of the needs of Accreditation Bodies from developing economies informed a tailor-made approach towards individual APAC members. The surveys of the needs of the members have prompted APAC to look at the demand on the regional accreditation network in a different way. They showed that the APAC biennial surveys have their merits but are too granular to guide strategic decisions that are envisaged by SANAP II.

New approaches like Training of Trainers (ToT) were introduced. Interviewees from emerging Accreditation Bodies stated that apart from the mandate and funding, the training of the staff is the most important aspect for any new Accreditation Body. For some stakeholders it was possible only after APAC/SANAP trainings that they were able to meet corrective actions to achieve MRA signatory status.

The project complies with the overarching policies and strategies on the regional level of APAC, on the national level of the accreditation bodies, and the BMZ.

SANAP II is perceived by some interviewees as a “think tank” of the APAC Capacity Building Committee.

Criterion	Assessment aspect	Assessment
<b>Relevance</b>	Solving the target group's core problem	2
	Agreement of the objective with strategies of the partner	3
	Agreement of the objective with BMZ strategies	1
	Topicality of the fundamental orientation and concept with respect to development policy	2
Global assessment of the relevance		2

The relevance criterion is given the rating “successful”.

### Effectiveness

The quality and requirements of the results model are found to be fit-for-purpose on output level and – with some reservations as exemplified below – on outcome level. The objective and indicators were not modified during implementation. Once APAC was established in January 2019, an understanding between PTB and APAC was reached to confirm the indicators previously agreed with the predecessor organizations and to fully quantify the target values of the indicators. The project’s logic is consistent, and the approach is plausible.

The project’s objective (“APAC is strengthened, to support the ecologically sustainable economic and social development of its members from developing countries.”) is assessed by the following three outcome indicators:

1) Strategic documents of APAC are making special reference to members from developing countries by mentioning them as a group needing special support and are recording the corresponding measures and impacts.

Initial value (2018): no strategic documents.

Target value (2021): 2 strategic documents.

Actual value: 1 strategic document.

*Fulfillment at 50 %*

Conclusion: The fulfillment of the indicator stands at one strategic document: the comprehensive survey of development needs and priorities of developing economy Accreditation Bodies.

The PTB project management expects that the indicator will not be fulfilled to 100 %. It has made several efforts to agree with the APAC management to develop a strategic document that makes special reference to the need to provide special support to members from developing countries. The “APAC Strategic Plan 2019-2021” entails the provision to assist the development of Associate Member Accreditation Bodies and to develop capacities on the route to become full members and partners in the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA). However, APAC decided not to make special reference to the need to provide special support to members from developing countries despite that the indicator was agreed in the implementation agreement in June 2019. The reason of APAC is that APAC resources should not be used for the integration of developing economies specifically but to serve all members equally. This was a subject in the first project progress report to the BMZ.

Several brochures and translations of documents that are of particular interest for Accreditation Bodies in developing economies have been produced with the support by SANAP II, e.g. translations of specific ILAC awareness documents into Thai, Vietnamese and Mongolian (and Burmese for Myanmar in progress). Those, however, are reasonably not considered “strategic documents of APAC”, or as project results on an outcome level.

2) At least two innovative capacity development programmes (that were developed either during the previous project or newly developed within the framework of the follow-up project) are independently continued by APAC without funding by PTB.

Initial value (2018): 4 innovative programmes are developed; none of these programmes can be implemented without additional funding by the project.

Target value (2021): 2 innovative programmes were developed by APAC without additional funding.

Actual value: 0 innovative programme

*Fulfillment at 0%*

Conclusion: The first programme of the target value of two programmes is potentially the e-learning programme that is run on the “teachable.com” website, and overseen by the APAC capacity building committee Chair. According to the Chair’s statement at the time of the evaluation, 1658 trainees are registered for this APAC platform. According to interviews among APAC members, the platform is widely known, however not known to each and every interviewee. Anyone can register as a trainee, from within or outside APAC. Membership in APAC is not checked. User accounts do not offer information on whether the user is an employee of an Accreditation Body in a developing economy. Some accreditation bodies, e.g. Indonesia, mentioned in the interviews that their new employees are required to use the platform for continuous learning. The project steering committee arranged to review the e-learning program with an external consultant in early 2020 and provided APAC with the report and recommendations in April 2020.

It has not yet been defined by the project what will register as the second innovative programme. Among the possible candidates is the tool of 'Knowledge Sharing Concept', including Reverse Attachments.

Regarding the methodology of the indicator the evaluator notes that the counting from the initial value to the target value suggests a decrease from 4 to 2, however it is meant that the quality (here: sustainability and ownership) of the programmes is to be improved. Thus, the logic of the counting does not seem to have been consistently applied. The initial value should rather be set at 0.

3) At least 50% of the members from developing countries confirm that APAC offers new services in subject fields that are useful to their work.

Initial value (2018): No survey conducted

Target value (2021): 50% of the members confirmed usefulness.

Actual value: more than 50% of the members confirmed usefulness

*Fulfillment at 100%*

Conclusion: In the thematic policy fields that have been identified for offering new services, 62.5% of supported participants in the Food Safety Management System training confirmed usefulness, and 66.7% of supported participants in the Occupational Health and Safety training, 100% of supported participants in the ISO 15189 training, 60% of the supported participants in the ISO 50003 training, and 57.1% of supported participants in the ISO 17029 training.

Further direct results that have been reported by interviewees include the increase of support of advanced APAC members for capacity building of less proficient accreditation bodies, e.g. the readiness to act as a host for attachment trainings or to conduct peer evaluations.

On output level, the project produced written and audiovisual learning materials. Some of these materials are accessible on the e-learning platform and were presented at APAC events, however the evaluator could not identify a clear dissemination strategy and key informants or the progress report seldomly made specific reference to such materials.

Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 crisis several project activities, e.g. meetings and trainings, have been conducted virtually or have been postponed. Currently, a cost-neutral extension of 12 months is being considered by PTB and the steering committee.

Criterion	Assessment aspect	Assessment
Effectiveness	Quality and requirements of the results model	2
	Objective achievement of the module	2

Global assessment of the effectiveness	2
--	---

The effectiveness criterion is given the rating “successful”.

### Efficiency

The resources invested and the modes of delivery are adequate in the view of interviewees. No interviewee suggested any other more efficient alternative for implementation. Not just since the restrictions of COVID-19, the contact management across countries to take operational decisions has been pursued quite efficiently via email and phone.

On the regional level, there was no project beside SANAP II providing support to APAC. The project coordinated strategically and operationally with several PTB projects on a national level in Asia-Pacific, e.g. Sri Lanka, Myanmar.

The project management is handled by a project coordinator and a project assistant at PTB in Braunschweig, Germany, as well as by an ISTE based in Taiwan. The latter is perceived by APAC interviewees as the key liaison for the preparation, conducting and follow-up of strategic aspects and key activities, such as the surveying of developing economy Accreditation Bodies on their development needs and priorities or the steering committee meetings. The committee has met nine times. It was put in the position to take all relevant decisions to steer the project. Until March 2020 eight external experts spent 191 expert days, of which 152 expert days were allocated to the ISTE (although less than 100 were carried out). The ISTE provided nine reports, covering semi-annual time periods and events, that are found to be clear and instructive for both the evaluator and the PTB headquarters.

The project counts on a multidisciplinary team with an accumulated experience in building capacities for accreditation bodies. All interviewees praised the technical and managerial qualities of the team, their professionalism and commitment.

The allocation of funds to the output areas (A-D) appears as planned, however the evaluator could assess neither sufficiently recent nor sufficiently detailed financial data.

The evaluator notes that a sound monitoring and knowledge management system has been lacking for most parts of the implementation period. PTB’s regular Excel project monitoring sheet appears to have not been applied by the project management between the start of the project and 12 May 2020. This lack of usage covers a time period of 24 months. The file “2020-01-16\_WiMo SANAP” was initially filled out based on the data of the BMZ proposal (e.g. indicators, risks), however never applied during project implementation until the evaluation took place.

A similar situation emerged with regards to the financial management of the project. The evaluator is not positioned to make profound first-hand and fact-based statements regarding efficiency.

APAC interviewees highlighted that PTB management regularly suggests how to increase ownership by way of increasing efficiency. For instance, for e-learning tutorials the involvement

of experts or the cutting of videos could be done by members' resources. As such, SANAP II is perceived by key stakeholders as more efficient as SANAP I.

Criterion	Assessment aspect	Assessment
Efficiency	Adequacy of the resources used	3
	Coordination with other donors/projects	1
	Adequacy of the period of time	3
Global assessment of the efficiency		3

The efficiency criterion is given the rating “satisfactory”.

### Impact

In principal, accreditation supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13. Specifically, APAC has taken some steps to better support its members from developing economies. First and foremost, the formation of APAC in January 2019 has made it easier for the developing economies to deal with the regional structure. The target group consists of the APAC management as well as the APAC members from developing economies. Among APAC Full Members and Associate Members the project targets Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam; furthermore, the non-members Bhutan, Lao, Myanmar, Nepal (NBSM) and Maldives. There is no constant flow upwards of emerging Accreditation Bodies and accreditation focal points. One Accreditation Body in Nepal has moved-up, Bhutan was withdrawn its associate status, and Cambodia is perceived by stakeholders as moving sideways.

APAC as an organization is more rounded after the 2019 merger. For emerging accreditation bodies, it provides added value through the SANAP-supported approaches and collects their feedback. New approaches like the Training of Trainers (ToT) for 10 participants, were introduced. Interviewees from emerging accreditation bodies stated that apart from the mandate and funding, the training of the staff is the most important aspect for any new Accreditation Body. For some stakeholders it was possible only after APAC/SANAP trainings that they were able to meet corrective actions to achieve MRA signatory status. The SANAP-supported 2019 APAC survey from the perspective of the needs of developing economies could be used to provide the baseline analysis for future impact monitoring. The project management staff states that this might be a way ahead, but it would need the buy-in from APAC.

Some initial work has been undertaken by the project management to pursue impact monitoring including an analysis of post-training reports and subsequent developments in accreditation bodies. In order to palpably prove impact, the project would need to show how activities such as trainings translate via APAC into the infrastructure of accreditation bodies or at the national level.

For the time being, the contribution that the trainings have made to overarching development results can be expected to show when accreditation bodies become full members of APAC and are fully recognized by established Accreditation Bodies.

With regards to a better integration into regional trade relations, in general, participants from developing economies report to have newly established or intensified connections to established Accreditation Bodies in Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore, among others.

Criterion	Assessment aspect	Assessment
Impact	Attaining higher-ranking objectives with respect to development policy	3
	Exemplarity, creation of structures and/or broad impact of the module	2
Global assessment of the impact		3

The impact criterion is given the rating “satisfactory”.

### Sustainability

The structure of the merged networks into APAC appears to be durable. The implementation of the APAC strategic plan until 2021 is expected to strengthen even further the positive results of the union.

Without qualified human resources in Accreditation Bodies there is no sustainability of results. Interviewees commented on the aspects of “brain drain”, which is reportedly not much of an issue for Accreditation Bodies: it can be expected that in some developing economies the staff that received SANAP trainings will remain in the permanent position within the civil service, and in cases where the accreditation body is a private entity, normally a competitive salary can be provided and the experts be kept on board of the Accreditation Body.

So far, the project supported 19 trainings (see file “Monitoring Trainings”). The monitoring of gender of SANAP-supported participants indicates quite a balanced ratio: 44 male participants, 52 female participants, whereas the gender ratio varied across thematic areas such as food safety (female overweight) and ISO/IEC 17011 Risk Management (male overweight).

The long-term strength of APAC comes from its members. Training measures and documents were set up in close collaboration with APAC and its members. This collaborative approach at the speed of the partner has been the main pillar to ensure that the project results can be sustained in the long term by the partners themselves. In that regard, the key prerequisites for sustainability in terms of durability of results was observed by SANAP II from the onset of each activity that went through the screening and approval process of the project steering committee.

The methodology and processes of the annual members' survey, feedback mechanism, ToT, e-learning can be continued by APAC after the end of SANAP II. Those project results have been the key to strengthen APAC to support its members from developing economies, and they do not overstretch the resources and capacities available to ensure the continuation.

Against this background, an exit of this BMZ/PTB intervention is, in principle, possible by the end of term. However, not least due to the stress the COVID-19 crisis puts on developing economies and regional trade relations, the key stakeholders do not expect that the cooperation will end soon, but that there should be a "SANAP III". A project proposal from APAC has already been submitted to PTB.

Beyond the effects of the project, some APAC members, like Singapore, monitor progress regarding international cooperation of their accreditation bodies by outlining such aspects in their strategies and by keeping track via Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Those synergies are found to be conducive for the long-term success of the project results.

The evaluator understands from the interviews that the project management and the steering committee had in mind throughout implementation the risks that have a negative influence on sustainability. As mentioned above, PTB's regular Excel project monitoring sheet covering risks had not been applied for the initial 24 months, thus it remains somewhat opaque to a third-party how risks have been taken into account.

An adequate approach of SANAP II to digitization (which goes far beyond e-learning or remote assessment) has not yet been developed.

Interviewees from some developing economies suggested that the project bears the annual APAC membership fee. The project has abstained from doing this, as it would be detrimental to ownership and sustainability.

In the evaluation, the factor of the durability of the positive impacts is given a higher weight because of the circumstance that the project mainly delivered results on human capacity level that can be sustained in the long term by the partners themselves.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Assessment aspect</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Sustainability</b>	Durability of the positive impacts	2
	Taking account of risks that have a negative influence on sustainability	3

Global assessment of the sustainability	2
---	---

The effectiveness criterion is given the rating “successful”.

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

### Strategy

The strategy of the project has been the result of a joint process with the relevant partners, as SANAP II emanated from a predecessor project. An implementation agreement of PTB and APAC has been in effect since 14 June 2019.

By January 2019, within the first year of implementation the two organizational predecessors APLAC and PAC merged to become APAC. This presented SANAP II with a huge potential to improve the alignment and to deliver tailored and demand-driven support to members from developing economies.

APAC did not, however, share the same focus on meeting the needs of developing economy members (see outcome indicator 1). APAC differentiates only between full members and associate members and whether they are MRA signatories or not. APAC does not want to apply the terminology of “developing economy”. It takes the perspective to guide and assist associate members to become full members, not to differentiate groups among full members and to serve all full members equally.

From the perspective of all key stakeholders, the project is understood truly as a partnership. The members of the steering committee presented themselves to be fully in the picture of the results model of the project. Compared to the situation that was described by the evaluation of SANAP I, on the one hand the rearrangement of the project’s steering and on the other hand the focusing on specific needs and priorities of APAC members have probably been the two most important changes that were made for SANAP II.

Within the strategic corridor, the activities ranged from the inquiry into the members’ status and needs as the basis for planning the tailored support measures, the report on potential members “Status of Development of Accreditation Bodies or National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFP) within the APAC region but are not Members or Affiliates of APAC”, ToT and various attachment trainings and ISO/IEC 17025 group trainer course, sponsorship for developing economies in sector-specific “classroom training”: food safety, occupational health and safety, medical laboratories, energy management systems, risk management for accreditation bodies, ISO/IEC 17025 experience-sharing, verification & validation (GHG) and e-Learning for ISO/IEC 17029.

An explicit capacity development strategy with activities on all levels of capacity development (person, organization, society) was not developed. Those aspects were considered in the continuous activity plan that the steering committee based its decisions on.

The evaluator notes, that some circumstances, such as the alignment with APAC’s project and knowledge management, IT management systems and the approach to challenges around

digitization of APAC and members have not yet been taken into account sufficiently (see criterion of sustainability).

Success factor	Central question	Assessment (%)
Strategy	Joint strategy development	80
	Taking the relevant stakeholders and circumstances into account	60
	Awareness level and implementation of the strategy	70
Global assessment of Strategy		70

## Cooperation

PTB is a trusted partner of APAC and all interviewed accreditation bodies in the region enjoy a long history of cooperation. Stakeholders appreciated to have been consulted about their perspective and the way their feedback was incorporated by SANAP II.

The focus of SANAP II to serve specific needs and priorities of APAC members has led to more exigent requirements regarding the implementation structure and processes. The cooperation and implementation structure needs to be able to respond to different local contexts, take advantage of regional synergies and allow for the implementation of the overall strategic focus. The management of a geographically dispersed team is challenging (Germany, Taiwan, Saudi-Arabia etc,) but workable.

All the “right“ stakeholders took part in the implementation of the strategy. With regards to the steering of the project no other partner was named who could have assumed a meaningful role to achieve the intended objectives and results.

No other donor programmes to support APAC currently exist. Prior to the formation of APAC, its predecessors (APLAC and PAC) received occasional support from APEC and APAC is one of four APEC Specialist Regional Bodies (SRBs) that support the work of the APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance. In case APEC would have played a formal role in the steering of the project, a line of conflict delineating APEC members and non-members would likely have become bigger and hindered the timely implementation of the project.

It is an open question whether the right people have been nominated by accreditation bodies and subsequently selected for the ToT in the regard that the staff must not just be profound in the technical aspects but also in the pedagogical aspects to share knowledge and train junior and inexperienced staff.

Apart from supporting the partners to manage the basics to become a recognized accreditation body, it is important to define the thematic fields that are important for accreditation in the respective developing economy and on regionally aggregated level for APAC. Based on

enquiries and surveys and manifested in activity plans for the steering committee, those aspects were spelled out by SANAP II. All management staff involved are aware not to overstretch SANAP’s regional approach by immersing itself too much into national details, and to strike the right balance. Essentially, training for human capacities can only be successful if each recipient individual accreditation body embeds this measure into organizational development (as it is done in some cases in form of institutional or national level strategies and milestones).

SANAP has and will most likely be able to reach impact-level results in those contexts only, where the regional offers by APAC will find a match on the national level in terms of political will, management orientation, funding and human capacities and – if needed – international donor support for national accreditation bodies and accreditation focal points. Responsibilities of the parties involved on regional and national levels have been clarified by the project to a large extent, but some accreditation bodies and accreditation focal points from developing economies appear to stick still too much at the receptive end of the cooperation.

<b>Success factor</b>	<b>Central question</b>	<b>Assessment (%)</b>
<b>Cooperation</b>	The right stakeholders	100
	Defining the project partners	80
	Clear responsibilities	80
	Taking lines of conflict into account	70
Global assessment of Cooperation		80

### **Steering structure**

As regards to the implementation arrangement and to the practice, the project has been implemented by APAC and PTB in accordance of joint steering decisions. The project structure (e.g. steering committee) and documents (e.g. minutes, activity reports) were found by the evaluator to be within the agreed framework. APAC shows sufficient ownership in the steering group.

The project steering committee maintains an ongoing action list (as at 16 March 2020) and has regularly produced minutes of meetings. The committee is formed by

- PTB Project Team: Nitja Rehani as the project coordinator until January 2020, Cora Roos as the project coordinator since March 2020, Graham Talbot as ISTE

- APAC Secretariat: Graeme Drake
- APAC Executive Committee: (Anil Jauhri, India), Vu Thuy Xuan (Vietnam)
- Developing Economy Member: Kukuh Ahmad (Indonesia)
- APAC Capacity-Building Committee: Brahim Houla (GAC, Saudi Arabia)

For the purpose of the scope of SANAP II the interviewees and the management team are satisfied with the steering committee’s work. No need for changes was expressed.

As mentioned above, the evaluator observes that for most of the time of implementation, the project did not apply the regular PTB Excel monitoring sheet. The steering committee decided in February 2019 to use parts of the output level reporting sheets to form a project action plan and to use the minutes of steering committee meetings for project management. The PTB Excel monitoring sheet was updated in 2020 for progress reporting regarding the BMZ project proposal.

Success factor	Central question	Assessment (%)
<b>Steering structure</b>	Using existing structures	90
	Complexity of the structure	90
	Steering based on operational planning and results-based monitoring	70
	Appropriate steering impulses	90
Global assessment of Steering structure		90

## Processes

The project did not apply any of the Capacity Works tools for any of the aspects of the assignment management. The processes for steering, support and core performances of the project were not mapped, however important aspects of the process landscape have clearly been mapped in the minds of the responsible staff – as results and interviews show.

An annual activity plan and plans for selected activities, such as trainings, were produced, shared with partners and observed. Those activities have observed the relevant capacity building policies of APAC and its members, according to interviewees.

The APAC capacity building secretariat stated during the evaluation that it is using the Asana project and knowledge management tool to plan and monitor services for potential and

associate members. The PTB management team stated to be aware of this tool, however, did not discuss the potential use for project-related processes.

The activity plans are elaborated and approved in a clear process, but follow-up to their implementation lacks structure. The project’s results framework and annual work plans are the main planning tools used by the project. The consolidated workplans do not include results-based budgeting nor operational planning for the project management. Once approved, activity plans constitute the main reference for operational planning by the implementing partners. The ISTE is called to supervise the implementation and reports back to PTB and partners involved.

As mentioned, the project drafted the Excel monitoring sheet “2020-01-16\_WiMo SANAP” based on the data of the BMZ proposal (e.g. indicators, risks), but did not apply this tool for the initial 24 months. Some parts of this information were documented in a decentral way, for instance in the 9 expert mission reports or in the Excel file “Monitoring Trainings”. In the latter file, 21 workshops and trainings have been registered, of which 14 have been subjected to a participant’s feedback assessment ranging from “2018\_06\_PAC California Food Safety” to “2019\_12 ISO IEC 15189\_Delhi”.

The ISTE and the Chair of the capacity building committee function as the key resource persons. The evaluator consider this as quite a bulk risk of a personalized information repository.

Since May 2020, the project operates on a comprehensive listing of activities, progress monitoring on output and outcome level against milestones, identifying lessons learned and coverage of risks.

The first progress report for the time period from March 2018 until February 2019, was submitted to BMZ overdue in January 2020. Apart from that, project cycle management steps have been observed properly.

Substantial delays of deadlines of project activities have occurred only after the restrictions of the COVID-19 crisis came up. This affects output 1 “Develop and implement a monitoring tool for training activities”, output 2 “Technical Training 6: 2-day ICAO-CORSIA Carbon offset scheme for the aviation sector”, and output 4 “APLAC to identify AB/Manager to conduct pre-evaluation audit of DA Cambodia following liaison with PTB ASEAN project”, “Identify SANAP mentoring proposals in conjunction with the APAC mentoring plan that is part of its support to Associate Members”, several attachment trainings conducted by regional guest accreditation bodies. Currently, a cost-neutral extension of 12 months is being considered by PTB and the steering committee.

<b>Success factor</b>	<b>Central question</b>	<b>Assessment (%)</b>
<b>Processes</b>	Analysis and integration of existing processes	70

	Establishing and examining the project's own processes	70
Global assessment of Processes		70

### Learning and innovation

The project has established several feedback mechanisms (e.g. steering committee, inquiries, surveys and post training reports) from which it learns. The implementation and evaluation of SANAP I is considered among key stakeholders as the biggest lesson, and important changes were made for SANAP II, e.g. steering, focus on individual needs of accreditation bodies.

SANAP adds an external dimension to discussions that take place in APAC. This consists of innovative approaches and of raising the profile of beneficiaries in developing economies.

The training measures are considered most important to build expertise of the staff of emerging accreditation bodies. Several beneficiaries stated that they were only able to meet corrective actions for becoming an MRA signatory after their staff received SANAP-supported training.

The responsiveness and readiness for absorption of project activities differs widely among APAC stakeholders. Whereas it is crucial for the ownership not to determine from outside who should attend trainings and a benchmarking of prerequisite technical qualifications does not appear feasible, PTB staff have articulated the idea to request an English certificate as a prerequisite for participation. In other projects it has turned out as a suitable criterion to safeguard the adequate selection of participants. Minimum knowledge of English is decisive for a success of any training measure given in English. Such a demand would probably not interfere in the autonomy of members too much: All SANAP supported events are APAC events – open to all APAC members and with APAC's specific permission, open to potential members. Any APAC member is free to nominate staff for APAC training events and – if the English certificate is missing – could do so without direct SANAP support for the participant's logistics.

As one member of APAC management put it, decision-makers in government often have a lack of awareness and the way awareness should be raised with them, this to convince them "not by events, but this evidence". Stakeholders mentioned that studies on impact could lead to palpable results in the cases of India and Vietnam and potentially for Bhutan, Cambodia and Nepal. Naturally, an external partnership with a university is considered to be conducive. The research question should be centered around the monetary value that is added to the national economy by a recognized accreditation system.

The project is perceived by interviewees to react flexibly, ready to apply lessons learned into its own work and to adjust its design accordingly (in relation to SANAP I).

From the regular exchanges that the project actively pursues with other PTB projects in the region that is covered by APAC, it enables those other projects to benefit from the activities and from the lessons learned.

The project management highlights the following lessons learned: firstly, the comprehensive survey of development needs and priorities of accreditation bodies in developing economies; secondly to tailor activities on the specific needs of accreditation bodies in developing economies rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Success factor	Central question	Assessment (%)
<b>Learning and innovation</b>	Defining learning objectives	40
	Supporting the partners' PME capabilities	70
	Learning from project activities	90
Global assessment of Learning and Innovation		70

### 3. Learning processes and learning experience

Many learning processes and experiences that have been elaborated in the evaluation of SANAP I remain relevant, in particular when it comes to the lack of application of Capacity Works management tools.

#### Learning Processes

- 1) The steering committee was used for exchange, joint reflection and learning on activity level.

#### Experiences

- 1) The comprehensive survey of development needs and priorities of Accreditation Bodies in developing economies, and the tailoring of activities on the specific needs of Accreditation Bodies in developing economies rather than a regional one-size-fits-all approach, have been the key feature of the project.
- 2) Stakeholders commended the project for its readiness to apply lessons learned of SANAP I, in particular the agile character of the steering structure and the focus on individual needs of Accreditation Bodies.
- 3) The experience was made the strategic design with the focus on developing economies was not entirely matched in the sense that APAC differentiates only between Full Members (i.e. MRA signatories) and Associate Members (non-MRA signatories). APAC does not want to use developing / developed country differentiation. APAC only wishes to provide individual capacity development to Associates to help them to become Full Members; once an Accreditation Body is a Full Member, APAC expects it to be self-sustaining in terms of its own development. But APAC aims to provide the same general training opportunities to all of its Members.

- 4) It was found not to be sufficiently clear among some stakeholders in developing economies what the project can and cannot address. For instance, the project's scope and resources are far too narrow to resolve broader capacity building bottlenecks of accreditation on national level, if there is no further support from another developmental measure. For Accreditation Bodies that are not yet a signatory to the MRA, some basic general training should still be provided in future. They are often still at the stage where they require basic training on the standards (e.g. ISO/IEC 17011, 17025).
- 5) The use of new, digital technologies in the delivery of accreditation is becoming even more important in times of restrictions of the COVID-19 crisis. It accelerates and intensifies the trend of digitization, for instance for training in form of e-learning and video conferences, but also for remote assessments.

#### 4. Recommendations

##### Recommendations to partners

- 1) The project steering committee might want to consider with regards to outcome indicator 1 whether an analysis – under the auspices of APAC – of the needs and expectations of Accreditation Bodies from developing economies would help both the APAC management orientation about a relevant section of the membership base and honor the SANAP implementation agreement.
- 2) The project steering committee should improve the communication to stakeholders in developing economies on what the project can do (e.g. support APAC to pilot innovative programmes, and support selected Accreditation Bodies and focal points in pursuing international recognition) and cannot do (e.g. resolve broader capacity building bottlenecks of accreditation on national level, if no additional project is partnering with the respective organization to address the regular key bottlenecks of lacking governmental awareness, management capacities, funding, and human resources.)
- 3) The project steering committee should encourage APAC to develop an adequate approach to digitization. This should go beyond items of e-learning or remote assessment and take into account that while digitization is at the core of sustainable capacity building, APAC and many of the selected Accreditation Bodies have insufficient resources for IT management systems and databases.

##### Recommendations to the project team

- 4) Recommendations #1, #2 and #3.
- 5) The PTB project management should comply with regular PTB project cycle templates, namely the Excel sheets on project monitoring and financial monitoring, and the Capacity Works methodology.
- 6) Feedback in form of participant's post-training reports have been collected for 14 training measures. The template states in a rather not partner-oriented way: „Following the training, please submit a report according to the following template to PTB within 2 weeks that outlines the actions that will be implemented as a result of the training.“ It could

increase alignment to ask participants to address their feedback to APAC, cc'ed SANAP project management, or – ideally – to combine the feedback mechanisms of SANAP and APAC into one.

- 7) The proposal for a new project starting in 2022, that has been drafted and discussed by APAC with the PTB project management can serve as a sound basis for discussions with BMZ. The proposed three outputs build on the results of the evaluated project and foresee:
- The organizational capacity of APAC to oversee and harmonize accreditation activities within the Asia Pacific region is strengthened.
  - The technical and managerial capacities of developing economy accreditation bodies in APAC are sustainably strengthened.
  - APAC and its developing economy members make greater use of new and emerging technologies to deliver their services in a more efficient and effective manner.

There are no recommendations to the "International Cooperation" department and no recommendations to the team from department 9.3 that is in charge of the evaluation.

**Annex 1: Grading scheme for OECD/DAC criteria**

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

Grade 1	Very good result, well above expectations
Grade 2	Good result, fully in line with expectations
Grade 3	Satisfactory result; is below expectations, but positive results dominate
Grade 4	unsatisfactory result; is below expectations and negative results dominate despite noticeable positive results
Grade 5	Despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
Grade 6	The project is completely unsuccessful, the situation has rather worsened



# Imprint

**Published by**

Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt  
Bundesallee 100  
38116 Braunschweig  
Germany

**Responsible**

9.01 Processes of International Cooperation  
[evaluierung-9.3@ptb.de](mailto:evaluierung-9.3@ptb.de)  
[www.evaluierung.ptb.de](http://www.evaluierung.ptb.de)