

PTB in brief

A globalized international economy calls for globalized metrology. This is why the orientation and impact of PTB, the national metrology institute of Germany, is not restricted to the national borders.

PTB with its 1,400 staff members is rather a „global player“ in the world of metrology and faces the responsibility involved for society, economy and science.

The international tasks of PTB include cooperation in all kinds of metrological organizations (the Meter Convention being the most prominent example) and cooperation with national metrology institutes all over the world. Furthermore, the PTB International Technical Cooperation advises and supports the conceptual design and practical implementation in the establishment of the quality infrastructure in developing and transition countries.

The clients of the Technical Cooperation projects are above all the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, (BMZ), which finances the majority of projects with PTB participation, but also the European Union, the World Bank and other organizations. For the implementation of projects a network of strategic partners is available.

All in all, the global networking of PTB has one major objective: the international harmonization of quality infrastructure and its mutual acceptance.



Project Data

Regional Cooperation for Environmental Protection and Food Safety in Latin America and the Caribbean

Source of finance

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Commission value

500 000 EUR

Implementing agency

Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB)
National Metrology Institute, Germany

Term

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Regional Cooperation for Environmental Protection and Food Safety in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Background

Participation in international trade, increasing regional integration as well as strengthening of competitiveness of national industries and consumer protection require a functioning quality infrastructure. The criteria for delivering services of metrology, standardization, testing, quality assurance as well as accreditation and certification need to be internationally harmonized if to avoid technical barriers to trade.



In the environmental and food sector of countries in the region, the services of quality infrastructure institutions are of different quality and rendered to a very different extent. The criteria for international recognition are complied with in some cases and not always with reliable reproducibility. This results in unused market opportunities that arise from the global interconnection between trade and economy and open national and regional markets. Insufficient quality infrastructures furthermore inhibit efficient monitoring of environmental or consumers protection policy implementation.

Existing regional cooperation approaches demonstrate that utilization of complementary resources can maximize benefits for individual institutions and impact of economic performance. Specialized regional organizations play an important role in connecting national quality infrastructure institutions and representing their interests at the international level. Adequate consultation mechanisms to continuously monitor the needs of developing country members and services tailored to these needs constitute major prerequisites to reach this goal.

Objective

The project objective therefore is directed to support the specialized regional organizations SIM (metrology) and IAAC (accreditation) in their efforts to offer to their members competent programs within the scope of conformity assessment in the environmental and food sector.

Components of support

Project activities aim at fostering regional cooperation and increase of international recognition of services delivered from quality infrastructure organizations in the region. A focus is given to establish opportunities for experience exchange among member countries in the region with different levels of development of their quality infrastructure. Selected inputs are sought from other regions according to needs to increase technical competence of staff and management competence of member organizations.

For this aim benchmarking exercises are supported like:

- laboratory intercomparisons to increase the level of comparability of measurements in the environmental and food sector both on the reference as well as on field laboratory level;
- evaluator trainings to harmonize procedures of conformity assessment and accreditation on a regional level.

Efforts include activities aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two regional organizations.



Cooperation

The project is part of an international agreement between the Organization of American States (OAS) and the German Government.



Implementation Partners

The project is jointly implemented by the OAS and the specialized regional bodies for metrology (Sistema Interamericano de Metrología SIM) and accreditation (InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation IAAC).

