

SEE QI Newsletter 2

Regional Consultancy Fund for Quality Infrastructure (QI) in South East Europe (SEE)

The SEE QI Fund is a demand-driven project implemented by the German national metrology institute Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB). It supports initiatives that foster the integration of the Western Balkan (WB6) countries in the European Union (EU) common market and other markets through the increased recognition of QI services. With this SEE QI Newsletter we would like to update you about recent developments within the SEE QI Fund and the ongoing SEE QI Projects and thus inform QI-stakeholders about the opportunities and benefits of regional cooperation in this field.

1. INTERVIEW WITH THE ALBANIAN CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE SEE QI FUND

Each WB6 Ministry responsible for Chapter 1 negotiations with the EU was asked by PTB to nominate a Consultative Committee (CC) member. The SEE QI CC met for the first time from 12.-13.06.2019 in Ohrid, North Macedonia. Since it was the first meeting of this kind, CC members got to know each other and agreed on the role and functioning of this body. One of the six participants was Ms Majlinda Hafizi, Director of Economic Development Policies at the Albanian Ministry of Finance.

Mrs Hafizi, how would you describe your role as Consultative Committee member?

My role as a Consultative Committee member consists in facilitating the active use of the Fund through communication with the relevant stakeholders. Also, the proposal of possible topics is a key aspect towards the achievement of good results of SEE QI Projects. Of great importance is my expected contribution to the result-oriented monitoring of the SEE QI Fund by sharing and providing information on the framework conditions and relevant progress of countries / stakeholders in the area of QI. Being a contact point for me is very crucial for transfer of related information to the policy-making representatives.



Majlinda Hafizi

How did Albanian QI stakeholders react to the news that they can initiate and participate in regional projects via the PTB SEE QI Fund?

The Albanian QI stakeholders were very interested to have further information on how to initiate or participate in a regional project via the PTB SEE QI Fund. As such in the future there is a need to provide full information to the relevant stakeholders to encourage their interest in participation. I am

hopeful the SEE QI Fund project will deal successfully with the development and implementation of all initiatives.

In October 2019, Albania will host a meeting of the CEFTA Subcommittee on Non Tariff measures, fostering regional cooperation on QI issues as well. In what WB6 political framework is the PTB SEE QI Fund embedded?

The core objective of the Berlin process is to advance the EU agenda, including regional cooperation and good neighbouring relations. In line with this goal, Additional Protocol 5 of CEFTA embodies the collaboration of the parties to deepen the trade integration among them with a free trade zone perspective, including the elimination of existing non-tariff measures and establishing mechanisms for trade facilitation in the region. QI is always part of regional discussions on the technical level and is backed up by political support from the respective parties in order to speed up the process of European Integration of WB6 in EU.

The EU enlargement process is a bilateral one: each WB6 country progresses at its own pace. Why are regional initiatives such as the SEE QI Projects nevertheless relevant for the EU accession process?

The Multi-Annual Plan for a Regional Economic Area (MAP REA initiative) coordinated by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) secretariat aims to enable unobstructed flow of goods, services, capital and highly skilled labour, making the region more attractive for investment and trade and accelerating convergence with the EU, thus bringing prosperity to Western Balkans citizens. Most of the actions and envisaged EU approximated legislation that are foreseen in the MAP REA are aligned with the EU progress report recommendations, especially Chapter 1 "Free Movement of Goods."

2. PLANNING OF FURTHER WB6 MARKET SURVEILLANCE COLLABORATION

PTB organised a project planning workshop on 4-5 September 2019 in Podgorica with the aim of developing a SEE QI Project on market surveillance in a participatory way.

WB6 market surveillance authorities had already cooperated in previous cooperation projects with the GIZ Open Regional Fund (ORF) on Trade and SIDA/ CEN and wanted to build on achievements such as a WB6 Market

Surveillance Network as "Regional Notification System for Unsafe Products" or the process of joint actions for specific product groups.

During the SEE QI planning workshop, they discussed current national needs that should and could be tackled by a regional approach. They came up with the decision to jointly adjust to the two new EU market surveillance regulations ((EU) 2019/1020 and 2019/515) specifically concerning collaboration requirements as well as to new aspects of sector EU regulations (PPE) and new products under the machinery directive (e.g. e-scooters). The participants nominated Mr Samir Bekto from the Market Surveillance Agency of BiH as project coordinator, who will submit a common SEE QI Project proposal.



Project planning workshop in Podgorica

3. FIRST SEE QI PROJECT COMES TO AN END

In the framework of the first SEE QI Project, National Metrology Institutes (NMI) from Albania, BiH, Greece and the Czech Republic conducted an interlaboratory comparison (ILC) on small volumes.

The SEE QI Project "ILC on small volumes" has achieved its goal: As soon as the Greek colleagues finalise the ILC analysis and assuming that the results are successful, the participating NMI can confirm their calibration and measurement capabilities (CMC) on small volumes on international level, and in consequence they can provide traceability to laboratories at national level.

Whilst the technical cooperation went very smoothly, this SEE QI Project encountered typical practical ILC problems that make the CMC submission process cumbersome, such as logistical problems at the border or the unpredictability of NMI participation. The devil lies in the details. For example, should the customs clearance papers be attached outside of the parcel or inside? It is this kind of issues that

affects the efficiency of the international traceability procedures.

4. ENSURING STABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY TO WB6 CONSUMERS

To smoothly transmit energy from one country to another, overhead electrical lines need to be interoperable.



Electrical lines

In 2018, Standardisation Institutes from BiH, Serbia and Montenegro created a working group with the aim to elaborate regionally agreed specifications for the design and construction of overhead lines above 1 kV AC, corresponding thereby to the obligations of the CENELEC standard EN 50341-1. The SEE QI Fund will contribute international best practice to their work by providing expertise from Germany, Austria and Slovenia to the technical elaboration of the National Normative Aspects (NNA). As connectivity of overland lines is of concern for all WB6 countries, the kick off and wrap up workshop will also be opened up for standardisation experts from Albania, North Macedonia and Kosovo.

More information on the SEE QI Project can be found here: <https://see.ptb.de/see-qi-projects/standardization-overhead-electrical-lines/>

5. IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF STANDARDS TO INCREASE EXPORT

Insufficient knowledge about standards is one of the main challenges for WB6 economic operators to export to the EU. This was one of the findings of piloting the Export Readiness Assessment (ERA) tool in the fruit and vegetable processing sector.

The ERA tool was developed by the WB6 Chambers Investments Forum, a network of WB6 Chambers of Commerce, with support of the GIZ Open Regional Fund (ORF) for Foreign Trade. Companies can use the online ERA tool to perform self-assessment and get a clear picture on their export readiness as well as to find out what the requirements for exporting businesses are.

The PTB SEE QI Fund had contributed to the online questionnaire targeted information on QI services for export. Both the PTB SEE QI Fund and the GIZ ORF are part of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)'s programme on sustainable economic development, so this kind of synergies are created in a systematic way by PTB and GIZ ORF project staff.

More information can be found here:

https://www.wb6cif.eu/portfolio_page/information-about-the-giz-orf-funded-project-increasing-export-potentials-of-smes-in-the-western-balkans-6-wb6-region/

6. SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE THE SEE QI NEWSLETTER IN THE FUTURE

If you wish to receive this newsletter in the future, please subscribe: <https://see.ptb.de/see-qi-news/subscribe-to-our-newsletter/>

If other QI stakeholders in your network might be interested in news on the SEE QI Fund, please feel free to share with them the information on how to register for the SEE QI Newsletter.

Date: September 30, 2019 | This newsletter is published about 3-4 times each year. Please subscribe or unsubscribe [here](#).

Published by
International Cooperation
Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
Bundesallee 100
38116 Braunschweig, Germany

Responsible
Dr. Marion Stoldt
+49 531 592-9300
marion.stoldt@ptb.de

Editors
Stefan Wallerath
Suzana Lange