SEE QI project 8:
WB6 QI response to COVID-19

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

Main result: Assuring QI institutions in the Western Balkan countries proactively tackle COVID–19 challenges related to QI
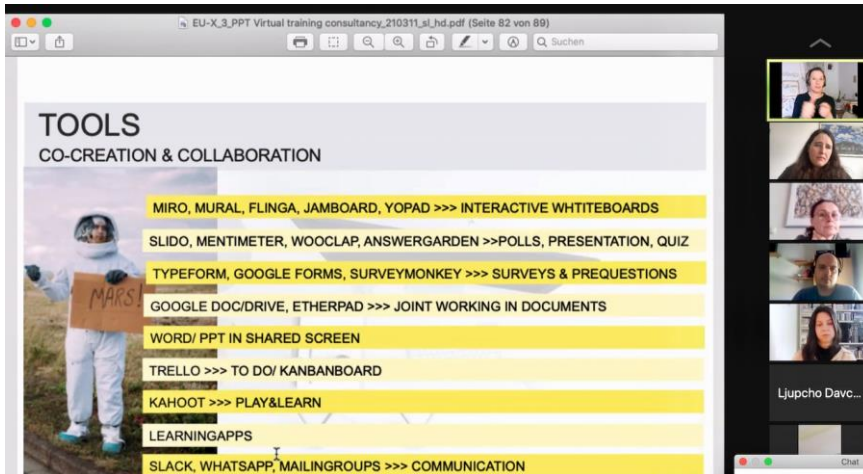
Duration: November 2020 – July 2021

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E-training "Conducting impactful virtual trainings and remote

The new economic, social and health challenges which arose through the spread of the COVID-19 virus have brought forth the need for transnational action. Accordingly, the project's aim was for QI institutions in the Western Balkan countries to proactively tackle Covid-19 challenges related to QI.

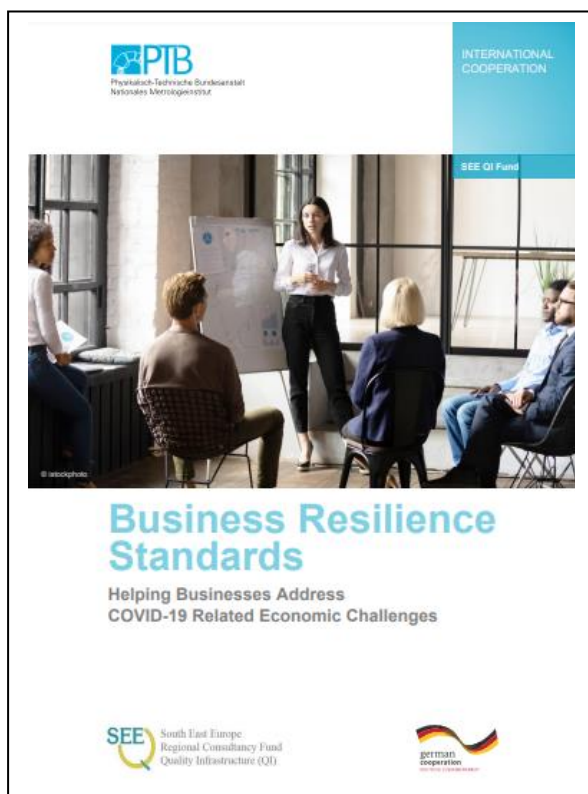The project was implemented through three components.

Component 1 focused on QI institutions to mitigate economic consequences of COVID-19

The component started with a needs assessment via Western Balkans standards bodies to understand the current situation with regard to the standards which can play a role in strengthening business resilience in the Western Balkan countries. Based on this research, the project team developed the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Business Resilience Standards. From March to June 2021, the ToT course was implemented online and covered a comprehensive package of standards related to business resilience, leadership and practical application in case studies. An interactive virtual training approach, a regional network of trainees/ future trainers as well as lectures by Western Balkan trainers who are familiar with the local context guided the participants to become trainers themselves. All trainees, who actively participated in the ToT sessions and who implemented a pilot training after the course, were promoted by the project team in various ways. A substantial output delivered by the ToT-programme is a Business Resilience Standards booklet of 182 pages, put together by the ToT organizers and featuring contributions by the six regional trainers in the course. The publication is available in English, Albanian and Bosnian language.

Component 2 aimed at QI institutions to offer improved health-related services

PTB procured laboratory equipment for infrared-thermometry calibration for metrology institutes in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Once the equipment arrives, if required e-training will be provided making use of recorded (PTB) training sessions.

Additionally, a two-day training on accreditation for SARS-CoV-2 virus identification has been organized where participants learned about how to ensure the quality of the examinations, the safety and efficiency of the examination services, and the safe disposal of samples and medical waste. The second day of the training, attended by 39 participants from four SEE countries' medical laboratories, focused on the PCR test and the serology tests. The results were compiled in a "Guide to Quality for Medical Laboratories Performing Molecular Tests for COVID-19" in order to provide laboratories, performing molecular-based methods for COVID-19, with a framework of requirements, related to EN ISO 15189:2012 in suspected human cases. This guide is available in English and in Albanian.

Handbook "Business Resilience Standards"

Component 3 addressed the need for QI institutions to build up capacities for remote work and cooperation

Correspondingly, three stand-alone e-trainings for participative and empowering virtual collaboration for event organisers, team leaders and trainers were held several times.

A virtual exchange of experience on COVID-19 triggered innovations in QI institutions/ services which took place online in March 2021 facilitated an exchange about innovative adaptations that QI institutions have undertaken during the pandemic in order to continue their work. The main focus was on innovations that are likely to persist even after the pandemic has subsided.

Project outputs

Needs analysis business resilience standards:
https://see.ptb.de/fileadmin/documents/see/SEE_QI_Visibility/Visibility_material/SEE_QI_P8_C1_Needs_Assessment_Report_20210113.pdf

ToT booklet:
https://see.ptb.de/see-qi-projects/wb6-qi-response-to-covid-19/training-of-trainers-on-business-resilience-standards/

ToT list of trained experts:
Trained_Experts_in_Business_Resilience_160721.pdf (ptb.de)

Guide to Quality for Medical Laboratories Performing Molecular Tests for Covid-19:
https://see.ptb.de/fileadmin/documents/see/SEE_QI_Visibility/Visibility_material/PTB_Info_Molecular_Test_Covid19_EN.pdf

Examples of Covid 19 triggered innovations in Western Balkans QI institutions:
https://www.covid19.ptb.de/fileadmin/covid19/downloads/Report_SEE_QI_Institutions_Covid-19_Innovation_EN.pdf

South East Europe
Regional Consultancy Fund
Quality Infrastructure (QI)