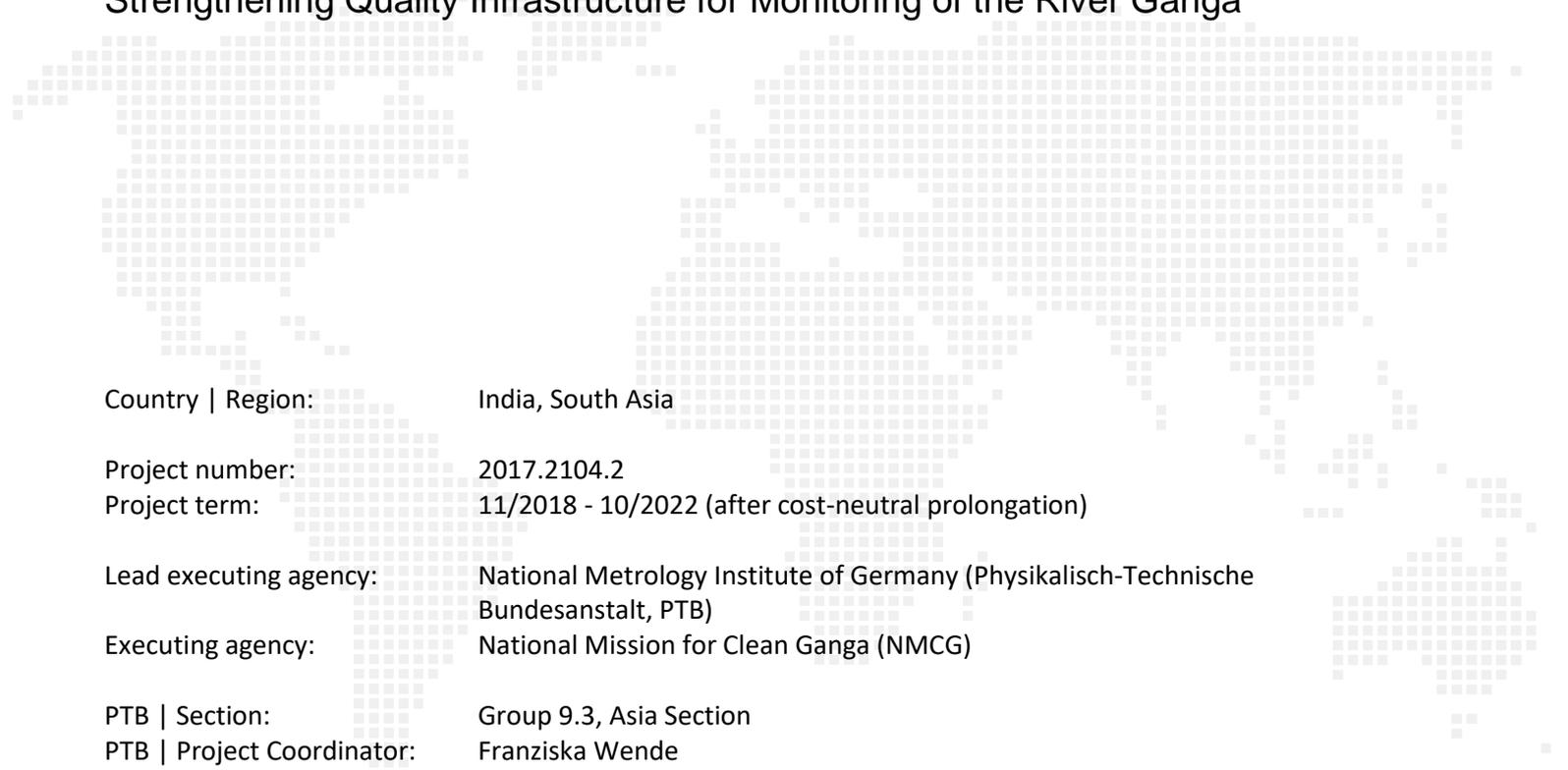


EXTERNAL EVALUATION – SHORT REPORT

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Strengthening Quality Infrastructure for Monitoring of the River Ganga



Country Region:	India, South Asia
Project number:	2017.2104.2
Project term:	11/2018 - 10/2022 (after cost-neutral prolongation)
Lead executing agency:	National Metrology Institute of Germany (Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt, PTB)
Executing agency:	National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)
PTB Section:	Group 9.3, Asia Section
PTB Project Coordinator:	Franziska Wende
Date:	25 th April 2022

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

Abbreviation	Definition
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (<i>Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung</i>)
DC	Development Cooperation
FC	Financial Cooperation
NMCG	National Mission for Clean Ganga
NPL	National Physical Laboratory
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PTB	<i>Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt</i>
QI	Quality Infrastructure
SMCG	State Mission for Clean Ganga
SPCB	State Pollution Control Board
SUD	Sustainable Urban Development
TC	Technical Cooperation
UK	Uttarakhand
UP	Uttar Pradesh

1. Project Description

This evaluation has been undertaken to assess the success of the bilateral cooperation project for “Strengthening Quality Infrastructure for Water Monitoring of the river Ganga”, implemented by the National Metrology Institute of Germany’s (*Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt*, PTB) in cooperation with the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG). The project has been commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung*, BMZ) in the frame project of the Development Programme “Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) in India”.

The project area is the Ganges River basin with a focus on the riverain states Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, home to nearly 450 million people. Despite the rejuvenation efforts under Indian government’s Namami Gange flagship program and the availability of surplus funds from various development agencies, the river remains heavily polluted, also due to weakly monitored anthropogenic activities, presenting a great threat to people and the environment as well as ecosystems and biodiversity in its catchment area. This also threatens the human right to water and sanitation, as well as to an adequate standard of living especially for vulnerable population groups. The lack of reliable (quality assured) water monitoring data has been recognised as one decisive bottleneck for the development of specific, appropriate, and well targeted pollution-mitigation measures as well as policy instruments for the river basin. The project has been conceived to address this issue by strengthening the capacities of relevant actors to produce credible and standardised water quality monitoring data.

2. Assessment of the project

The achievement of project objectives has been evaluated in accordance with the standards of the German Association for Evaluation (*Gesellschaft für Evaluation*, DeGEval) with focus on the 6 criteria of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), the 5 capacity WORKS success factors. The evaluation has been conducted to comply

with PTB's rule to evaluate projects during its duration to assure accountability towards BMZ and the Indian cooperation partners as well as to contribute towards PTB's institutional learning. The evaluation design considered the triangulation of data and methods. Standardised marking scales, as laid out by OECD-DAC and capacity WORKS, have been used for the evaluation of project results. The overall global assessment of the project based on OECD-DAC criteria is 2.7 (successful to a limited extent) which is satisfactory; results are below expectations, but mainly positive.

2.1 Status of the change process

The project evaluation based on the OECD-DAC criteria is as follows:

Relevance

The Project was found to be geared well to the country, global and BMZ policies and priorities, catering to the needs of the beneficiaries with an overall appropriate design and resilience to posed risks.

Mark: 2,3

Coherence

The Project was found to be internally and externally coherent with suitable alignment to German Development Cooperation and complementarity with other donors' activities (limited to the World Bank Group).

Mark: 2

Effectiveness

The project has partially achieved its objectives based on the defined indicators mainly due to the impact of the ongoing COVID pandemic which has led to a shift from on-site project delivery to virtual mode reducing the overall effectiveness of the project.

Mark: 3,3

Efficiency

The allocation of resources during the project delivery has been done in a reasonable and largely cost-efficient way by leveraging partner resources and contributions but a major part of the project budget remains unspent due to COVID related limitations.

Mark: 2,5

Impact

Overall, the contribution of the project towards the intended and unintended higher-level developmental changes has been majorly indirect.

Mark: 3

Sustainability

While the capacities of target groups are still not strengthened adequately to ensure sustained positive results (mainly due to COVID limitations), the project has contributed significantly towards enhancing the capacities (especially lab accreditations) of the target groups which make the results durable.

Mark: 3

2.2 Success factors for the observed results and change processes

The success factors for observed results have been assessed during the mission, taking the Capacity WORKS self-assessment filled out by the project coordinator and team as a basis. The different aspects have been discussed and deepened during the interviews carried out, based on specific guiding questions developed, with the following outcomes.

Strategy

The strategy was developed together with the implementing partners and is considered coherent and logically comprehensible. Although, its implementation has been hampered considerably by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Level of achievement: 70 %

Cooperation

The relevant partners for the implementation of the project have been identified based on a documented stakeholder map. The cooperation with the partners improved constantly over the project duration and went out well despite the severe impacts of the COVID pandemic.

Level of achievement: 75 %

Steering structure

A steering committee was set-up but could only be used to a limited extent under the prevailing COVID conditions (only part of the activities implemented).

Level of achievement: 60 %

Processes

Steering, core and support processes have been implemented by and large as planned.

Level of achievement: 80 %

Learning and innovation

The use of lessons learnt was supported by regular documentation (in the form of expert, lab assessment and training reports) and the online learning platform MOODLE was established.

Level of achievement: 60 %

3. Learning processes and learning experience

The chosen innovative approach to cooperate with another partner system than usual, can be considered as successful. During the project implementation NMCG developed into a committed and reliable partner. The work with the state level labs allowed the project to put "feet on the ground". Despite the challenges faced, which have been increased by the COVID pandemic (not allowing physical visits to the labs for international experts), this "practical approach" is considered in principle as successful. The direct confrontation with the situation in the labs responsible for water quality monitoring, allowed a realistic assessment of technical competences and organisational capacities needed for applying quality infrastructure systems. These experiences gained on the ground are an added value to the design of appropriate and targeted capacity development measures for the labs. The shift to purely virtual formats for capacity development and trainings, due to the COVID pandemic, was partially successful, generating innovative digital tools which could be applied very cost-efficient.

However, these digital applications and online learning platforms have their limitations and can't replace face-to-face/ on-the-job trainings completely. A hybrid approach seems promising for the future.

5. Recommendations

Recommendations to partners:

- Continue with NMCG as the implementing partner on central level showing a high ownership for the project.
- Strengthen the role of SMCGs and SPCBs at regional level.
- Focus project activities on one state (Uttar Pradesh) with up-scaling of the experiences gained to the other Ganga labs within UP and the other Ganga states via NMCG.
- Focus on training-of-trainer programs on the central lab (Lucknow). Engage with other Training Providers.
- Continue with regular lab assessments and foresee follow-up visits to the regional labs
- Continue working with NPL as technical partner

Recommendations to the project team:

- Foresee regular physical visits of PTB staff and external international experts, as soon as possible.
- Increase the contribution of national experts and foresee their placement near the partners on central level and regional level.
- Communicate and cooperate more formally with the other TC and FC modules in the common Development Cooperation (DC) program
- Communicate and cooperate more formally with other donors and development partners
- Transfer the un-used budget of the current project to the next phase for increasing effectiveness and efficiency
- Don't foresee purchase of equipment necessary under the TC project

Recommendations to the International Cooperation Department (Group 9.3):

- Continue to focus on leveraging PTB strengths in the QI sector ('Unique Selling Point') for increasing effectiveness, efficiency, and learning & innovation
- Ensure that the project indicators are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic and Time-bound) for a better measuring of the future project objective achievement (over your internal quality control system)