

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT - INCEPTION REPORT

Concept: Ms Suzana Lange
Methodology: Ms Katharina Plutta

“STATUS AND PERSPECTIVES OF COOMET”

PTB/BMZ Project number: 95271 / 2015.2066.7

Executing agency: PTB

Implementing partner institution: COOMET

PTB | Working Group: 9.11

PTB | Project coordinator: Mr Moritz Ackermann

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1. TERMES OF REFERENCE

1.1. ASSESSMENT CONTEXT

The German COOMET member Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) initiated the assessment on the status and perspectives of COOMET as organizational development study (OE study) with the following introductory note:

"COOMET has been established as a regional metrology organization in the Euro-Asian area in 1991 to foster the cooperation between national metrology institutes. Since then COOMET, its members and the relevant framework conditions developed and changed dynamically. As associated member of COOMET, Germany continuously provided support, including funding for COOMET activities with the intention to support the institutional development and enable all members to participate. However, after almost 30 years the financial contribution will be phased out. For this reason it seems useful to think about the current status of COOMET, its tasks, functioning, financing and perspectives. PTB deems high importance to the sustainability of COOMET. PTB intends an organizational development study as external assessment to be performed, which will include preparation of recommendations for the future development of COOMET. For this assessment it is important to have the opinions and cooperation of all COOMET members. PTB proposes to cover the tasks, structure, organizational and especially financial aspects of COOMET in the organizational development study."

PTB (project coordinator Moritz Ackermann) contracted Suzana Lange (concept) and Katharina Plutta (methodology) as external consultants to propose a methodology for the organizational development study.

- Suzana Lange is a freelance consultant for quality assurance in international cooperation. Her professional background is political sciences and organizational development. Since 2013 she has been contracted by various PTB projects as evaluator and consultant for project and network development. Beside, she works as consultant for different public authorities and private institutions.
- Katharina Plutta is a freelance consultant with ten years of work experience in the management and evaluation of projects and programmes in development cooperation. Her background is in psychology (MSc level) and organizational development. Apart for PTB she has worked for the major governmental and nongovernmental organizations in German development cooperation.

The consultant's approach onto this study is based on the general assumption that the member organizations of COOMET aim towards a further professionalization of COOMET as active and sustainable Regional Metrology Organization (RMO). The consultants are aware of the fact that there are currently several COOMET initiatives towards the aforementioned aim either planned or ongoing, such as a research on COOMET's legal entity, a financial analysis (annual cost estimates to support the operation of COOMET and to fund the events held within COOMET) and an envisaged COOMET strategy. The organizational development study is one of those initiatives, aiming to provide added value to its Members through a participatory and systemic approach. Both the study and the other initiatives will strongly benefit from a close interaction and interlinkage between all initiatives during their implementation.

1.2 ASSESSMENT OBJECT

COOMET's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) foresees that in order to achieve the objectives of COOMET, each member has the right to propose projects for joint work and participate in their implementation. This assessment on status and perspectives of COOMET (organizational development study) is initiated by PTB, holding one of the COOMET Vice-Presidency positions and providing institutional as well as project-based support to COOMET. The Presidential Council endorsed PTB's initiative during its meeting in November 2018. PTB had previously presented the idea of an assessment during the COOMET Committee meeting in April 2018. It was approved by COOMET in the resolution no. 4:

"To take into note of the information of Peter Ulbig, Vice-President of COOMET, about the beginning of work on the external assessment of the status of activities and perspectives for cooperation within COOMET by an external expert within the framework of the project "Assistance to regional trade and support of consumer rights protection for COOMET member-countries" (on the initiative of PTB, Germany). To ask the COOMET Committee Members to take an active part in the questionnaire for the purposes of external assessment."

The assessment is initiated by PTB within the current technical assistance project (05/2017-05/2020) financed with 0,8 Mio EUR by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project aims to support three specific objectives:

1. The integration of COOMET into international professional bodies has been consolidated
2. COOMET offers demand oriented qualification measures to its members
3. COOMET disposes of a mid-term business plan and corporate identity

The third objective is specified in indicator C.1 as follows:

"COOMET has a strategy document with content regarding

- Securing and further developing the competence of the members
- Organizational development/ structure
- Inclusion and support of the CEEMS
- Cost planning and financing."

The study is aimed to be a first step to reach this objective by identifying current issues and options regarding the status and perspectives of COOMET in three interlinked fields:

- COOMET Tasks and fields of cooperation
- COOMET Financing model
- COOMET Organizational structure

COOMET Members' perspectives will be collected and analysed in a three-step approach:

1. step: Actual situation
2. step: Need for adaptation
3. step: Options for future development

These topics are to a certain extent and actuality valid in all RMO. Examples and lessons learned from these other RMO and other International Organizations (IO) such as BIPM will be introduced as far as possible in the study.

4. step: Benchmarking: lessons learned.

The underlying assumptions by the Consultants will be presented and analysed as well.

1.2 FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

COOMET was founded in June 1991. Today COOMET has 21 Members, out of which fifteen full Members (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cuba, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine) and six associate Members (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, DPR of Korea, China, Slovakia, Turkey).

COOMET Scope of work

COOMET is one out of six RMOs recognised within the framework of the CIPM MRA. The RMO is the link for its member National Metrology Institutes (NMI) to the international metrological structures and fulfils tasks assigned to RMOs by the CIPM MRA. Active participation in COOMET is the precondition for the international recognition of national measurement standards and/or calibration certificates issued by NMIs.

The actual benefit for NMI to engage in COOMET differ though in accordance of the status of the member such as full versus associate membership; international recognition of the NMI and/or actual participation in the CIPM MRA through the COOMET structure.

The COOMET objectives, tasks and principal fields of cooperation are defined in its MoU, amended last time in April 2012. The MoU does not cover financial aspects. Working processes are described in the Rules of Procedures and on level of the single structural bodies.

According to COOMET President's Council Members, the development of a mid-term COOMET Strategy is envisaged for the near future.

COOMET Financing

COOMET is financed by various sources:

The COOMET member country holding the Presidency of COOMET provides and mainly finances the COOMET Secretariat. Some COOMET full Members as well as associate Members finance activities such as intercomparisons, the hosting of COOMET Committee meetings, COOMET Presidential Council meetings, technical committee (TC) meetings and TC secretaries or the organisation of trainings and workshops/seminars.

Most, but not all COOMET countries cover their own expenses deriving from participation in COOMET statutory meetings and activities. In some cases this contribution is covered by various cooperation projects.

Currently, the participation of most countries in COOMET activities is carried out on the basis of self-financing, including partial.

PTB as associate member contributes since many years to the funding of the Secretariat, the participation of some COOMET Members to statutory meetings and activities and the implementation of activities such as joint training measures.

Up to now, there is neither full information on financial contributions nor on cost categories of COOMET's functioning, such as the costs of Secretariat work, of statutory meetings (Committee, President's Council, TC, etc), of activities such as trainings, workshops, intercomparisons, Award, and other activities, of international networking (e.g. participation in international meetings and conferences) and of public relation activities such as the two websites and the publications.

The question how to ensure financial stability and sustainability for COOMET has been discussed several times in the past, but without a sustainable result. Therefore, financial sustainability is one suggested topic of the study.

COOMET Organizational structure

Today, COOMET is operating as network (voluntary association) and has no legal entity. There are current discussions raised by the Presidency and other COOMET Members about the establishment of a legal entity of COOMET and the permanent place of its registration. This implies practical as well as legal and political questions.

All NMIs of COOMET Member Countries are represented in the COOMET Committee. The Presidency of COOMET is rotating. Since 2018, Belarus is holding the Presidency for a three-year period. The NMI of the Presidency provides the Secretariat, responsible for the management of the network and the communication between the different COOMET bodies. In 2018, the four elected Vice-Presidents are from Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and Germany.

COOMET has various structural bodies to implement its cooperation: A Joint Committee on measurement standards (etalons), TCs per field of measurement, a Quality Forum and its TC on quality issues, as well as Sub-Committees and Working Groups.

A COOMET development programme for 2017-2020 was approved at the COOMET Committee meeting in April 2017. Foreseen activities, especially in section 1 "Improvement of COOMET infrastructure and activity arrangement", are of interest for the organizational development study and vice-versa.

The President's Council decided in November 2018 to establish a Working Group on Development of a COOMET Strategy under the lead of the COOMET President.

2. KEY TOPICS OF THE ASSESSMENT

1) COOMET Tasks and fields of cooperation

- Do COOMET Members agree with the following underlying assumptions?
 - The relevance of single COOMET tasks and fields of cooperation vary according to the status of the Members.
 - The MoU sufficiently describes the actual tasks and fields of cooperation of COOMET.
 - Satisfaction with the fulfilment of tasks and fields of cooperation are a precondition for (further) (financial) engagement of Members.
- Actual situation: To what extent is COOMET according to its Members fulfilling its main tasks and fields of cooperation?
- Need for adaption: What are reasons that prevent COOMET from fully fulfilling its tasks?
- Benchmarking: What are lessons learned from other RMO and IO?
- Options for future development: In which way can COOMET improve its performance?

2) COOMET Financing

- Do COOMET Members agree with the following underlying assumptions?
 - CEEMS participation in COOMET statutory meetings and activities depend on external funding.
 - The organisation of COOMET activities is driven by the willingness of one or more COOMET Members to contribute to the financing.
 - Models of sharing financial responsibilities need to take into consideration the diversity of Members' status.
- Actual situation: What is the current financing model of COOMET?
- Need for adaption: Which statutory bodies and activities need a different financing in the future?
- Benchmarking: What are lessons learned from other RMO and IO?

- Options for future development: Which internal and external financing options are possible to sustainably secure the functioning of COOMET?

3) COOMET Organizational structure

- Do COOMET Members agree with the following underlying assumptions?
 - Future changes in COOMET's tasks as well as in its financing will have consequences on the organizational structure (e.g. Secretariat) and work processes of COOMET.
 - The issue of COOMET's legal status implies practical as well as legal and political questions.
 - COOMET aims considering the interests of and actively involving all its Members.
- Actual situation: Is the organizational and legal structure suitable for ensuring the sustainable functioning of COOMET?
- Need for adaption: Which internal and external changes require adaptations?
- Benchmarking: What are lessons learned from other RMO and IO?
- Options for future development: In order to better and sustainably achieve its objectives, in which fields COOMET needs to adapt?

Outcome

- The organizational development study will capture COOMET Members' views and experiences.
- The information provided by Members will be treated anonymously. All data gathering activities conducted in the framework of this study will comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation.
- The findings and recommendations of the organizational development study will be available to all COOMET Members and structural bodies as suggestions that may contribute to the further organizational development of COOMET.
- Recommendations deriving from the study should be discussed with the Working Group on Development of a COOMET Strategy under the lead of the COOMET President. Possible activities as follow up should be decided by the COOMET Committee (e.g. in the form of a roadmap).

3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

1. Desk study

The Consultants will analyse COOMET documents such as the COOMET MoU, Rules of Procedure, Development Plan 2017 - 2010 or minutes of recent statutory meetings, as well as external documents such as the evaluation of the PTB COOMET project. The Consultants will research practise of other RMO and IO on relevant topics such as funding modalities, which might serve as benchmark or example for COOMET.

2. Qualitative interviews

Explorative interviews with Members of the COOMET President's Council were held in October 2018. Other qualitative interviews with COOMET Members will be conducted before launching the survey as well as later to get a deeper understanding of selected findings. In telephone interviews with external stakeholders (BIPM, other RMO etc) the consultants will discuss external requirements as well as benchmarks/ examples.

The Working Group appointed by the COOMET President will be addressed for elaborating more in-depth information for the study.

3. Online survey

The draft survey - see annex - is based on first research and the results of explorative interviews. Both an English and a Russian version will be part of the web-based survey.

At the end of January 2019, the COOMET Secretariat sent a request to all COOMET Committee members to update the information on the cooperation participants and their contact details (TC SC, WG members) from all COOMET countries. A list of potential participants with e-mail will be compiled for the COOMET Committee meeting 2019 and handed over to the Consultants.

To increase the motivation of COOMET Members to participate, the survey might be kicked off by a support letter of the COOMET President, accompanied by an explanatory note to all National Contact points. The overall analysis of results will be part of the OE study.

4. Participation in COOMET statutory meetings

Observation of various COOMET meetings and informal discussions during these events will provide additional valuable information for the organizational development study. The assessment was announced in the COOMET Committee meeting in April 2018. The draft inception report was presented at the President's Council in November 2018 and will be presented at the 29th meeting of the COOMET Committee on 3.-4. April 2019.

The preliminary results of the surveys will be shared and discussed with members of Working Group on development of the COOMET Strategy. The OE study will be presented at the COOMET President's Council meeting in November 2019.

4. CURRENT STATUS OF PREPARATIONS

PTB contracted Suzana Lange (concept) and Katharina Plutta (methodology) as external Consultants.

Suzana Lange attended the COOMET Committee meeting in April 2018 to collect first information about the possible design of the assessment. The Consultants conducted explorative interviews with the COOMET President's Council Members in October 2018 and presented the draft inception report to the Members of the President's Council at their meeting in November 2018 in Minsk. PTB will present the inception report and the survey to the COOMET Committee meeting in April 2019. The Consultants will be present to answer to possible questions.

5. ANNEX

1. Working plan: Suggested programme of data collection
2. List of intended interview partners
3. Content of online survey
4. Interview guideline

1. Working plan: Suggested programme of data collection

	2018			2019											
	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Organizational development study (OE study)															
Participation in COOMET meetings															
Development of Inception report															
Draft OE study															
Revision, summary and translation															
Desk study															
COOMET + other documents															
Research practise of other RMO + IO															
Survey															
Draft survey															
Letter President and explanatory note to all National Contact points															
Launch survey (with prolongation if necessary)															
Analysis of results															
Qualitative interviews															
Interviews with COOMET Members															
Interviews with external stakeholders															
Working Group meetings															