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# Strengthening the Quality Infrastructure in the South Caucasus

Newsletter 02 (September 2019 to February 2020)

## Dear Readers,

This is the second newsletter of the PTB regional project with the countries of the South Caucasus to strengthen the Quality Infrastructure in the region. Again, we will give you a short introduction into the project, inform you about the activities of and provide you with an outlook for the upcoming months.

## About the project

The PTB South Caucasus project, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), has a focus on the strong food sector of the region since the beginning of the regional cooperation in 2014.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the current phase targets to improve the calibrations and further metrological services relevant for the food and wine sector.

Priority laboratories in the metrology institutes NIM (Armenia), AzMI (Azerbaijan) and GeoSTM (Georgia) are supported to extend their supply of services to stakeholders of industry and trade in the region. An efficient metrology service is an important step to allow enterprises of the region to export their products to regional and international markets. The priority laboratories are in the fields of

mass, volume, temperature, humidity and chemical metrology.

Next to the work with the metrology institutes, PTB is reaching out to other relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of products in the region. PTB is consulting the relevant ministries or agencies responsible for Quality Infrastructure. Also, PTB is going to support business support organisations to better provide services to small and medium enterprises on how to export. Here, a strong focus lies on chambers and associations supporting the wine sector.

By its approach, the project is working complementary to other projects like the PTB Eastern Partnership project, the GIZ project on development of the private sector and vocational training as well as to EU Twinning and World Bank projects in the three countries.

Information about the project can also be found online: [www.eastern-partnership.ptb.de](http://www.eastern-partnership.ptb.de) under *Other PTB activities*.

## Activities from September 2019 to February 2020

- **Metrology in Chemistry, consultation for the Georgian Metrology Institute GeoSTM**

From 15 to 18 October 2019, Dr. Schnelle-Werner from ZMK & Analytics GmbH Wolfen visited our Georgian partner institution GeoSTM to support its branch of metrology in chemistry. Next to a training on reference materials, certified reference materials and the relevant international standard, a new layout of the pH laboratory was established. The new layout would allow GeoSTM to prepare their own reference materials. By that they can increase the services for companies in the whole South Caucasus region, where stable reference materials are demanded.

- **Statistical Tools for Metrology, regional training**

At the end of October, key expert of the project Dr. Irene Flouda conducted a regional training on statistical tools that are needed in metrology institutes. Participants from all the three metrology institutes from the South Caucasus countries participated in the training which was hosted by GeoSTM. With knowledge about the most important statistical tools that are applied in the routine work of a calibration laboratory for analysing and interpreting the measurement results and estimating the relevant uncertainties, metrology institutes improve the quality of their analyses.

- **Calibration services, consultation for the Armenian Metrology Institute NIM**

After the training on Statistical Tools for Metrology, Dr. Irene Flouda provided consultation to the NIM representatives concerning the development of calibration methods. As NIM is in the process of establishing their own mass and temperature laboratories, they increase their capacities now in order to start their services as soon as the laboratories are ready to work.

- **Improving Quality, consultation for GeoSTM**

In November, Dr. Irene Flouda spent two further days at GeoSTM to provide intensive consultation to Quality Manager Natalia Sidamonidze on the necessary amendments to revise the Quality System according to the current international standards.

- **Extending the measurement range, mass comparator and consultation for GeoSTM**

For GeoSTM, PTB purchased a mass comparator

that is able to measure big volumes up to 60 litres. By that, GeoSTM increases its range of measurement and, hence, their services to companies working with fluids. In order to set up the device together and to train the staff of GeoSTM working with the new comparator, Dr. Breuel from ZMK & Analytics GmbH travelled to Tbilisi as soon as the comparator arrived at GeoSTM. The comparator is now in function with a low measurement uncertainty.

- **Seminar on Export Quality Management**

On 10 and 11 December, a training for business support organisations from the wine sector was conducted in Tbilisi. Chambers, foundations, associations and ministry staff from all the three South Caucasus countries participated in the training and were provided with information for their members what is necessary to export their products and how this could be done best.



Photo from the EQM seminar in Tbilisi, December 2019

- **Steering Committee Meeting 2019**

On 12 December, the Steering Committee Meeting of the project was held in Tbilisi. Here, the developments of the past year and the activities for the upcoming project period were discussed. Besides the planning of the project, some consultancy was provided to the General Director Albert Babayan and the Quality Manager Gevorg Martoyan of NIM on the development of a Quality System according to the standard ISO/IEC 17025. General Director Mr Babayan used the chance of his stay in Tbilisi to visit the laboratories of GeoSTM and get to know its management.

- **Quality Control, workshop for GeoSTM**

On 13 December, Dr. Irene Flouda organised a workshop for GeoSTM heads of laboratories to present their procedures for ensuring the validity of calibration results and discussed with them some methods for improvement.

- **Systemic consultation for NIM**

From 24 to 28 February, PTB expert Mr. Haygas Kalustian visited NIM to give a systemic consultation on the current status, the possibilities of the country's metrology and methods to identify and respond to the customer's demands for metrology services in Armenia.

## What is next?

- **Calibration trainings in Germany**

In March, two employees of GeoSTM will receive a training at ZMK & Analytics GmbH in Wolfen on the topics reference materials, pH and density. Here, the partners learn practically to use the internationally recognised methods and are consulted about the next steps that are necessary to develop their own services in the field of metrology in chemistry.

- **Interlaboratory Comparison for temperature measurement**

In the upcoming months, PTB is going to organise an interlaboratory comparison for temperature measurement in which GeoSTM will act as the pilot laboratory. Calibration laboratories from all the three partner countries already registered to participate in the comparison. Such a comparison is useful to compare laboratory measurements with peers in order to assess and improve the services.

- **Trainings on the standard for testing and calibration laboratories**

Soon, all metrology institutes and laboratories worldwide have to work according the revised version of the standard ISO/IEC 17025 which defines the requirements of the competences of testing and calibration laboratories. To ensure that our partners are on track, Dr. Irene Flouda will conduct trainings at the end of March at the Azerbaijan Metrology Institute AzMI and in Armenia at NIM.

- **Trainings on internal audits in GeoSTM**

At the end of April, Dr. Irene Flouda will provide a training on internal audits for GeoSTM.

Thank you for reading! For further information, please contact us.

With kind regards,

PTB Project Team  
Janin Fischer  
(janin.fischer@ptb.de)

Irene Flouda  
(flouda@eim.gr)



Photo from the Steering Committee Meeting in Tbilisi, December 2019