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Mid Term Review of the Agadir Technical Unit and the Swedish International Development Agency, Sida funded project "Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries"

Final Report

Sida

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Table of contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATC	Agadir Technical Committee
ATU	Agadir Technical Unit
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IT	Information Technology
ITP	International Training Programme
LPM	Local Programme Manager
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoM	Minutes of meeting
MoV	Means of Verification
MTR	Mid-term Review
NAB	National Accreditation Body
NFP	National Focal Point
NSB	National Standards Body
NTB	Non-Tariff Barrier
PHCC	Product Harmonisation Coordination Committee
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
PWG	Product Working Group
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
SEK	Swedish Krona
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIS	Swedish Standards Institute
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SQIA	Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries
Swedac	Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment
TBT	Technical Barrier to Trade
ToR	Terms of Reference
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Preface

This is the Mid-Term Review of Agadir Technical Unit and the Swedish International Development Agency, Sida funded project "Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries". It was commissioned by Sida's Unit for MENA and carried out by NIRAS Indevelop.

Field visits were undertaken in Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan. A visit was also undertaken to Stockholm to meet Swedac and the two Swedish partners.

NIRAS Indevelop's independent evaluation team consisted of:
- Ali Dastgeer, Team Leader
- Bourhan Kreitem
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- Stefano Ciarli

The Project Manager at NIRAS Indevelop for this evaluation, Josefina Halme, has been responsible for compliance with NIRAS Indevelop's quality assurance system throughout the process and quality assurance was performed by Ian Christoplos. The team would like to thank all the respondents for their valuable contribution to the evaluation process.

Executive Summary

This is the final report of the mid-term review of the second phase of the Support to Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries (SQIA) financed by Sweden. The purpose of the second phase of the project is to assist the four Agadir countries in the implementation of the Agadir Agreement signed in 2004 with the aim to establish a free trade area between Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan. The support focuses on establishing systems and structures to bring down technical barriers to trade (TBTs). The overall expected result is to reduce poverty through boosting trade, increased economic development, and the attraction of Foreign Direct Investments. The support period runs from 2014 to 2018 and amounts to SEK 51.5 million. The local counterpart of the project is the Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) in Amman, Jordan, and the technical assistance is provided by the Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (Swedac).

The review adopts a contribution analysis approach, recognising that there are alternative explanations for the changes observed. The project is but one contribution to a broader process of trade reform in the Agadir countries. The main data collection activities organised by the review team during implementation were a documentation review and semi-structured interviews conducted during a field visits to the Agadir member countries, visits to Stockholm to meet Swedac and the two Swedish partners, and additional Skype interviews. The main limitation of the review is the slow progress of the project, which inhibited any systematic assessment of outcomes, impact and sustainability.

Relevance

The mid-term review finds that the chain between the actual project design and its overall objective is indirect at best as there are no direct outcomes or outputs aimed at enhancing the poverty impact of the project. The project appears as relevant at first sight, but it is unclear to what extent it is TBTs that constrain trade within the region, given the many other factors that obstruct intra-regional trade.

The overall project design and process contains characteristics and activities that are favourable to ensuring relevance and ownership among stakeholders. At the same time, there is no indication that the lessons learned from the EU support have been considered when designing the SQIA project. A concern is Sida's possibility to absorb the information produced in the project and engage with its implementation.

The greatest doubts about the relevance of the SQIA project arise when considering the political economy of the Agadir Agreement. There was, from the start, a range of serious challenges that affected the feasibility of the SQIA project, specifically the

lack of an existing harmonisation structure, the institutional differences between the member countries and the weakness of the ATU. The likelihood of the SQIA project making a significant contribution to a complex and multi-stakeholder environment seems very optimistic, if not unrealistic.

Moreover, the mid-term review finds that the countries currently seem to have little appetite to promote regional trade and that demand for a harmonisation process remains to be demonstrated.

Effectiveness

The mid-term review finds that the SQIA project has done most progress in outputs and outcomes related to the organisation of project implementation (arguably more related to process than actual results), rather than with the actual harmonisation process. The main progress in terms of harmonisation has been the production of tables of correspondence for one product (low voltage cables) and one sector (garments), but this can only be considered the start of the harmonisation process. The mid-term review finds no evidence of achievement of project outcomes.

Overall, the mid-term review finds that the project has indeed led to increased dialogue amongst the four countries. It has led to increased awareness and knowledge, and greater interaction. However, that has come at considerable expense and (in the view of the mid-term review) cannot justify the time and resources invested into the project.

The mid-term review finds that the private sector has been marginally involved in the project and thus has not been used as a key source to identify what the real technical barriers are in interregional trade. Another constraint has been the weakness of the ATU and the fact that the SQIA project largely has been working separately from the ATU.

Efficiency

The mid-term review finds that the ATU does not at present have the proper specialised staff to handle the potential continuity of project activities, and a documented management system that will allow it to receive the results of the project and ensure the sustainability of its effects.

Coordination amongst stakeholders within the project has suffered from insufficient clarity about who these stakeholders are, the absence of a structured communication tool and lack of clear coordination structures. The online information and coordination platform has been delayed and is unlikely to solve all problems of communication. The project was considerably delayed in starting up, the current relationship between the ATU and SQIA is frictional and communication about project activities has been problematic.

The financial data show that the administrative and staff costs represented 42.6% of the total disbursements over the current lifetime of the project, with only 58.4% spent on project activities (capacity building and harmonisation activities). This suggests that thus far the project is being implemented with high administrative and related costs. At the same time, there is some underspending, which is due to the delays experienced by the project.

A gender work plan was developed within the project, but it was deemed inappropriate by the Project Steering Committee for reasons that the mid-term review finds justifiable. At present, there is no gender expert and there has been no progress in implementation of the gender work plan. In sum, gender issues have played marginal roles in the programme.

Evaluative conclusion

The mid-term review concludes that the relevance of the project is questionable. The overall design was too ambitious and underestimated the challenges despite previous experiences. Some results have been reached in terms of setting in motion and pushing forward the harmonisation process and structures of two pilot products. These positive achievements are overshadowed by multiple weaknesses that put sustainability at risk. There is no basis on which the mid-term review can recommend a no cost extension of the project.

Recommendations and lessons learnt

The mid-term review issues the following recommendations and lessons learned:

Sida

1)   It is recommended that the programme not be extended beyond the current phase ending August 2018, and no new funding phase or any no-cost extension of the current phase be considered.

2)   In the future, Sida should examine projects and determine whether they are worthy of funding based on real needs, ownership and commitment, after undertaking thorough reviews of ground-level realities. Sida should also consider how realistic the achievement of outcomes are, based on past or parallel endeavours in the same region with the same partners and on a frank assessment of the likely sphere of influence of the structures that would be established.

Swedac

3)   Swedac needs to come up with a realistic, owned and achievable exit strategy in partnership with the ATU. The exit strategy should be developed in the next three months, outlining the duties of both Swedac and ATU, and how the project will be transferred to and absorbed within ATU.

4) In partnership with ATU, Swedac needs to develop a realistic plan after what is achievable by August 2018 in terms of the harmonisation process. This plan needs to be submitted to Sida within the next two months.

ATU

5) The ATU needs to respond to the exit strategy presented to it by Swedac last December, and start negotiating with Swedac as to how the SQIA will be mainstreamed within the organisation before Sida funding ends in August 2018.

6) The ATU should move forward with the recruitment of the proposed harmonisation coordinator who should be an experienced senior professional able to handle the complex realities of engaging with four to six countries, and possess the authority to deal with the members of the various groups that have been created over the last one and a half years as part of the harmonisation process.

7) The ATU needs to resolve the administrative and financial issues that it is facing with Swedac and SQIA. The ATU must develop and implement solutions which can result in the smooth functioning of SQIA until the end of the project implementation period in August 2018.

8) The coordination procedures implemented at present need to be reviewed with the aim that this will allow smoother and more effective lines of communications between the SQIA office and the beneficiaries of the activities. Copying all other concerned officials at the level of ATU, National Focal Points (NFPs) and others should certainly be part of such revised procedures. It is further recommended that, at least at the level of the coordination between ATU and SQIA team in Amman, this process is speeded up, with the reduction as much as possible of "red tape".

Sida/National Focal Points/ATU/Swedac

9) The four stakeholders need to review and act upon the various recommendations listed in the SQIA annual progress report for 2016. The response to these recommendations should become an integral part of the 2017-18 work plan.

10) These main stakeholders need to meet on a quarterly basis to closely monitor the SQIA work plan and ensure that the basis of its sustainability is in place by August 2018.

1 Introduction to the Evaluation & Methodology

1.1 BACKGROUND

This is the final report of the mid-term review of the second phase of the Support to Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries (SQIA) financed by Sweden. The purpose of the second phase is to assist the four Agadir countries in the implementation of the Agadir Agreement signed in 2004 with the aim to establish a free trade area between Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan. The support focuses on establishing systems and structures to bring down technical barriers to trade (TBTs). The support period runs from 2014 to 2018 and amounts to SEK 51.5 million. The local counterpart of the project is the Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) in Amman, Jordan, and the technical assistance is provided by the Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (Swedac).

According to Sida's Terms of Reference (ToR) for the mid-term review (Annex 1), the main objective of the assignment is to provide the project partners i.e. Sida, ATU and Swedac with an independent mid-term review of the status, relevance and performance of the project as compared to the main project document, and identify and assess the basic results, outcomes and impacts as to their sustainability and suitability for replication in other areas. The mid-term review was originally supposed to be conducted in 2016, but was delayed till the spring 2017.

The following sections of the report present the methodology of the mid-term review, followed by an introduction to the Agadir process, ATU and the SQIA project. After that follows the core of the report, which is a presentation of the findings of the mid-term review structured according to five headings: effectiveness; relevance; efficiency; reporting and planning; and cross-cutting issues, including Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA). The final part of the report is dedicated to presenting the conclusions, lessons-learned and recommendations of the review.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology is based on a theory-based approach to evaluation. This means that the review team understands the project to be based on a theory regarding how capacity development efforts, awareness raising, and harmonisation of structures, systems and regulatory frameworks within the trade sector will lead to enhanced trade, increased economic development, attraction of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), jobs creation and ultimately reduced poverty. In a theory-based approach the extent to which the cause and effect assumptions in this theory are valid and leading

to intended results are assessed, with a focus on the issues raised in the evaluation questions.

The review adopts a contribution analysis approach, recognising that there are alternative explanations for the changes observed and that the project is but one contribution to a broader process of trade reform in the Agadir countries. The European Union (EU) is also supporting the ATU and there is some financial contribution (8%) from the Agadir countries, which are also engaged in other efforts at boosting commerce and economic development beyond the Agadir process. Thus, there are some outcomes which cannot be attributed to Swedish support alone; and while the mid-term review endeavours to isolate the effects of Swedish support, it should be realised that in some cases the Swedish support will have contributed jointly with EU support (and other national level efforts) to the results that have been realised. As an example, SQIA uses the communication structure the ATU has already put in place.

Another point to note is that it becomes increasingly difficult to isolate results the higher up in the results chain one gets. The link between capacity building and knowledge is relatively clear-cut, but identifying the contribution of the project to the reduction of technical barriers and development impact (trade, jobs creation, poverty reduction) is complex given that an increasing number of external factors and actors come into play and that these changes may take time to realise. That is why an assessment of the assumptions and limitations that were made during the formulation of this project is important, such as continued political commitment within the four countries, and the capacity and credibility of the ATU. A review of assumptions is done throughout this report.

The methodology was designed to respond to objectives and questions of the mid-term review specified in Sida's ToR. The review team assessed the evaluability of the evaluation questions and developed an evaluation matrix that was presented in the Inception Report (in April 2017). The evaluation matrix links the questions in the ToR to more precise sub-questions used in the review, data collection methods and sources of verification. The inception phase included discussions with Sida's Project Manager responsible for the project. The main data collection activities organised by the review team during the implementation of the review were a documentation review and semi-structured interviews conducted during a field visits to the Agadir member countries, visits to Stockholm to meet Swedac and the two Swedish partners, and additional Skype interviews. Annex 2 contains a list of persons interviewed.

The documentation review involved a desk-study of all relevant project documents produced by Sida and project stakeholders during project implementation. A list of documents consulted is included in Annex 3. It should be noted that additional documentation continued to be received and requested during the field phase. Visits to Agadir member countries included week-long missions to Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. The visit to Jordan included discussions with the ATU staff and its steering committee to understand the rationale for the design of the project, the

reasons for the pace of progress achieved so far and, the relationships with the national stakeholders and the various concerned groups, the current state of affairs, and the expected outputs achievable by the end of the project period.

In all the four visited countries the review team met with: (i) relevant government organisations (ministries, National Focal Points (NFPs), members of the Swedac Steering Committee, the accreditation bodies and the standardisation bodies, regulators for products, members of the Product Harmonisation Coordination Committee (PHCC) and Product Working Groups (PWG) for the two pilot products i.e. low voltage electrical cables and ready-made garments, and other public sector shareholders); (ii) representatives of the private sector (business associations, chambers of commerce and enterprises especially in the low voltage cables and readymade garments sectors); (iii) experts involved in SQIA.

The meetings with government officials allowed the review team to understand the views of government officials on the ATU and SQIA, their perspective on project progress, their current motivation for the continued implementation of the Agadir Agreement in general and SQIA in particular, and what modifications they feel would make the project more efficient. Meetings with other stakeholders also aimed at determining the extent to which the projects' training and awareness activities had been successful.

The visit to Stockholm was organised to coincide with a meeting of NFPs there, and a demonstration of the online harmonisation platform soon to be implemented in the project. During the visit, the review team was able to hold discussions with Swedac staff involved in the project, the project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) expert, and the two Swedish partners: the National Board of Trade (Kommerskollegium) and the Swedish Standards Institute.

The two main limitations of the review are:

1) The slow progress of the project, which inhibited any systematic assessment of outcomes, impact and sustainability.

2) The difficulty in maintaining appointment times and dates of some interviewees in the four countries, even though these had been established and agreed beforehand. They were either engaged elsewhere on urgent business or were abroad. Further time had to spent in rearranging logistics and interviews.

2 The Agadir Process, ATU and SQIA Project

2.1 THE AGADIR AGREEMENT

The Agadir Agreement is a preferential trade agreement that was signed between Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan in 2004 and aims to abolish customs duties between the four countries in industrial, agricultural and processed agricultural products. The agreement needs to be seen in the wider context of Arab regional integration and relationship with the EU. On the Arab side, a pan-Arab free trade area - formally the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA) - entered into force in 2005. In parallel, the Arab countries have entered into bilateral Association Agreements with the EU as part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership launched in 1995 and with a view to establish a Mediterranean free trade area compatible with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. A central provision of the Association Agreements is the rules of origin - the technical criteria which determine whether a specific product qualifies for duty free or other preferential access under a given trade agreement. In the Euro-Med area, so-called diagonal cumulation of origin apply, meaning that rules of origin can cumulate between Arab countries, but only if they belong to a common free-trade area, such as the Agadir Agreement.

There are some challenges to consider when assessing regional integration initiatives in the Arab region. First, there are several simultaneous initiatives to promote trade within the Arab region. There are indications that the GAFTA, initiated in 1998, has contributed to increased regional trade. There are questions as to what extent a sub-regional free-trade area such as the Agadir Agreement can help or hinder this broader integration process. Second, critics argue that the EU has developed a 'hubs and spokes' system with the region, which insufficiently recognises that there are still trade restrictions between the Arab countries - 'the spokes'. Third, the expansion of trade within the Agadir Agreement is hampered structurally by the fact that the four member states are producing the same products and are competing against each other. Fourth, there are significant political and capacity constraints within the Arab countries (and the EU) that slow-down integration efforts within the region and with the EU.

A feature that makes the Agadir Agreement different from other free-trade agreements is the far-reaching obligations for the Arab countries to harmonise with EU rules to avoid TBTs which may be caused by the differences between technical regulations, national standards and conformity assessment procedures among countries. TBT is covered in the articles 8 and 23 of the Agreement. Assisting the

Agadir countries in this harmonisation process to reduce technical barriers to trade is the basic rationale of the SQIA project.

2.2 THE SQIA PROJECT & THE AGADIR TECHNICAL UNIT

Sweden's support to SQIA was motivated by it being in line with the previous Swedish Strategy for Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa 2010-2015. Sida also deems the project to follow the most recent Swedish strategy for the region – the Regional Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) 2016–2020. The reason is that the project responds to the results area focusing on regional economic integration and the result focusing on "increased economic integration and improved opportunities for countries in the region to participate in free, sustainable and equitable regional trade". Sida has previously provided support to the implementation of the Agadir Agreement in the areas of trade in services and trade defence instruments. Sida also funds International Training Programmes (ITPs) within the MENA region in the field of the WTO's TBT and Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreements implemented by Swedac. This experience is one of the reasons the ATU approached Sweden for assistance. In 2011, the ITP held a special Agadir programme to produce ideas for harmonisation among the four countries and to gauge support and ability for implementation.

The SQIA project followed up on this exercise and is implemented in two phases. The first phase (2012-2013, budget SEK 1.87 million) focused on analysing the situation in the four Agadir countries and developing of ToR for the second phase. The second phase started in 2014. The second phase runs from 2014 to 2018 and comes with a financial envelope of SEK 51.5 million financed by Sweden. The local counterpart of the project is the ATU and Swedac has been contracted to support the implementation of the project. The Swedish Institute of Standardisation and the Swedish National Board of Trade also play key roles in implementation. The project is governed by a Programme Steering Committee with representation from the Agadir member countries, the ATU, Sida and Swedac.

The ATU itself was established in April 2007 in Amman, Jordan, to ensure the implementation of the Agadir Agreement, follow-up on the decisions of the Committees of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Trade, offer technical advice on various questions concerning the Agreement and the modalities of its implementation and offer recommendations to the member countries and the institutions of the Agreement on any trade issues covered by the Agreement. The ATU is a small Secretariat consisting of the Executive Director, technical staff from the four member countries and administrative staff. Of its total administrative and programme costs, 92% are borne by the EU. The ATU is involved in the following activities: organising working groups for each trade issue covered by the Agadir Agreement; producing studies on priority economic sectors; providing capacity building for the public and

private sectors; conducting awareness-raising and organising advocacy-related activities. The EU has been supporting the ATU since its inception in 2007. Phase 3 of the support covers the period 2013-2017 and amounts to EUR 4 Million. The EU support was being evaluated at the time of writing this report (Spring 2017).

The overall expected results of the SQIA project's second phase are:

Impact	To reduce poverty through boosting trade, increased economic development, and the attraction of Foreign Direct Investments
Overall objective	Enhancing the implementation of the agreement through establishing necessary systems and structures to bring down technical barriers to trade
Overall outcome	Systems and structures are nationally and regionally implemented to use for harmonise mandatory requirements (technical regulation), voluntary standards and enforcement of national mandatory requirements, in order to bring down technical barriers to trade

The project is composed of seven main outcomes:

• Outcome A - Agreement to Phase 2 of the project
• Outcome BA - ATU ready to support the countries fulfil the project outcomes
• Outcome BB - Managerial structures fully implemented
• Outcome C - Existing technical barriers to trade in the selected product areas identified
• Outcome D - Mandatory requirements on selected products areas harmonised
• Outcome E - Voluntary standards in the selected product areas harmonised
• Outcome F - Enforcement of national mandatory requirements harmonised

A range of outputs and activities were planned, including awareness-raising of Agadir country officials on TBTs, support to the ATU and the NFPs, studies aimed at identifying TBTs, putting systems and structures in place to harmonise mandatory and voluntary standards in selected product areas and to harmonise enforcement of national mandatory requirements.

The SQIA project has been reviewed already as part of a wider evaluation of the Swedish development cooperation in the MENA region 2010-2015.[1] The review talks in favourable terms of the extensive mapping exercise of phase 1, the results matrix,

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[1] Buhl-Nielsen (2015), Evaluation of the Swedish development cooperation in the MENA region 2010-2015, Sida, available at http://www.sida.se/English/publications/Publication_database/publications-by-year1/2015/may/evaluation-of-the-swedish-development-cooperation-in-the-mena-region-2010-2015---final-report/

the Swedish comparative advantage and high local expectations on the project, but also raises challenges in relation to ensuring high-level ownership, building trust, and instituting systems and structures that will meet expectations and demonstrate their practical utility to both public and private sector stakeholders.

3 Findings

3.1 RELEVANCE

3.1.1 Assumptions in the Theory of Change

The overall expected impact of the project is to reduce poverty through increased trade, economic development and FDI. However, the logical chain between the project design and this overall objective is indirect at best. In the description of the project outcomes, there are no direct outcomes or outputs aimed at enhancing the poverty impact of the project. In the original project document (i.e. the recommendations for phase 2 coming out of the first phase, which will be called the project document in this report for convenience), poverty is only dealt with as a stand-alone issue. The text is very general and mainly points to the presumed link between the reduction of non-tariff barriers (NTBs), trade, economic development, job creation and poverty. The underlying assumption is that competition stimulates innovation and that countries over time can take advantage of changes in comparative advantage and new opportunities. This is a simplistic free-trade logic that ignores the many structural issues and constraints that prevent low and middle income countries from taking advantage of trading opportunities, and the uncertainty involved in the link between freer trade and large-scale job creation.

The project appears as relevant at first sight for promoting trade within the region. The report from phase 1 rightly points to challenges facing developing countries to implement the WTO TBT/SPS agreements in general and the unevenness in the relationship with the EU caused by the lack of regional integration in particular. Given that the Arab countries have participated in the trend to reduce tariffs, TBTs emerge as key remaining obstacles to trade. Harmonisation with the EU in this area is mandated in the Association Agreements between EU and the MENA countries (including conclusion of Agreements on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products, ACAAs). However, it is unclear to what extent it is TBTs that constrain trade within the region. The project annual report 2015 (p. 17) summarises the findings of the project's baseline study that point to a range of factors: "trade among the four Agadir countries is limited due to distance (time and transport cost, logistics); product similarities/competition; poor awareness of quality and conformity requirements; insufficient trust in quality infrastructures; and high level of border uncertainty (clearance and rejection problems, due to SPS/TBT issues, rules of origin, politics, and poorly trained, frequently changed border officers)". Furthermore, the report (p. 19) notes that few if any TBTs have been raised as concerns during project activities, indicating that there may be less need for far-reaching harmonisation of technical regulation.

The overall project design and process contains characteristics and activities that are favourable to ensuring relevance and ownership among stakeholders:

• The project was initiated at the request of the Agadir countries;
• There was a first phase, which included consultations and mapping of member countries and stakeholders;
• The project supports an existing regional integration process and is anchored in its Secretariat; and
• The project is explicitly aimed at establishing systems and structures among the member countries, including addressing process related issues such as political commitment, cooperation mechanisms and capacities in ATU and national government agencies.

3.1.2   Donor Engagement

The EU was the instigator of the Agadir Agreement and has supported its implementation since its conception, including being the main funder of the ATU. The EU has undertaken regular monitoring and evaluation activities, the most recent external evaluation being under production at the time of writing of this report. For instance, the EU's Action Fiche for the third phase of EU's support to the Agadir Agreement[2] mentions the following lessons learned:

• Regional trade flows and economic integration between Agadir countries remain far below expectations. The four member states have the same level of maturity but they are competing against each other because they are producing the same products.
• Coordination and capacity building activities at national level should be strengthened.
• The ATU needs to focus on a reduced number of activities of its core mandate, where it can offer real value added to the various stakeholders (mainly governments and private sector).
• Coherence must be ensured with other bilateral and regional EU actions which contribute to regional integration and trade facilitation.

These are quite challenging issues, but there is no indication in the SQIA documentation that these experiences have been considered when designing the

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[2] Annex 4 of the Commission Implementing Decision on the ENPI Regional South Annual Action Programme 2013 –Part I Action Fiche for Support to trade development in southern Mediterranean through the Agadir Agreement – Phase III, available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/comitologie/ros/2013/D027431-02/COM-AC_DR(2013)D027431-02(ANN4)_EN.pdf

project. In contrast, the EU Fiche mentions the then forthcoming Swedish support to the ATU. Subsequently, the EU was not involved in the implementation of SQIA.

In terms of provision of information to donors within the project, the agreement between Sida and Swedac stipulates that Sida should be presented with a gender policy, an anti-corruption policy, a capacity development plan, and an updated results matrix by 2014, annual budgets and financial and activity reports, and a phase-out plan following a mid-term review to be conducted in 2016. There should also be a final evaluation of the project. The mid-term review and consequently the phase-out plan have been delayed and are being conducted in the spring 2017. Apart from this deviation from the plan the requested reporting has been produced. Sida has also been a member of the project's Steering Committee. Overall, a concern has rather been Sida's possibility to absorb the information produced in the project and engage with its implementation. The responsible desk officer has changed several times since the project started, causing discontinuity in both monitoring and support. Little if any information about the project has been accessed by donors other than Sida, despite its potential significant relevance for broader learning.

3.1.3   Overall Assessment of Inter-regional Trade & Cooperation

The greatest doubts about the relevance of the SQIA project arise when considering the political economy of the Agadir Agreement. While the Swedac report from Phase 1 provides a general background to the Agadir Agreement and reviews the national structures related to TBTs in the member countries, it is extremely weak in its analysis of the deeper economic structures and political forces at play and of the local ownership of the Agadir process. The reason this is important is the complex political situation in the region, the challenges involved in promoting regional integration within the Arab countries, the uneven relationship with EU, and the lack of complementarity between the regional economies that reduces the intra-regional trade potential.

The Swedac report argues that there is strong commitment to the Agadir Agreement among member governments, but at the same time notes that the amount of regional trade done under the Agadir agreement is very limited. In fact, the European Parliament writes in a report on regional integration in the Mediterranean that the Agadir Agreement has had little impact on generating trade, but rather diverted trade flows to third party countries.[3] There are thus reasons to raise doubts about the potential of economic integration between the countries in general and the

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[3] Jolly, Cécile, 2014, Regional integration in the Mediterranean, impact and limits of Community and bilateral policies, Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, European Parliament.

contribution of the Agadir Agreement in particular in the current political and economic situation.

Against this rather bleak general picture, there was also from the start a range of serious challenges that affected feasibility of the SQIA project more specifically. For example, Swedac notes in the report from phase 1 that "*there is no work carried out on harmonisation of technical regulations, voluntary standards and conformity assessment between the members of the [Agadir] agreement"*, that *"the co-operation between and the way of operating the national focal points is not co-ordinated with the effect that the operations of the focal points is very different and the understanding of their role varies between the countries"* and that *"the systems and structures for enforcing mandatory requirements in the countries are different between the countries"* and that *"the ATU does not have the necessary resources to manage a programme to address issues of technical barriers to trade".* The Annual Report 2015 (p. 15) also notes the general weakness of the implementation structure of the Agadir Agreement: "*some countries do not seem to have the national administrative infrastructure in place to administer the Agadir Agreement and other related legal documents. Nor do the NFPs seem to have enough knowledge of the Agadir Agreement in context – that is, its relationship with WTO, the EU etc., with some saying that they wanted more training/information on the WTO and the TBT Agreement.*"

The extent of these challenges can be understood by looking at the institutional structure and policy making process of the Agadir Agreement shown in Figure 1. Experience tells us that supporting capacity development within the national administration of a developing country is a challenging task. The SQIA is dealing with a multi-layered, highly politicised process with both a regional structure and secretariat and four sets of governments, national administrations and private and civil society stakeholders. Even if there were strong pre-existing political commitment, established cooperation structures, and reasonable capacity, such support would be daunting. In this perspective, the likelihood of the SQIA project making a significant contribution to such a complex and multi-stakeholder environment seems very optimistic, if not unrealistic.

Another key concern is the position and capacity of the ATU. During Phase 1, it became clear that the ATU has very limited capacity and the fact that it is principally funded by the EU could also indicate that there is limited commitment to the operations of the ATU from the member states. Given the weak capacity of the ATU, a Local Programme Manager (LPM) could be justified, but this function was not integrated into the ATU structure and activities from the outset. An alarm bell should have sounded when Swedac noted that there is no space for an LPM in the ATU offices – a separate location is likely to reduce ownership and communication between the project and the ATU.

Today, there is little evidence or enthusiasm to suggest that the project or indeed the Agadir Agreement is relevant any more. The four countries appear to have little

appetite for trade amongst one another. Lack of interest can also be gauged from the fact that, under article 24 of the agreement, the foreign trade ministers who were supposed to meet with each other at least once a year, have met only twice in that capacity in the last six years.

Figure 1: Institutional structure and policy making process of the Agadir Agreement
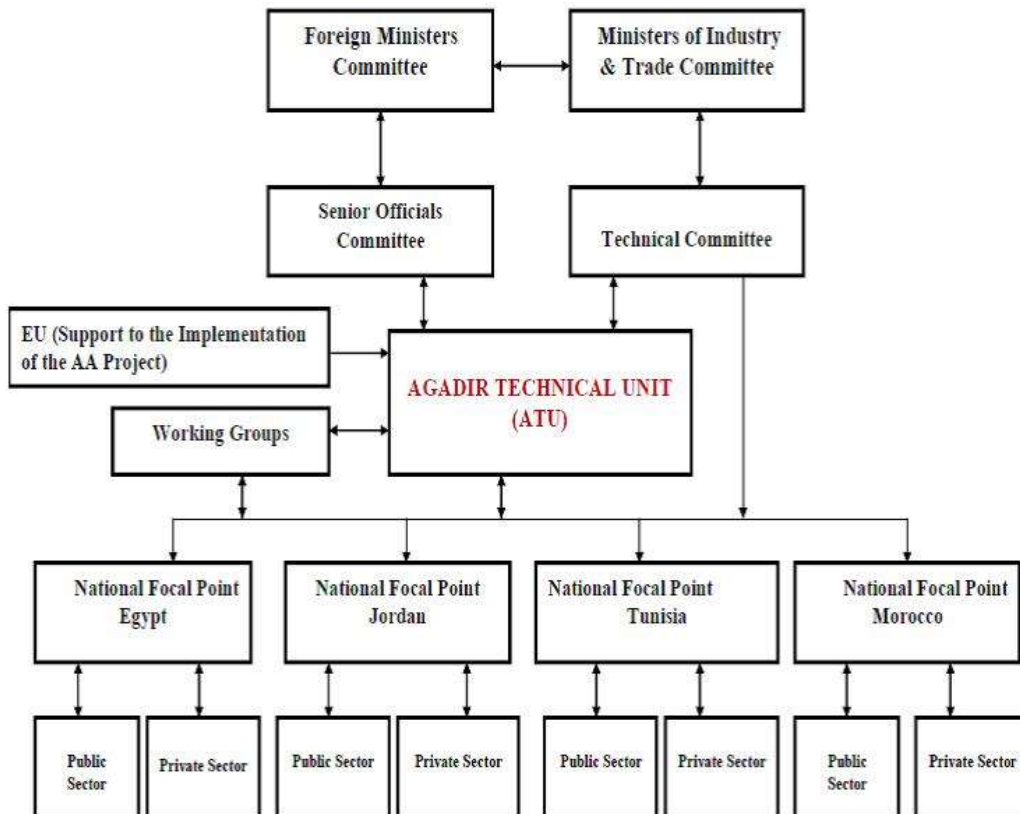
Furthermore, the entire SQIA project is funded by Sida, with no financial contributions from any of the benefiting countries. For quite some time now both Swedish partners and local stakeholders have been stating that for harmonisation to occur there must be a clear demand for a harmonisation process. That demand has not been demonstrated.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

3.2.1 Achievement of outputs and outcomes

The expected outputs and outcomes are summarised in the results matrix of the project. The annual reports document the progress of each of the project's components and sub-components based on its internal monitoring system. This information shows progress at both outcome and output levels. Figure 2 shows the evolution of the outcome implementation status according to the assessment made by the project itself; 50% of the outcomes were completed and 50% were initiated by

2016. Looking closer at the underlying data, completion concerns largely outcomes A, BA and partly BB, which mainly involve the approval of the approach of Phase 2 and related managerial structures and training. For outcomes D, E and F there is less progress; those outcomes are more complex as they aim to move the actual harmonisation process of standards and enforcement forward. This dichotomy is also reflected in the implementation status of outputs reported in Figure 3 – the set of outputs under outcome A and BA were more advanced than the other outcomes. Table 1 summarises the key results and outstanding issues by end 2016. In terms of the harmonisation process, the gains so far are summarised in Box 1. It should be noted that this is progress as viewed by the project, not the mid-term review[4].

Figure 2: Outcome implementation status, according to the project, at the end of 2014-2016
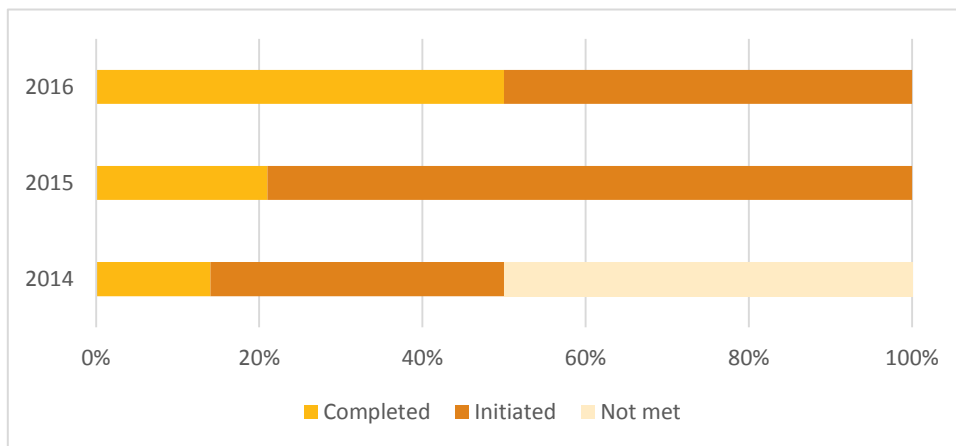
Figure 3: Output implementation status, according to the project, at the end of 2016

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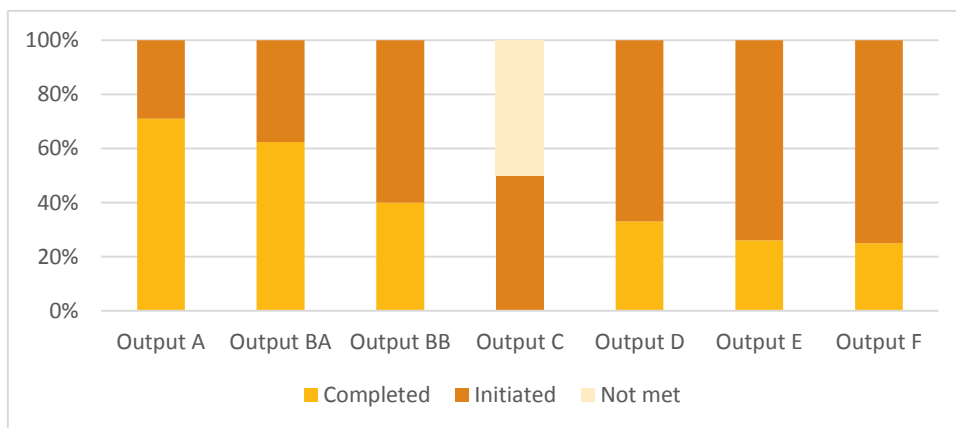
[4] For the mid-term review's account of achievements, please see section 3.4

Table 1: Summary of key results, according to the project, by end 2016

Outcome	Completed	Initiated/not met
Outcome A	Agreement Sida, Swedac and ATU on Phase 2 National seminars on Agadir Agreement in the 4 countries	Information strategy not formulated
Outcome BA	ToR for Agadir harmonisation agreed Local Programme Manager and Assistant recruited by ATU Programme Steering Committee established Product Harmonisation Coordination Committee established	IT Platform for the Agadir harmonisation structure still under development Implementation of ATU capacity plan started
Outcome BB	Trainings to and meetings of National Focal Points	
Outcome C	Baseline study on technical barriers to trade	Study at the end of the programme on changes of technical barriers to trade that has taken place during the programme (part of exit strategy to be undertaken in 2017)
Outcome D	2 agreed product pilot areas (electrical low voltage cables and textiles/ready-to-wear garments) Two Product Working Groups established Training sessions to technical regulation agencies to learn more about Good Regulatory Practice	Training on negotiation skills and techniques, expert advice and development of methods and procedures not started
Outcome E	Visit on harmonisation of standards to all four countries by Swedish Standards Institute (SIS) 1st meeting of meeting Directors of National Standardisation Bureaus	Implementation of harmonisation of voluntary standards through regional meetings, expert advice and methods and procedures not started
Outcome F	National and regional seminars and workshops for National Accreditation Bodies	Memorandum of understanding between the Agadir countries on conformity assessment, methods and procedures not started

Box 1: Progress in the harmonisation process

<u>2015</u>
- Priority Product lists received from countries
- Baseline study recommends: electrical equipment, building materials, toys, pressure equipment and nappies
- PSC decides on the pilot products and harmonisation structure
- Product Working Group (PWG) and Product Harmonisation Coordination Committee (PHCC) established
- Agadir countries select participants to PWG and PHCC
- ATU Harmonisation Coordinator/LPM ensures coordination
- "Kick-off seminar and workshop was held in Agadir, Morocco on 14-17 December 2015"
- Initial work plans of PWG and PHCC formulated

<u>2016</u>
- Pilot products and harmonisation structure presented to the Trade Minister's committee for formal endorsement by the Agadir countries as a recognised part of the Agadir structure
- Table of correspondence for the pilot products agreed
- PWGs agree on methodologies
- Meetings of National Standards Body (NSB) Directors and regional work plan for harmonisation developed

<u>2017 (planned)</u>
- IT platform operational
- Endorsement by the Agadir Technical Committee
- National stakeholder meetings

A capacity audit and capacity assessment of the ATU was produced by Swedac in 2014. The ATU has subsequently established a work plan for capacity building of the ATU and the NFP structure (2015). Training sessions covering enhancing trade policy capacities, Regulatory Impact Assessments, and language skills (English) started during the first quarter of 2016. A capacity building framework covering the development of the capabilities and competencies of the ATU staff and the NFPs for the years 2016-2018 has been approved. A related activity has been the development of a strategic plan for the ATU. A final version of the strategic plan (2017-2021) was issued in May 2017.

3.2.2   Quality of Capacity Building Activities

In 2015 and 2016, a total of 36 national and regional capacity building activities with approx. 574 participations (participants may have participated in several events) were organised, in particular within outcomes D, E and F. Most of the interviewed

participants in the capacity building activities were pleased with the initiatives and appreciative of the information transmitted to them.[5] Many were very positive to the programme and thought it was needed. It was furthermore noted that the networking established at national level was very promising as the relevant stakeholders are more involved and looking to further cooperation with their counterparts in Agadir countries.

The M&E function of the project has reported the following responses to a question asked as part of a standard survey circulated after each event: "Have the ATU/Swedac/Sida sponsored efforts led to increased knowledge in areas/subjects that were discussed during the events?"
The received responses are presented below:

Table 2: "Have the ATU/Swedac/Sida sponsored efforts led to increased knowledge in areas/subjects that were discussed during the events?"

Response	No. of respondents	Approx.% of respondents
Don't know	5	1.5
No	7	2.0
Not applicable	8	2.5
Yes, to a low degree	26	7.5
Yes, to a certain degree	188	54.5
Yes, to a high degree	111	32.0

The respondents have positively indicated (94%) their satisfaction of the increased knowledge accumulated during the activities. Only 2% seem dissatisfied.
At the same time, some aspects related to the administrative arrangements and the contents of the transferred material at the capacity building activities/meetings were criticised by interviewed participants. A selected sample of these comments, for improving the output of these workshops and meetings, are mentioned here:

Planning of events:
−   Invitations arrive late, not allowing for any practical preparation by participants. There is a need for better planning in setting a fixed programme well in advance of the actual dates of activities.

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[5] Also from comments reported in the M&E tables for 2016

–   The agenda is not always distributed ahead of the event.

–   Workshop material (such as background information) is not distributed at least 10 to 15 days before the event, hence preventing preparation. Sometimes, the gathering of national information is needed, and a better interaction with instructors and other participants during the sessions.

–   The purpose and expected results of the event should be clearly explained to the participants prior to the event. This will allow a better understanding of what the event is about.

–   There were also several requests to *invite more private sector representatives to these activities*. This is seen to allow for more informed knowledge of the project beneficiaries and a needed networking among national and regional public and private bodies concerned with the same technical and administrative matters.

–   An international Programme expert wrote: "*... Improved communication with experts on what the participants are supposed to do ahead of the events, and to follow up if that is being done before the event/workshop starts…*" This seems to be good advice to take into consideration.

Implementation of capacity building activity:

–   Only the pre-selected participants should be allowed to attend the meetings, especially when the activity is in relation to a previous one. Different representatives of one organisation are attending different activities. It is seen that this has created a waste of time and loss of concentration during the events, especially when the newcomers ask questions related to earlier activities they did not attend.

–   A recurrent request for the inclusion, in the prepared material during capacity building activities, of more practical examples and case studies (if possible, related to real challenges in the Agadir countries) was made by many.

Other comments:

–   The following comment was made after the final regional workshop on the outcome D: "*This meeting was not needed as we did not receive anything other than just three slides on recommendations for the members and for the project which I couldn't really get the point - recommendations and suggestions from the experts as final ones?!!! And also for the project!!? These three slides of "recommendations" with the rap up the "suggestions" took about one hour with members comment and feedback, this means they could have sent it by mail or any other mean to save money, efforts and time.*" This is a very serious comment if true. It requires a close analysis with lessons learned drawn from it.

- It is suggested, when possible, to organise study tours in the facilities of the host country to allow participants to meet all their counterparts and be aware of the capabilities and facilities. This could lead to further networking among staff in similar organisations and eventually cooperation among Agadir entities.

- The provision of some sort of a certificate of participation could be considered. This might motivate the participants and encourage them to keep a record of the activity in their offices.

Furthermore, in the opinion of some participants in capacity building workshops interviewed, many of the capacity building activities were judged to be of an introductory level. One participant said: "*We were looking for practical ways to implement the methods, but we ended up with an introduction*". Their expectations were that the "Swedac programme" will be providing them with more in-depth knowledge. It was suggested that the implemented capacity building modules need, in many instances, to be complemented with other more advanced ones, covering the practical aspects of their implementation by concerned technical entities.

These remarks were mainly made by participants coming from quality infrastructure entities. It should be remembered that these are staff members deeply involved in their technical work, mostly well informed of the developments in their fields, and are often targeted by capacity building activities offered by many funding agencies, including the EU. The lack of proper training needs assessments before developing the contents of the capacity building activities apparently led to these 'missed opportunities' in these activities.

3.2.3   Quantity of Capacity Building Activities

Number of implemented activities

The project has implemented a large number of capacity building activities and harmonisation meetings, especially during 2015 and 2016. More activities are being implemented in 2017, although their numbers are decreasing.

Table 3: List of capacity building activities

Capacity Building Activity	Dates & Place	Attendees
Certification ; Accreditation ; standardisation ; Trade; TBTs	15-18 Mar-15 Amman	JSMO; Customs; NFPs ; Chamber of Industry
Certification ; Accreditation ; standardisation ; Trade; TBTs	30 Mar-2 Apr-15 Tunis	TUNAC; INNORPI; MIT; Customs; NFPs ; Chamber of Industry
Certification ; Accreditation ; standardisation ; Trade; TBTs	19-23 Apr-15 Cairo	EGAC; EOS; GOEIC ; MIT; Customs; NFPs; Chamber of Industry
Certification ; Accreditation ; standardisation ; Trade; TBTs	4-8 May-15 Rabat	SEMAC; Chamber of industry; IMANOR; MS Department; MIT
Processes for EU technical harmonisation	19-21 May-15 Rabat	MIT; Technical regulation authorities

International standardisation systems	28 Sep - 1 Oct-15 Cairo	IMANOR; EOS; GOEIC; INNORPI; JSMO
Agadir Agreement provisions (Article 23); Quality Infrastructure pillars	7-8 Nov-15 Hamamet	NFPs
TBTs; Trade development	27-28 Jan-16 Hurghada	NFPs
Regulatory Impact Assessment; Good regulatory practices	2-3 Feb-16 Rabat	Regulatory authorities
Regulatory Impact Assessment; Good regulatory practices	9-10 Feb-16 Amman	Regulatory authorities
Regulatory Impact Assessment; Good regulatory practices	12-13 Apr-16 Amman	Regulatory authorities
Regulatory Impact Assessment; Good regulatory practices	17-May-16 Rabat	Regulatory authorities
Proficiency testing (ISO17043)	23-25 Aug-16 Casablanca	NABs; CABs Textiles; Cabs Cables
Measurement uncertainty	4-6 Oct-16 Amman	NABs; CABs Textiles; Cabs Cables
Product certification (ISO17065)	17-19 Oct-16 Cairo	NABs; CABs Textiles; Cabs Cables
Inspection (ISO 17020)	22-24 Nov-16 Tunis	NABs; CABs Textiles; CABs Cables
Result oriented management	28-29 Nov-16 Marrakech	NFPs

Seventeen (17) capacity building activities were conducted in 2015 and 2016. Some of these activities were implemented at national level (eight in total), and others at regional level (nine in total).

Table 4: List of harmonisation meetings

Harmonisation Activity	Dates & Place	Attendees
AHS Planning workshop - Kick-off meeting for PWGs & PHCC	14-17 Dec-15 Agadir	NFPs; CABs; NABs; NSBs; Chambers of industry
1st PWG/Electrical cables meeting	1-2 Aug-16 Amman	PWG Members; NFPs
1st PWG/Ready garments meeting	3-4 Aug-16 Amman	PWG Members; NFPs
1st PHCC meeting	30-31 Aug-16 Amman	PHCC Members; NFPs
2nd PWG/Electrical cables meeting	4-5 Dec-16 Amman	PWG Members; NFPs
2nd PWG/Ready garments meeting	6-7 Dec-16 Amman	PWG Members; NFPs
2nd PHCC meeting	12-13 Dec-16 Amman	PHCC Members; NFPs
3rd PWG/Electrical cables meeting	24-25 Apr-17 Amman	PWG Members; NFPs
3rd PWG/Ready garments meeting	26-27 Apr-17 Amman	PWG Members; NFPs
3rd PHCC meeting	9-10 May-17 Amman	PHCC Members; NFPs

Ten (10) harmonisation activities were carried out during 2015, 2016 and the first quarter of 2017. The meetings of the two PWGs were conducted in August 2016, December 2016 and April 2017. Those for PHCC were held in August 2016, December 2016 and May 2017.

It is notable here that the meetings of PHCC were scheduled the first time 26 days after the last PWG meeting in August 2016, then after five days in December 2016, and finally after 12 days after the latest PWG meeting in April 2017. This means that, according to the established protocols, the minutes of meetings (MoM) of the PWGs should been prepared and approved by the PWG members in record times after the second and third meetings; then these MoM should have been distributed to the PHCC members for their study prior to their scheduled meeting. As mentioned earlier in this report, the current system is not efficient.[6]

Number of participants in activities

The number of participants in 21 Programme activities implemented in 2016 was 265, are shown below:

Table 5: Number of participants in activities

Activity	Dates	Total no of participants
Meeting with NSB Directors	21 Jan-16	8
Regional workshop to establish the final consensus	24-25 Jan-16	17
Two days' workshop with NFP	27-28 Jan-16	7
Facilitating technical regulation - national workshop RIA (regulatory impact assessment)training exercise	02-03 Feb-16	4
Facilitating technical regulation - national workshop RIA training exercise	09-10 Feb-16	26
Meeting with AIDMO (Standardisation and Metrology Centre)	29 Mar-16	6
Regional workshops to establish the final consensus	30-31 Mar-16	16
Facilitating technical regulation - national workshop RIA training exercise	12-13 Apr-16	8
PSC	08 May-16	17
Facilitating technical regulation - national workshop RIA training exercise	17-May-16	4
Regional workshop to establish the final consensus	18-19 May-16	10
1st PWG1 meeting	01-02 Aug-16	14

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[6] The received information from some PWG members in the four countries tells another story. The MoM are already prepared before the meetings of the PWGs and they are approved and signed by participants, on the insistence of the LPM, prior to their departure back to their offices. This practice was not appreciated by some participants, especially when changes were requested to be introduced in the prepared MoM, but were not taken into consideration due the practicality of altering the printed document when the meeting was taking place outside the ATU offices

1st PWG2 meeting	03-04 Aug-16	13
3-days regional training on Proficiency testing	23-25 Aug-16	13
1st PHCC meeting	30-31 Aug-16	13
3-days regional training on Uncertainty Measurement	06-10 Oct-16	15
3-days regional training on Product Certification	17-19 Oct-16	20
3-days regional training on Inspection	22-24 Nov-16	16
2nd PWG1 meeting	04-05 Dec-16	12
2nd PWG1 meeting	05-06 Dec-16	12
2nd PHCC meeting	12-13 Dec-06	14
	TOTAL	**265**

The number of participants in these activities varied between four and 26 participants per event. As shown below, almost half of the activities had 13 and more than participants, while four activities had four to seven participants.

Table 6: Average number of participants in activities

Number of activities with	4 to 7 participants	8 to 12 participants	13 to 20 participants	above 21 participants
Number of participants	4	5	11	1

The mid-term review analysis of this data suggest that greater efforts should be made by all concerned (project management, ATU and NFPs) to invite more participants to individual project activities, especially as some of the low attendance events were capacity building activities (such as regulatory impact assessment [RIA] training exercises and workshops with NFPs). Learning opportunities were lost and at very high costs.

The project has implemented a large number of activities, especially in 2016, in an attempt to catch up on lost opportunities in earlier years and unutilised budgets. The total number of participants was high. This was achieved with the hard work and dedication of the SQIA project team in Amman. Almost everyone in the list of the interviewed project participants had expressed their gratitude to the LPM and his assistant. The downside was that that this was a "*one-man show*", in the views of some interviewees.

3.2.4   Targets versus Achievements[7]

Outcome A

Table 7: Outcome A - Agreement to Phase 2 of the Programme

Result Level	Indicators	Means of Verification (MoV)
Outcome A. An agreed common approach amongst the Agadir agreement regarding the content of phase 2 of the programme regarding harmonisation of mandatory requirements between the countries on the national markets, harmonisation of relevant voluntary standards and harmonisation of the national enforcement mechanisms to reach equivalence between the national systems.	– Approval of approach by the ATU – Approval of approach by the programme steering committee – Approval of approach by the Foreign Ministers' Committee and the Committee of Foreign Trade Ministers – # of Committee meetings of Foreign Trade Ministers	– Minutes of meetings
Output A1. information strategy (including establishment of homepage) aiming at increased awareness among Agadir member country officials concerning the need to enhance efforts to remove technical barriers to trade according to the Agadir agreement.	– Information strategy formulated by ATU/Swedac – Homepage activated – Regular information update on homepage – Annual number of hits on homepage – Enhanced knowledge on Agadir agreement and its implementation with regards to removal of TBT among relevant officials	– List of relevant stakeholders[8] – Homepage statistics – Web based surveys for the officials from Agadir countries

> ➢ As mentioned previously, the link between output A1 and outcome A is not clear. An information strategy on its own does not lead to an agreed common approach by the different management structures created under SQIA.

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[7] The highlighted indicators and/or MoV, in BLUE, in the presented sections of the Result Based Matrix are the ones which do not seem to have been properly considered till the present date by the Programme management. Also the highlights Outcomes and/or Outputs, in BLUE, are considered not being fully reached till the present time.

[8] The list at present includes, apart from the public sector quality infrastructure representatives, some representatives of the private sector. Other stakeholders such as Customs, SMEs and NGOs are not included yet.

> ➢ The chosen indicators for outcome A were easily verified through reference to minutes of meetings involving different stakeholders.

> ➢ As for the indicators related to output A1, they are deemed suitable and are presently used to indicate that the Information Strategy, which is highly important for the transparent sharing of SQIA information and outreach to beneficiaries, has not materialised yet. This is a major building block for SQIA that was not strongly insisted upon by ATU and the project management.

> ➢ The lack of an information strategy was the subject of multiple complaints by several programme participants in the four countries.

Outcome B

Outcome B was divided into two outcomes BA and BB[9] and related output, as shown in the following table

Table 8: Outcome B - Necessary managerial structures and methodologies are operational nationally and regionally

Result Level	Indicators	Means of Verification (MoV)
Outcome B. Necessary managerial structures and methodologies are operational nationally and regionally in order to administer the implemented harmonised mandatory requirements, harmonised voluntary standards and enforcement of national mandatory requirements.		
Outcome BA. Establishment of function at ATU to support the signatory countries to fulfil the overall outcome to establish systems and structures are nationally and regionally implemented to use for harmonising mandatory requirements (technical regulations), voluntary standards and enforcement of national mandatory requirements, in order to bring down technical barriers to trade.	− Proposed organisational and managerial structures and methodologies accepted by the countries, and implemented. − Allocated resources to the operations of the new ATU support function − Database is fully operational and integrated into the structures of ATU	− Resources allocated by the countries − Report from database with acceptance by all countries of harmonised products/area

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[9] Project Proposal for Agadir Phase 2 - 2014 02 11

Output BA.1 Support function established at ATU	− Organisational unit at ATU established for the support function − ATU fully employed to manage the new ATU unit − Gender balance in staffing of the new ATU unit − Job description for the required staff developed − The programming of activities are conducted	− Service description for ATU − New organogram for ATU accepted and published − Staff contracted − Web based surveys for ATU
Output BA.2 Established the necessary preparedness for ATU to be able to manage the receiver capacity for reducing technical barriers to trade at regional and agreement level.	− A budget proposal developed for the current costs necessary for the adjusted ATU organisation beyond the end of the programme − Well organised managerial structures and processes/instructions/routines developed − .# of staff with raised knowledge and skills concerning new managerial structure for the relevant persons of ATU	− Web based surveys for ATU
Outcome BB. Managerial structures between the countries and ATU are fully implemented.	− Proposed organisational and managerial structures and methodologies accepted by the countries, and implemented − Allocated resources to the operations of the NFPs in each of the countries	− Minutes of meeting − Resources allocated by the countries
Output BB.1 Established the necessary preparedness for the National Focal Points to be able to manage the receiver capacity for reducing technical barriers to trade at regional and agreement level.	− Well organised managerial structures developed for NFPs − Correct entries into the developed data bases/use of the developed data bases − Indication of better established co-operation between the NFPs	− Statistics from database − Web based surveys for NFPs

32

	− a budget proposal developed for the current costs necessary for the adjusted organisation beyond the end of the programme	
	− # of NFPs with raised knowledge and skills concerning new managerial structure for the NFPs including in regard to gender, environment	

> ➢ Outcome BA was interpreted by the project management as if the function that is supposed to be established at ATU to support the signatory countries to fulfil the overall outcome B was related to the Programme unit which is headed by the LPM. However, another reading of this outcome and its related outputs would suggest that the function in question is a permanent function established within the ATU, a fact that has as yet not materialised. This second interpretation of the outcome is further supported by its related outputs: "A budget proposal developed for the current costs necessary for the adjusted ATU organisation beyond the end of the Programme"; "Well organised managerial structures and processes/instructions/routines developed"; "number of staff with raised knowledge and skills concerning new managerial structure for the relevant persons of ATU". If such an alternative interpretation is considered, this will lead to the conclusion that outcome BA and consequently overall outcome B are still not achieved.

> ➢ Output BB1, and its most important indicator "a budget proposal developed for the current costs necessary for the adjusted organisation beyond the end of the programme", have not yet been confirmed. Thus it is clearer to indicate that output BB1 is "half fulfilled".

Outcome C

Table 9: Outcome C - Existing technical barriers to trade in the selected product areas identified

Result Level	Indicators	Means of Verification (MoV)
Outcome C. Identify actual details of existing technical barriers to trade in the selected product areas to support the harmonisation processes.	− Selected product areas are identified, prioritised and approved. − recommended product areas are analysed from a gender perspective − recommended product areas are analysed from an environmental perspective	− Prioritised products/areas list

| Output C1. Detailed study at the outset of the programme on how technical barriers to trade materialise in the different product areas in the countries. | − Final baseline report

− main technical barriers to trade for product areas are identified and prioritised | − Final baseline report

− Final end line report |
| Output C2. Detailed study at the end of the programme on the changes/reductions of technical barriers to trade that has taken place during the programme. | − final end line report

− reduction/changes of technical barriers to trade for products on the priority list are identified | |

➢ The chosen indicators related to outcome C do not reflect the substance of this outcome; i.e. "identify actual details of existing technical barriers to trade." Furthermore, the indicators related to the analysis of the recommended product areas from gender and environmental perspectives were not taken into consideration when the programme management declared that outcome C was completed.

➢ Outputs C1 and C2 are well linked to the outcome C, and their indicators and MoV are properly set up.

➢ However in the case of output C1, the content of the final baseline report, prepared in May 2015, did not elaborate on how TBTs materialise in the two product areas in the four countries. At the same time, the mid-term review was not given any documents that confirm that the indicator "Main technical barriers to trade for the product areas are identified and prioritised" were prepared. This is leading to confusion. Several contradicting opinions were expressed by interviewed Programme participants in relation to the completion of the activities under this outcome and its outputs.

➢ Output C2 is not fulfilled yet.

➢ The project management has used the indicators and Means of Verification specified in this section of the Result Based Matrix, without analysing the contents of the baseline report and their relevance to the outcome and outputs, nor contracted the preparation of an important document that will describe the main technical barriers to trade for the two chosen product areas.

Outcome D

Table 10: Outcome D - Mandatory requirements on selected products areas harmonised

Result Level	Indicators	Means of Verification (MoV)
Outcome D. harmonised mandatory requirements on selected products areas	− # product areas where the harmonisation has taken place per	− Products list developed − Entries in the developed

34

based on the priority product list developed and operational in the countries.	year − # products entered the developed system and structure − D Participants' workshop satisfaction index	database − Web based surveys of satisfaction
Output D 1. Systems and structures developed to be used when harmonising the sectorial mandatory requirements by giving examples and proposal for the systems and structures to be used when harmonising horizontal and sectorial mandatory requirements.	− Established system and structure for harmonising technical regulations. − # staff with increased knowledge on systems and structure − Gender-ratio in the negotiations	− Documentation over the established systems and structures − Reports from negotiations
Output D 2. Prepared and adopted national mandatory requirements harmonised by responsible relevant functions, through regional meetings.	− # mandatory requirements inserted in the database − prepared applications from the countries to ATU − adopted applications − Gender-ratio in meetings	− Entries in the database − Specific application developed − Reports from the regional meetings
Output D 3. Necessary databases and communication facilities developed to allow a smooth and effective co-operation between the countries to perform the harmonisation of mandatory requirements.	− Developed and approved need analysis − Corresponding software − Purchased/database set up − # of user satisfied	− Need analyses − Purchasing order with specific requirements − Web based surveys of satisfaction
Output D 4. Negotiation skills and techniques enhanced to establish a commonly agreed practical communication culture when discussing and agreeing on the equivalence of the mandatory requirements in the different countries.	− % of seminars implemented out of planned seminars − assessment of # of staff/officials/stakeholders/participants with negotiations skills after completed seminars − Gender-ratio in seminars	− Minutes of meetings from seminars − Web based surveys of skills before and after seminar
Output D 5. Expert advice provided on, and subject knowledge of, acceptable levels of protection and safety to be used as the bases for the harmonisation processes and to provide comments on the differences of the mandatory requirements in the different countries and proposals for solutions in	− # requests for those requested expert advice − # short-term expert advice missions carried out, of those requested − # of receiver satisfaction with short-term expert advice missions	− Web based surveys on satisfaction

the selected product areas.		
Output D 6. Necessary methods and procedures established at the ATU for managing and operating the systems and structures to be used for the harmonisation processes in a sustainable way.	− ATU's operational functionality − ATU staff ability to support member countries − D participants' satisfaction with ATU support − # ATU-staff with increased knowledge about gender analysis in trade related areas	Web based surveys of knowledge Web based surveys on satisfaction

> ➤ The difficulties in setting up the Agadir Harmonisation System platform at present are noted. It was supposed to rely on a needs analysis (pre-study of the platform) conducted during the first quarter of 2016. The demonstration presented to the NFPs meeting in Stockholm in May 2017 showed that this platform still requires a lot of work and an extra budget was recommended to complete the work. The platform is one of the key technical "results" achieved so far. The two others are the two Tables of Correspondence for the two chosen products. It is of utmost important that the platform is properly designed, made operational and presented to all concerned stakeholders. The use of the platform in an efficient manner will require intensive training of users and the creation of support and maintenance function contracted out by ATU.

> ➤ Outputs D4, D5 and D6 are not fulfilled yet. Implementation related to output D5 is planned for 2017 and that for D6 for 2018.

Outcome E

Table 11: Outcome E - Voluntary standards in the selected product areas harmonised

Result Level	Indicators	Means of Verification (MoV)
Outcome E. Harmonised voluntary standards in the selected product areas.	− # product areas where the harmonisation has taken place per year. − # of products entered the developed system and structure − E Participants' workshop satisfaction index	− Developed database − Product list developed − Web based surveys of satisfaction
Output E 1. Systems and structures developed to be used when harmonising the sectorial voluntary standards.	− Established system and structure for harmonising the sectorial voluntary standards − # staff with increased knowledge on systems and structure	− Minutes from the workshop − Web based surveys of knowledge

	– Gender-ratio in the workshops	
Output E 2. Regional meetings organised and implemented for the relevant standards experts to meet with the purpose of harmonising voluntary standards.	– # harmonised voluntary standards inserted in the database – ATU reply on prepared applications from the countries – adopted applications – Gender-ratio in meetings	– Entries in the database – Specific application developed – Reports from the regional meetings
Output E 3. Necessary databases and communication facilities developed to allow a smooth and effective co-operation between the countries to perform the harmonisation of voluntary standards.	– Developed and approved need analysis – Corresponding software suitable for harmonising of voluntary standards – % of user satisfied	– Need analyses – Purchasing order with specific requirements – Web based surveys of satisfaction
Output E 4. Expert advice and subject knowledge provided on the background and content of the voluntary standards based on European union standards and international standards and to provide comments on the differences in the national standards in the selected product areas.	– # requests for expert advice – # short-term expert advice missions carried out of those requested – receiver satisfaction with short-term expert advice missions	– Web based surveys on satisfaction
Output E 5. Necessary methods and procedures established at the ATU for managing and operating the systems and structures to be used for the harmonisation of voluntary standards in a sustainable way.	– ATU's operational functionality – ATU staff ability to support member countries – E participants' satisfaction with ATU support – # ATU-staff with increased knowledge about gender analysis in trade related areas	– Web based surveys of knowledge – Web based surveys on satisfaction

➢ Output E2 lacks the indications that the harmonised voluntary standards have been tested in the Agadir countries.

➢ Outputs E4 and E5 are not reached yet. Implementation of activities related to outputs E5 and E6 are planned for 2017.

Outcome F

Table 12: Outcome F - Enforcement of national mandatory requirements harmonised

Result Level	Indicators	Means of Verification (MoV)
Outcome F. Harmonised enforcement of national mandatory requirements based on internationally accepted best practices.	– MOU signed and adapted to international best practices – perception of trust in the harmonised enforcement systems among key stakeholders – f participants' workshop index	– Developed database – Web based survey of trust in the harmonised enforcement systems among key stakeholders – Web based surveys of satisfaction
Output F 1. Relevant national regulatory authorities responsible for enforcing the national mandatory requirements listed in the priority list provided with knowledge and skills on international best practices for conformity assessment procedures (administrative procedures, pre and post marketing controls, WTO TBT requirements, border controls, accreditation, testing, certification and inspection).	– Relevant national regulatory authorities responsible for enforcing the national mandatory requirements represented. – # of participants with increased knowledge about the international principles and practices.	– Participation in relation to priority list – Web based surveys of knowledge
Output F 2. Harmonised enforcement mechanisms on selected product areas based on the priority product list developed by the countries.	– Established methodology for harmonising national enforcement mechanisms	– Documentation over agreed and established methodology
Output F 3. Conformity assessment procedures applied for each of the products on the priority list, in a transparent way, by developing a databases and communication facilities to allow a smooth and effective co-operation between the countries to establish transparency on conformity assessment in the different countries.	– Developed and approved need analysis – Corresponding software suitable for harmonising of national enforcement system – % of users satisfied	– Need analyses – Purchasing order with specific requirements – Web based surveys of satisfaction
Output F 4. Regional meetings organised and implemented for the relevant national regulatory authorities to work at	– % of seminars implemented out of planned seminars – Methodology/approach for establishing trust developed	– Reports from the seminars explaining the differences and common approaches – Web based surveys of

establishing the necessary trust and transparency on the national enforcement systems.	– # of participants with increased knowledge about each overs national enforcement systems. – Gender-ratio in seminars	knowledge
Output F 5. Accreditation bodies provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to enhance the national enforcement mechanisms by supporting them in qualifying for signing MLA/MRAs in the relevant areas where they have not signed such agreements previously.	– Enhanced co-operation between the national accreditation bodies – Established methods for cooperation between ABs – Analyses of actual MLA/MRA in relation to the product lists – ABs prepared for signing MLA/MRAs in relation to the products lists – # of participants with increased knowledge and skills for qualifying for signing MLA/MRA	– Analyses of Abs, MLA/MRA status – Web based surveys of knowledge
Output F 6. Memorandum of understanding between the Agadir countries on conformity assessment developed and adapted to international best practice.	– MOU adapted to international best practices	
Output F 7. Necessary methods and procedures established to the ATU for managing and operating the systems for making the enforcement mechanisms in the countries transparent.	– ATU's operational functionality – ATU staff ability to support member countries – F participants' satisfaction with ATU support – # ATU-staff with increased knowledge about gender analysis in trade related areas	– Web based surveys of knowledge – Web based surveys on satisfaction

➢ Outcome F and outputs F6 and F7 have not been addressed yet.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the mid-term review notes that the Results Based Matrix is not being used by the project management in an efficient manner. Although there are many comments regarding the structure of the matrix, it is noted that convenient interpretations are presented in the Annual Progress Report of 2016 to justify the results of the implemented activities.

The problem here also seems to be related to the identification of which activities are being implemented under each output and outcome, without sufficient attention to their relevance to the specified indicators in the matrix.

It seems clear that the ATU has absorbed some of the outputs of the project; a Policy Statement on Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption has been posted on its website, capacity development has started to be implemented and a medium-term strategy for the period (2017-2021) has been produced (dated May 2017). [10]

3.2.5   Assessment of Achievements

Some issues related to the project structure make the assessment of results from the annual reports somewhat hazardous. First, as already noted, the project results matrix consists of outcomes and outputs that relate both to the organisation of project implementation (arguably more related to process than actual results) and with the actual harmonisation process. Second, the way activities are reported makes it difficult to easily understand what exactly is going on within the different components. There is a narrative summary per component in the annual reports, very detailed financial information, and results columns in the Project Implementation Analysis (but the information in the boxes is very succinct and appears to be severed in some places). Third, monitoring is primarily focused on perception surveys, while progress in the actual harmonisation process is not tracked in a systematic manner (as could have been done by systematically establishing and monitoring the necessary conditions, structures and activities necessary to move forward). Fourth, the responsibility for implementation of activities related to poverty, gender, environment, capacity building, information and anti-corruption is unclear. These issues feature in the project, but in fact it seems as if they are within the remit of the ATU, with the project only being able to encourage action. The LPM is tasked with follow-up, raising questions about sustainability. Finally, it has evidently proved more difficult than initially expected to get the actual harmonisation process going, with much time and effort being needed for building trust, commitment and communication. In view of the complex challenges mentioned above, this is not surprising. The project annual reports include long lists of lessons learned and recommendations apparently aimed at speeding up implementation. While this is laudable, it is unclear to whom these recommendations (which are a mix of very general and specific issues) are addressed and how they should be implemented and response monitored over time.

Despite the activities mentioned above, and their outputs, the effectiveness of the

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[10] The strategy mentioned potential Swedish support under the objective to promote trade facilitation among Agadir member states, in relation to: developing an MoU of mutual recognition of certificates; furthering work on harmonising technical regulations; specifications and standards and conformity assessment procedures using systems and structure that have been developed within the second phase of the SQIA; and discussing with Sida about a third phase of SQIA focusing on food and agro-food products.

programme has been at risk from the start. In terms of implementation, SQIA activities started in 2015. An introductory workshop was held at the end of 2015 in which the various harmonisation structures were introduced. As listed in box 2 above, the PWGs and the PHCC began their work in 2016 focusing on electrical cables and garments. By the end of 2016, beginning of 2017, tables of correspondence had been produced for the one mentioned product (low voltage cables) and one sector (garments). In their meetings held in May 2017, the PWGs and the PHCC reviewed the work undertaken so far. The ATU claims on its website that this means harmonisation has to a large extent occurred. This is not the case. The examination of the various technical parameters being used by the four countries was merely the start of the process, and there is considerable way to go before any claims of harmonisation can be made. Harmonisation can include a number of processes such as approval by the highest ministerial authorities, or changes in regulations or legislation. In terms of outputs, the tables of correspondence arguably are the only tangible result of the project. This is unsatisfactory in terms of the Sida resources that have been invested, the time has been committed and the number of people involved. In terms of outcomes (not outputs), the project now in its final year of implementation, has not been able to achieve anything.

3.2.6   Synergies with ATU activities

To reach an outcome, such as reduced barriers to trade, both technical and non-tariff barriers have to be addressed in parallel. In the case of the project, while SQIA is housed in the same building as the ATU in Amman, it works in almost complete isolation from it apart from using the ATU as a route for its correspondence with its wider group of stakeholders. The four advisors of the ATU are technically not involved in any SQIA activities, apart from receiving trainings on professional development with SQIA support. There is no overlap of their activities with the work being done by SQIA. Thus, while administratively, SQIA's finances are received by ATU from Swedac, there are no synergies at the technical level. Ideally, while SQIA was focusing on TBTs in cables and garments, ATU technical staff should have been working on the same product sector, but from the NTBs side. Instead, while activities are indeed done on NTBs, they do not relate to the work of SQIA. During the NFP meeting April and later in the 7th Programme Steering Committee (PSC) meeting in May 2016, the Egyptian NFP raised a number of criticisms regarding the implementation of the project and its failure to achieve its expected results. These included: a focus on meetings and workshops, weakness of the TBT baseline study, insufficient technical expertise of the programme experts, and transfer of responsibilities from Swedac to the ATU and lack of communication. It was noted that the resulted outcomes of the conducted activities are not up to the desired level, and did not achieve any targeted goals.

In May 2015, the baseline study mentioned above was carried out to "provide an overview of patterns of production, trade, technical barriers to trade, as well as prevalent awareness/availability of information on the technical barriers to intra-Agadir trade." It was to be used as input for the ATU steering committee when

choosing pilot products for subsequent work in the project. However, the study was unable to fulfil that purpose as its main finding was that such information was in fact not available. Such preparatory work should have been part of the mapping exercise of phase 1.

3.2.7   Overall Assessment

The project has indeed led to increased dialogue amongst the four countries. It has led to increased awareness and knowledge, and greater interaction. Countries meet at the regional meetings and at the harmonisation structure forums (such as PHCC, PWGs, National Accreditation Body [NAB] coordination bodies and Conformity Assessment Body [CAB] coordination bodies). Countries can be said to be now more familiar with each other's accreditation structures and Government bodies related to trade. However, that has come at considerable expense and (in the view of the mid-term review) cannot justify the time and resources invested into the project. Even if they now know each other, it is not clear what that would result.

The mid-term review judges that the private sector should have been involved right from the start, and it should have been a key source to identify what the real technical barriers are in interregional trade. Those obstacles should have been elaborated in a baseline and become the basis for future work. However, the private sector has been marginally involved. A number of the companies in the harmonisation structures are not really interested in intraregional trade. To widen the appeal of the project, the ATU could make better use of the recently created Agadir Business Council, which has held a couple of meetings so far. Beyond a few private companies, the overwhelming majority of the industry in the four countries are not aware of what the Agadir Agreement is trying to achieve and even less aware of the existence of the Agadir Technical Unit or SQIA. The same applies to the government bodies not directly engaging with the project, for example, customs.

As an organisation, the ATU is a weak body. It does not have the political or administrative clout to be able to press for greater cooperation from the four countries. This was not only experienced during the mid-term review MTR, but is also documented in various minutes and was mentioned in a number of interviews. That it does not receive the seriousness which its work should has repercussions on SQIA's ability to e.g. demand that members of working groups do the 'home-work' they committed to in between PWG meetings or that any communication or invitation issued by it is received and responded to as a priority by the intended recipients (see the next section on 'efficiency' for more discussion on this).

3.3 EFFICIENCY

3.3.1   Capacitating the ATU

The Swedac audit report of the ATU prepared in December 2014 recommended, among others, that:

i. The ATU should critically review its staffing levels to be able to run both the EU-funded project and the Sida-funded programme whilst still meeting the requirements of the Agadir agreement.

ii. The ATU should establish appropriate resources and processes to manage and provide technical oversight of the Sida-funded programme finances.

iii. The ATU should consider the introduction of a more integrated documented management system to enhance the "institutional memory" of the ATU.

iv. The ATU should review its IT capacity to meet future demands.

v. The ATU should implement an archiving policy taking into account any requirements of the Jordanian authorities, the member states, the EU and Sida.

Many aspects of the above recommendations have not been yet fully implemented by the ATU. In particular, ATU does not have at present: the proper specialised staff to handle the potential continuity of project activities; and, a documented management system that will allow it to receive the results of the project and ensure the sustainability of its effects. If no urgent actions are taken in this regard, when the project ends, this situation is likely to lead to failures in the desired effects of the project, namely its sustainability and impact.

3.3.2 Coordination amongst stakeholders

The roles and responsibilities of the PHCC and PWGs are described in the document entitled "Agadir Harmonisation Structure (AHS)".[11]

In that document, it is particularly mentioned that "an efficient structure needs to be put in place to focus on the harmonisation of mandatory requirements, standardisation, and conformity assessment procedures so that, amongst other things, all stakeholders involved in trade between the Agadir countries and beyond have trust in the processes backed up by accurate data."

The term "all stakeholders involved in trade between the Agadir countries and beyond" was not properly defined in the document, hence this became subject to interpretations according to different parties and in different countries. It is the judgement of the mid-term review that the term should have been defined to include all eventual beneficiaries, including related quality infrastructure entities such as testing laboratories and others, as well as industrial and business operators, who at present are in a large manner not actively involved in the decision making process nor

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[11] Latest version V1.1 issued on 31 December 2016.

are made fully aware of the results of the harmonisation process.

As for the coordination among the various committees created under SQIA, it became clear as a result of the discussions with the interviewed entities that the LPM is the main coordinator who is orchestrating the sharing of information among these committees via the ATU channels. The absence of a structured communication tool, which can be monitored by ATU and others at national levels, leads to failures in the communication of information about the project activities and their results to concerned parties and the outreach to all stakeholders.

A good example of the above is the repeated comments received from members of the PWGs, in the different countries, who stated that they do not know what the next steps and tasks required from their respective committees were, since they are not made aware of the decisions taken by higher level decision making committees about what will happen with the two Tables of Correspondence (one each for the low-voltage cables and the garments sector) that they had prepared. No clear coordination structures are being implemented allowing, in this instance, the first level committees (PWGs) to be fully aware of the decisions taken by the next level committee (PHCC), who in their turn should be aware of the decisions taken by upper level committees (PSC / ATC /NFPs / NAB /National Standards Body (NSB)).

3.3.3 Agadir Harmonisation System Platform

It is hoped by ATU and SQIA that when the information and coordination platform, the Agadir Harmonisation System (AHS) platform, devised by HiQ, becomes operational, this tool will allow the different committees' members to be more informed of SQIA developments. That could happen in case access to information is opened to all platform users, including all the different project stakeholders mentioned above.

However, the project believes that with the adoption of the online platform HiQ, the problems of communication will be largely solved. This is easier said than done. First of all, the platform is being developed in Sweden, when there is plenty of expertise to develop it within the region. The development of such platforms needs constant engagement with the intended users – not only the SQIA LPM - to elicit their needs, constraints, capacities and modes of working. This would be greatly facilitated if the developer had been based, let's say, in Amman to enable greater interaction with users, as it is the hub of SQIA activities. Secondly, there is an incorrect assumption that the users have access to all information they need to communicate and that they will be allowed to communicate with no or speedy approval of their superiors. As has been observed, the provision of information can be a sensitive task in the region. The platform has been delayed considerably in its development and, as in other cases SQIA has not been able to effectively communicate to stakeholders about whether the development of the platform is on-going. It was only in May 2017, after a protracted gap since the concept of the platform was first introduced in December 2015, that NFPs witnessed a first demonstration of the system in Stockholm and were, at that time, given an opportunity to provide feedback on it.

3.3.4   The ATU and SQIA Relationship

The project was considerably delayed in starting up. No implementation activities were carried out in 2014, largely because the personnel required had not been recruited. The LPM was recruited in early 2015, followed by his assistant a few months later. That is the total SQIA staff composition in the ATU, and is less than adequate. The Harmonisation Coordinator has to be identified and deployed by ATU, as has the gender expert whose recruitment process has been going on since the beginning of 2017.[12]

The antagonism between ATU and SQIA has been brewing since the latter half of 2016. It has evolved into a situation where the SQIA programme assistant has now taken legal action against ATU. This is an unfortunate turn of events, which has soured the working relationship between SQIA and ATU considerably. Emoluments have been cut and a state of non-cooperation amongst staff members exists. SQIA maintains it is independent from ATU internal rules from a managerial point of view and that it will solely abide by Swedac procedures, while ATU maintains both employees of SQIA should work under its authority.[13]

Adding to this unpleasant state of affairs, the LPM pays, out of his own pocket, for the daily subsistence allowance, transportation and other incidentals of participants of training events when such trainings are held in Amman, and even the salary of his assistant and then is reimbursed for that by Swedac through the ATU after a period of time. No financial support is provided by the ATU. The mid-term review is surprised that Swedac has allowed this state of affairs to exist and linger on. Swedac requires the LPM to submit detailed expenditures before it reimburses him, rather than providing him with a budget, and reconciling the accounts after the expenditures have occurred.

Till the time of writing of this report, the issues mentioned above had still not been resolved, despite Sida being updated of developments.

3.3.5   Quality of communication

This difficult working relationship has spilled into communication problems with key players beyond the ATU building in Amman. In response to requests from NFPs, the coordination of programme activities, previously directly handled by the LPM with the different Programme committees, has been shifted in 2016 to ATU. Previously

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[12] At the time of writing this report, the gender expert had been identified.
[13] Minutes of meeting between ATU and SQIA, 15 Jan 2017

the LPM was communicating directly with the concerned participants and the invitations were reaching them faster. Currently, after approval of the Swedac Programme Manager (SPM), the LPM prepares and sends the requests concerning Programme activities to the ATU Programme Coordinator, a function created in 2016, who in her turn seeks the approval of the ATU Executive Director, before sending the request to the NFPs. Then the NFPs in their respective countries transmit the requests to the concerned public entities, and through their management structures, to the concerned staff members. This complicated process has introduced delays in the communication timelines.

In this respect, the interviewed participants associated with different project activities in the four countries have flagged the issue of delays in communications, especially related to the short durations of notices received for attending meetings/workshops (which in many instances do not allow them to properly prepare themselves for the intended activity) and to the receipt of the agendas of the meetings/workshops and of the follow up reports after the meetings/workshops. This is leading to a sense of discomfort and dissatisfaction among many of them, and has been constantly reported in their comments in the evaluation sheets at the end of such activities. The 7th ATU-Swedac Programme Steering Committee (PSC) May 2016 also noted that prior to the meetings, invitations and preparatory material and subsequent to the meetings, their proceedings are provided with delay.

Part of the problem here is related to the communication system imposed by the NFPs on ATU and the project since it was requested that all communications from the project go through ATU and then via the NFPs to the concerned national entities. On the other hand, the NFP in Jordan states there is no need for this. As NFP, he should be copied in on relevant communication, but the SQIA/ATU should directly communicate with concerned officials.

3.3.6   Hand-over to ATU

At the current level of the project implementation, the mid-term review judges that the established system of coordination between Sida, Swedac, ATU and national authorities needs to be strengthened in order to keep all main stakeholders mobilised in view of monitoring and supporting the project on quarterly basis.[14]

One example is stated here to show the negative effects of the lack of this intensive

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[14] It is suggested for the PSC to request constant follow up reports from ATU, Swedac and NFPs on the implementation of decisions taken. More frequent meetings should be held for appropriate actions to be taken in case of lack of proper implementation steps and if there is a need for further decisions to be taken.

coordination at present. An exit strategy was presented by Swedac to ATU on 19 December 2016. The purpose of this important document is: … *to plan the withdrawal of programme resources provided by Sida and Swedac from the entire programme area while ensuring that the achievement of the programme goals is not jeopardized and that progress towards the implementation of the Agadir Agreement will continue… The aim is thus to ensure the sustainability of the programme's impacts after the programme ends*." It is noted that ATU has not responded, after nearly six months, to the proposal. It is clear that when the time of exit comes, the programme activities will cease, and the ATU, if not ready as suggested in the above document, will fail to properly benefit from project outcomes and will not be able to ensure the sustainability of its activities. The ATU strategic plan (2017-2021), issued in May 2017, is silent on how this handover will occur, merely stating that SQIA activities will continue.

Another example is related to some of the recommendations of the 2016 annual progress report. It has stated, among others that: "*A number of recommendations made in previous Annual Reports (2014 and 2015) have only been partially implemented and so should be reviewed for future relevance: (i) Work to formulate and implement an information strategy …; (ii) Development of a long-term strategic plan for the ATU, clearly stating its Vision for the future; (iii) The Trade Ministers Committee should be asked to consider providing further resources to National Focal Points to be able to implement the Programme and in the long-run to make the harmonization process …*" Since the 2016 annual progress report has been approved by the main stakeholders, then a "fast-track" action plan needs to be drawn and implemented by the different concerned parties, and frequently monitored by Sida, Swedac and national authorities in the four countries. Otherwise, the future of this programme is very much doubtful.

In conclusion, the responsibilities of the stakeholders (and notably of the PSC) have been defined in this project, but the coordination among them remains unclear and is sometimes ineffective. Stronger commitment of all concerned stakeholders would be urgently required in order to take this project positively forward and reach the time of closure with a clear sustainability strategy and plan.[15]

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[15] It is mentioned in the 2016 Annual Progress Report, in its lessons learned section: "The level of commitment to the Agadir Agreement and delivery of the programme outcomes still appears varied between the Member States, although 2016 has shown an increase in commitment from some of the NFPs (Egypt in particular) and ongoing support from the different Quality Infrastructure organisations as a whole."

3.3.7 Cost efficiency of the Programme

Table 13: Levels of budget and disbursements over the period 2014 – 2016 of the programme[16]

Year	2014	2015	2016
Budget	4,821,779	15,070,492	10,094,608
Disbursement	3,774,252	13,947,892	8,706,140
Undisbursed	1,047,527	1,122,600	1,388,468
% Undisbursed	21.7%	7.5%	13.7%

SQIA has disbursed in total the amount of SEK 26,428,284 during the period 2014 – 2016, with an undisbursed percentage estimated at 11.8 % (Table 7). Disbursements can be classified under the three categories: (i) Administrative and staff costs (including rents, etc.) (Table 8), (ii) Expenses related to capacity building activities (Table 9), and (iii) Expenses related to harmonisation process activities (Table 10).

Table 14: Disbursements during 2014 – 2017 (Q1) classified as administrative and staff costs (incl. rents, etc.), costs of capacity building activities, and costs of harmonisation process activities

	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Q1)[17]
Administrative and staff costs (including rents, etc.)	2,898,346	4,368,515	3,532,884	948,112
Costs of capacity building activities	24,780	244,2125	59,9943	19,647
Harmonisation process activities	851,126	7,137,252	4,573,313	157,983
Total disbursements	3,774,252	13,947,892	8,706,140	1,125,742

Table 15: Disbursements during 2014 – 2017 (Q1) classified as totals for administrative and staff costs (incl. rents, etc.), costs of capacity building activities, and costs of harmonisation process activities

	Totals for 2014-2017(Q1) per category of disbursement	% disbursements per category of disbursement
Administrative and staff costs (including rents, etc.)	11,747,857	42.6%
Costs of capacity building activities	3,086,495	11.2%
Harmonisation process activities	12,719,674	46.2%
Total disbursements	27,554,026	100%

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[16] As reported by Swedac to the MTR. These amounts differ slightly from those included in the annual progress report of 2016.

[17] The budget for 2017 is SEK 9,988,698 and that for 2018 SEK 3,550,669.

Table 16: Percentages of administrative and staff costs (incl. rent, etc.) over the years

	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017 (Q1)**[18]
Administrative and staff costs (including rents, etc.)	2,898,346	4,368,515	3,532,884	948,112
Total disbursements	3,774,252	13,947,892	8,706,140	1,125,742
% of disbursements of admin. and staff costs	76.8%	31.3%	40.6%	84.2%

The financial data show that the administrative and staff costs represented 42.6% of the total disbursements over the current lifetime of the project, with only 58.4% spent on project activities (capacity building and harmonisation activities). This suggests that thus far, the project is being implemented with high administrative and related costs.

Moreover, during the first quarter of 2017, administrative and related costs were about 84% of the total disbursed. This is a worrying indicator about the performance of the project in the current year.

At the same time, unsurprisingly there is some underspending, which is due to the delays experienced by the project. The fundamental reasons for the delays are the low commitment and capacity of the four countries to implement the Agadir Agreement, but also because of the need to wait for higher-level decision-making and validation. In addition, there were for example delays in the recruitment of the LPM and its offices as mentioned earlier. Swedac writes in the annual progress report 2014 that "*the mobilisation phase of the programme should have been longer to allow for recruitment of key personnel. Furthermore, earlier implementation of the Capacity Assessment (for example, prior to the start of the programme) might have identified that the ATU was already operating near to or at its maximum capacity and therefore had few spare resources to devote to programme mobilisation.*" However, the low capacity of the ATU and the challenges involved in implementing the Agadir Agreement should have been clear from Phase 1 of the project and the previous experience of the Swedish government agencies in the region.

Additionally, the way the project is set up gives it little direct leverage over the functioning and capacity of ATU, which would have been difficult in any case since the ATU is an independent international organisation. More fundamentally, the Agadir countries are middle-income countries, which do have government structures in place and should be able to invest in a priority programme. Apparently the Agadir Agreement is not one of those, and it would seem very difficult for an aid programme

[18] The budget for 2017 is SEK 9,988,698 and that for 2018 SEK 3,550,669.

to build up the needed local structures in an efficient way. It essentially means replacing what should have been done by government officials with far more expensive international experts and providing additional capacity to the ATU through a costly LPM office that ideally (and in principle) should have largely been financed by the countries themselves.

3.4 PLANNING AND REPORTING

3.4.1   The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The M&E framework developed for the project has, amongst others, the following features:

- There is a separate section in the annual reports that introduces the M&E system of the project.

- It builds on a theory of change and results framework.

- The results framework contains indicators at all outcome and output areas, with means of verifications.

- The results system is highly complex: seven outcomes with 20 indicators and 24 outputs with 77 indicators.

- Monitoring of progress is done by colour coding of individual indicators of the results framework. This allows for easy monitoring and overview of project progress from a quantitative perspective.

- Qualitative perspectives of the project are mainly monitored through end of activity/meeting perception surveys. A wider survey on the ATU was attempted in 2015, but with extremely few respondents. It was not repeated in 2016. A follow up was initiated in early 2017.

- The main weakness of the system is that it does not track the harmonisation process (which is the core of the project) in a systematic manner. While the monitoring process is indeed fraught with difficulties, as noted by Swedac in the annual reports, efforts have been insufficient to more precisely define and monitor the key elements and steps involved in the harmonisation process. On this basis a few central indicators could have been designed that capture key milestones and decision points in the harmonisation process.[19] On this basis a

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[19] The piloting process has not identified sufficient M&E steps in the harmonisation process and this should be rectified by the combined efforts of the project so that as the ATU takes over further responsibility for harmonisation, it will be able to keep track of the process.

few central indicators could have been designed that capture key milestones
and decision points in the harmonisation process.

3.4.2   Programme Implementation Reporting

In the 2016 Annual Progress Report, the Programme Implementation Analysis table
cannot be read fully since entries in the boxes were not fully copied when included in
the Report. However, the status of the indicators used in the Result Based Matrix for
the identified outcomes and outputs are mainly classified as "Completed" or
"Initiated"[20] as seen below.

Table 17: Outcome level implementation status in 2016 Annual Progress Report

OUTCOME indicators	No. of indicators	Completed	Initiated	Others
Outcome A	4	4	0	0
Outcome BA	3	2	1	0
Outcome BB	2	1	1	0
Outcome C	1	0	1	0
Outcome D	3	1	2	0
Outcome E	3	1	2	0
Outcome F	2	0	2	0
TOTALS	18	9	9	0

[20] Some other statuses were reported as "N/A", and "Not met".

Table 18: Output level implementation status in 2016 Annual Progress Report

OUTPUT indicators	No. of indicators	Completed	Initiated	Others
Output A1	5	2	2	1
Output BA1	5	4	1	0
Output BA2	3	1	2	0
Output BB1	5	2	2	1
Output C1	1	1	0	0
Output C2	1	0	0	1
Output D1	3	2	1	0
Output D2	4	1	3	0
Output D3	4	1	3	0
Output D4	3	2	1	0
Output D5	3	0	3	0
Output D6	4	0	4	0
Output E1	3	2	1	0
Output E2	4	1	3	0
Output E3	3	2	1	0
Output E4	3	0	3	0
Output E5	4	0	4	0
Output F1	3	3	0	0
Output F2	1	1	0	0
Output F3	3	2	1	0
Output F4	4	0	4	0
Output F5	5	0	5	0
Output F6	2	0	2	0
Output F7	4	0	4	0
TOTALS	80	27	50	3

Table 19: Outcome and output level implementation status in 2016 Annual Progress Report

Outcome	% of indicators reported as Completed[21]	Outputs	% of indicators reported as Completed
A	100%	A1	40%
BA	66%	BA1	80%
		BA2	33%
BB	50%	BB1	40%
C	0%	C1	100%
		C2	0%
D	33%	D1	66%
		D2	25%
		D3	25%
		D4	66%
		D5	0%

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[21] Percentages are estimated for the purpose of the arguments presented in this section as the percentage of the number of outputs reported "completed" versus the total number of outputs indicated in the matrix.

		D6	0%
E	33%	E1	66%
		E2	25%
		E3	66%
		E4	0%
		E5	0%
F	0%	F1	100%
		F2	100%
		F3	66%
		F4	0%
		F5	0%
		F6	0%
		F7	0%

The logic and methodology used in compiling the above tables and labelling the outcomes and outputs as either "completed" or "initiated" are not clear. It is not clear, for instance, how outcome A at 100% has been judged to be completed while its outputs A1 is only implemented up to 40%. An outcome can be achieved or not achieved, and the outputs leading to its achievement should either be done or not. "Initiation" of outputs is not a clear result.

Furthermore, the above suggests that the choice and the use of indicators in the Result Based Matrix have not been properly designed, nor properly utilised in tracking Programme performance.

The field work conducted by the mid-term review showed that some stakeholders in the four countries do not agree with the stated conclusions of the project management on some results. The claim that the harmonisation process has been "completed" is challenged by many. For them, the first step of the process has been identified and tested, and other steps should still follow before the process is labelled "completed".

It was also noted that many interviewed Programme participants did not understand the recurring indicator in outcomes D, E and F dealing with "gender ratio in meetings". They argued that the participants in technical committees and meetings are mainly public servants employed by technical departments with specific duties and are assigned by their management to work on the subjects addressed by the project. In most countries (except Egypt), the number of staff in these technical departments is limited. Gender is judged by them to be an inappropriate criterion in relation to their specified responsibilities in their organisations.

3.5 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES INCLUDING HRBA

3.5.1   Gender

A gender policy was drafted in December 2014 to ensure that implementation of the project programme is carried out to international standards with respect to gender balance in its activities. Subsequent to that, a work plan was elaborated. The policy has three "impact levels": 1) ensuring gender balance among participation project activities; 2) commitment to gender balanced employment practices among

participating conformity assessment bodies; and 3) outreach to women's business organisations and ensuring commitment to gender balance in organisations seeking product certification. What is clear is that implementation of the policy has been fraught with difficulties.

The policy was drafted in 2014, but was only launched officially in November 2015. It created a backlash among participants, as acknowledged in the annual report 2015: "Addressing gender issues in a specific event that focused only on the topic was not well received. In the future, the topic will need to be integrated more carefully within the individual programme components." Instead, the PSC asked for a less ambitious approach to gender issues than compared to what had been proposed by the gender expert. In the annual report 2016, Swedac wrote that the gender work was progressing well. This is a surprising assessment given that the work on gender issues was suspended following a decision at the PSC meeting to replace the then gender expert with one from the region. While the new local gender expert has been selected, her appointment is now overdue and pending for several months partly because of the discord between ATU and SQIA which has been discussed above. Thus there is no progress being made on the implementation of the gender work plan.

Gender is an important and often overlooked aspect of trade-related process and support programmes. The original gender plan that was developed for the SQIA project contain some relevant elements, such as promoting and monitoring gender balance in participation in project activities, taking gender issues into account in analysis and studies (in particular the reports on TBTs produced within the project), increasing the knowledge of gender issues among stakeholders, and reaching out to women-owned businesses through e.g. the ATU webpage (essentially corresponding to parts of impact levels 1 and 3 of the plan). However, the mid-term review judges that the gender policy may have over-estimated the sphere of influence of the programme when it tried to influence the gender situation among national agencies and even organisations applying for certification (mainly impact level 2 and part of 3). There are even indications that there were ideas about trying to mainstream gender within the whole Agadir Free Trade Agreement (according to an undated document with the heading: "Gender Mainstreaming in Agadir Free Trade Agreement Proposed Deliverables till end of Phase II Programme"). These wider plans evidently reached beyond the project reach and were completely unrealistic to implement within a project that faced so many other challenges. The reality check called for by the PSC seems justified in this regard.

The analytical part of the phase 1 report contains no gender dimension. Gender instead appears as a horizontal item in the project formulation part, with a range of activities proposed without considering what would be reasonable given the project context. In the M&E framework, most focus is on the gender-ratio in seminars. The main important exception is the indicator under outcome C that tracks if "recommended product areas are analysed from a gender perspective". However, a review of some key substantive documents indicate that gender aspects are not mentioned at all, including the documents describing the Agadir Harmonisation

Structure and the Agadir Harmonisation Platform or the TBT baseline study (entitled "Agadir Product Survey and Benchmarking Study Mission Report") which is completely silent on this aspect. Overall, gender is poorly analysed in the projects monitoring system. It largely focuses on counting the number of female attendees at the various events.

Gender was not felt by several PHCC/PWG participants interviewed to be a formal issue of relevance; on the contrary, the representativeness criteria is simply based on professional skills rather than gender; yet the participation of women throughout the programme appears consistent both in quantity and quality/profile. In some accreditation and standardisation bodies women representation was found strong both in quantitative and qualitative terms; their roles were found to be often in middle or senior management or technical position vis-à-vis their males counterparts and women tend to be more the more outspoken and critical in assuming responsibilities as PHCC/PWG participants.

Gender issues have played marginal roles in the project. Neither electrical cables nor textiles were selected as the pilot projects after the undertaking of an assessment through a gender lens. It was not assessed whether the improvements in the quality of these products would directly or indirectly affect women, children or the marginalised. Neither was it assessed what sections of society these two industries employ. As it happens, textile industries do - largely on the factory floor – employ many female labourers. On the other hand, they are very few in percentage terms in the electrical cable industry, and there mainly in administrative and clerical roles.

3.5.2   Environment

There is little mention of the environment directly in the project documentation, how it will be focused upon or the effects of project outcomes on environmental issues. The issue was mentioned by the private electrical cables sector, in the interviews conducted; that improved standards should make their handling and use safer in terms of human health and that they, as manufacturers, do have a focus on this. In addition, it should be noted that technical regulations and standards may lead to improvement in the work environment, health and safety and the physical environment generally. Some of the countries' technical standards in the textiles sector, as listed in the tables of correspondence, take account of the use of chemicals and hazardous substances in the production of clothing e.g. formaldehyde, metals, carcinogenic colours and phthalates.

3.5.3   Anti-Corruption

In 2014 an anti-bribery and anti-corruption policy was developed in conjunction with the ATU (Activity BA43). Whilst this was initially intended to apply only to programme activities, the ATU agreed to adopt this as a long-term policy to apply to all its activities. Initially, this did not appear to have led to any changes in practices. However, according to the annual report 2015 following a meeting with senior staff

of the ATU in July 2015, a work plan was put in place that covers publishing the policy, raising staff awareness, training and incorporating it into purchasing and supply procedures. The final version of the Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Statement (in both Arabic and English) along with associated policy procedures was endorsed by the ATU Executive Director in December 2016, with a recommendation for it to be circulated to the NFPs and the entire ATU staff. The related work plan was signed by all ATU employees including the programme staff and was communicated externally on the ATU website.[22]

[22] Available at
http://www.agadiragreement.org/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/PDFs/EN/policy%20statement%20on%20anti-bribery%20and%20anti-corruption.pdf

4 Evaluative Conclusions

It is noted that the subject of harmonisation of the quality infrastructure among the four member countries of Agadir Agreement is well developed within the national entities dealing with this subject, namely the accreditation, standardisation and technical regulation entities. Furthermore, it is clear that the project was the forum for multiple face-to-face interactions among the participants from these entities in the four countries. Networking between counterpart officials/technical staff was created as a consequence of the project.

The above does not unfortunately apply to the other operators in the quality infrastructure chain. Private operators such as testing laboratories and specialised training institutions and bodies, for example, are not targeted by project activities or by its information sharing activities.

Furthermore, the private sector of the concerned two pilot products sectors was not, apart from some exceptions in some countries, on the radar of the limited communications and outreach actions of the project. The lack of an ATU communication strategy and the lack of national outreach plans regarding this project, along with the limited concerns/actions of the project management with this essential potential project result led to this situation being allowed to continue for years. Moreover, the lack of awareness raising activities touched more severely the small and medium enterprises (SME) in the four countries; a sector that represents the largest number of enterprises active in these countries, employing the largest percentages of industrial and commercial operators nationally. A general impression of the review team is that this has been a "hidden" project for a large number of industry operators.

There is no basis on which the mid-term review can recommend a no cost extension of the project. Very few activities are planned for the remaining period anyway, and the project has very high administrative and staff costs. Most of the financing from any no cost extension would end up being allocated to such costs, without any real substantial progress being made in project objectives. It is unclear what a no-cost extension would achieve apart from prolonging a poorly executed project, with little ownership and no evidence of results higher than outputs.

The relevance of the project is very much questionable 13 years after the four countries signed the Agadir Agreement. The feasibility of the project was not thoroughly thought through, nor were questions about ownership and capacity properly sufficiently investigated and addressed in programme design. Sida fully financed a regional project benefitting middle-income countries but did little to stimulate local ownership.

Swedac has made attempts to promote ownership and local participation, including in the design and activities of the project. However, Swedac is by nature not a capacity developing organisation, but a technical agency. As a consequence the overall design was too ambitious and underestimated the challenges in spite of previous experiences and the recommendations from Phase 1. The recommendations were poorly thought through and weakly constructed in the document that became the Programme Document.

In spite of these challenges, some results have been reached in terms of setting in motion and pushing forward the harmonisation process and structures of two pilot products. However, the prospects for sustainability of these achievements when the project ends are not promising. There has been quite positive appreciation of the training events by the overwhelming number of participants. This and the intra-regional dialogue fostered on trade and TBTs are good outputs of the project (note, they are not outcomes).

These positive achievements are overshadowed by multiple weaknesses: the poor capacity of the ATU, commitments not being translated into actions by the member countries, the poor progress especially in the first two years, the squabbling between ATU and SQIA, token representation of the private sector, and a very high cost to benefit ratio have left this a failed project.

The goal was not that officials from four countries would have be provided trainings and be able to interact with each other; it was that the countries would move towards greater exchange of goods and services benefitting their populations especially the poor and the marginalised. This would contribute to better human rights and prosperity – the values on the basis of which Sida makes investment decisions. There is no sign that the journey on that path has made any mentionable progress.

5 Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Sida

1) It is recommended that the project not be extended beyond the current phase ending August 2018, and no new funding phase or any no-cost extension of the current phase be considered.

2) In the future, Sida should examine projects and determine whether they are worthy of funding based on real needs, ownership and commitment, after undertaking thorough reviews of ground-level realities. Sida should also consider how realistic are the achievement of outcomes, based on past or parallel endeavours in the same region with the same partners and on a frank assessment of the likely sphere of influence of the structures that would be established.

Swedac

3) Swedac needs, in partnership with the ATU, to come up with a realistic, owned and achievable exit strategy. The exit strategy should be developed in the next three months, outlining the duties of both Swedac and ATU, and how the project will be transferred to and absorbed within ATU.

4) In partnership with ATU, Swedac needs to develop a realistic plan of what is achievable by August 2018 in terms of the harmonisation process. This plan needs to be submitted to Sida within the next two months.

ATU

5) The ATU needs to respond to the exit strategy presented to it by Swedac last December, and come to agreement with Swedac as to how the output of SQIA will be mainstreamed within the organisation before Sida funding ends in August 2018.

6) The ATU should move forward with the recruitment of the proposed harmonisation coordinator who should be an experienced senior professional able to handle the complex realities of engaging with four to six countries, and possess the authority to deal with the members of the various groups that have been created over the last one and a half years as part of the harmonisation process.

7)   The ATU needs to resolve the administrative and financial issues that it is facing with Swedac and SQIA. The ATU must develop and implement solutions which can result in the smooth functioning of SQIA until the end of the project implementation period in August 2018.

8)   The coordination procedures implemented at present need to be reviewed with the aim that this will allow smoother and more effective lines of communications between the SQIA office and the beneficiaries of the activities. Copying all other concerned officials at the level of ATU, NFPs and others should certainly be part of such revised procedures. It is further recommended that, at least at the level of the coordination between ATU and SQIA team in Amman, this process is speeded up, with the reduction as much as possible of "red tape".

Sida/National Focal Points/ATU/Swedac

9)   The four stakeholders need to review and act upon the various recommendations listed in the SQIA annual progress report for 2016. The response to these recommendations should become an integral part of the 2017-18 work plan.

10) These main stakeholders need to meet on a quarterly basis to closely monitor the SQIA work plan and ensure that the basis of its sustainability is in place by August 2018.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND: THE AGADIR AGREEMENT AND THE REQUEST TO SIDA

The Agadir process was initiated in Agadir in May 2001 by the four countries of Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan. Through a declaration, the four countries expressed their intention to establish a free trade area between them. This initiative is supported by the EU, as it is seen as an important contribution in leading the objectives of the Barcelona Process.

The *Agadir Agreement* was signed by the four Arab countries in Rabat, Morocco in 2004. The ratification of the Agreement was completed in June 2006 and proper implementation was made possible from 27 March 2007. The cooperation for the Agreement is formalized in the EU-funded institution of Agadir Technical Unit (ATU), with its office in Amman, Jordan.

The key element in this strategic partnership between the EU and these four Agadir countries is to eliminate technical barriers to trade and to facilitate investment, which will enhance development and boost trade in the region and, ultimately, contribute to poverty reduction as an effect from economic growth and job creation. The agreement is also a step towards establishing the *Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area*.

The aim of the Agreement is to further regional cooperation through boosting trade between the four member countries as well as with the EU, including creating a free trade zone in order to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and enhancement of the development and integration through the implementation of the Pan-Euro-Med rules of origin (RoO). The Agreement is based on international rules and regulations that apply in the world today, embedded in the agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Agreement is in harmony with the Charter of the Arab League, thus supporting Arab cooperation and the implementation of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA).

The four Agadir countries have, through the ATU, *requested* the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for technical assistance to enhance the implementation of the Agadir Agreement by providing support to establish systems and structures to bring down technical barriers to trade, so-called TBTs. Sida has previously provided support to the four Agadir countries and the ATU through addressing issues related to trade in services and the EU's Trade

Defence Instruments (TDI). EU is currently supporting operations of the ATU and the implementation of the Agadir Agreement.

Sida has agreed to provide the requested technical assistance to the ATU. The program is implemented through two phases. The first phase focused on analysing the present situation in the four Agadir countries at both international and regional levels, as well the development of Terms of Reference for the second phase, Phase 2, which is the actual implementation phase. The Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (Swedac) has been contracted to implement both phases. Phase 2 has been running since 2nd quarter of 2014 and has scheduled activities throughout 2016 and 2017, with an intended exit strategy to be finalized by the end of 2017.

1.2 SWEDAC, ATU AND THE SQIA-PROGRAM

The Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (Swedac) is a Swedish government authority working for products' safety and reliability and in the trust how this is assessed, answering both to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation. Swedac's work lays a foundation for the trust between countries that is needed for economic growth and a functioning world trade. Swedac is active in international cooperation within all of its working areas, with the aim that products and services should fulfil high standards on quality and safety all over the world, without barriers to trade.

Swedac also supports other countries in development projects throughout the world, such as the Sida funded International Training Program's (ITP). The ITPs within the MENA region aim at advanced capacity building in regards of the WTO's TBT and SPS agreements (*Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade* and *Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures*) for key actors within relevant ministries, authorities and accreditation and standardization bodies. Within each ITP, participants are to initiate and operationalize so called change projects for structural change within their home organizations; and as such, the Sida funded program within the ATU is one of the key results of former ITP participants' change projects. Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) is an Amman-based regional organization with the mission to promote the Agadir Agreement as well as the partnership between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Additional to its objective to liberalize trade and achieve economic integration between its four member states, the agreement also creates possibilities to develop trade and economic partnership between its member states and their neighbouring European countries and, therefore, is in compliance with the objectives of the Barcelona Process. The agreement is possible to expand and is open to accession for all Mediterranean Arab countries that have association agreements with the EU. Among these, Lebanon and Palestine are now the countries closest to join.
Phase 1 of the Sida funded program, which was carried out 2012-2013, focused on mapping member countries' work towards harmonisation of technical regulations,

voluntary standards and conformity assessment. Together with experts' input, member countries have supplied a baseline of information for the phase 2. Phase 2 – *Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries* – that has been in operation since 2nd quarter 2014, is carried out in order to reach the objective of removal of TBTs through:

Developing and agreeing on a list of priority product areas to focus efforts on (initially low-voltage cables and ready-to-wear clothing);

Conducting a more detailed assessment study of actual TBTs;

Strengthening the capacity of the ATU to become the coordinating body as envisioned in the Agadir Agreement;

Strengthening necessary and corresponding capacities on national level in member countries; and

Initiate and carry through processes of harmonisation of technical regulations, voluntary standards and relevant enforcement mechanisms, i.e. conformity assessment.

1.3 OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND SYNERGIES WITH THE NEW REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR SWEDEN'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA) 2016-2020

The Sida-funded project *"Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries"* (SQIA) is developed in line with Sweden's previous strategy for development cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa 2010 - 2015. The project is furthermore assessed to be in compliance the new strategy as it responds to the results area focusing on regional economic integration and in the particular result focusing on *"increased economic integration and improved opportunities for countries in the region to participate in free, sustainable and equitable regional trade".* Both Sida and the Program work towards promoting regional trade, integration and co-operation through:

Harmonizing structures, systems and regulatory frameworks within the trade sector;

Working towards elimination of TBTs;

Promoting trust, dialogue and exchange within the region and with other countries and regions on economic reform priorities to foster private sector development, regional economic integration and attraction of Foreign Direct Investments in order to contribute towards increased productivity and employment opportunities;

Providing capacity building and technical assistance; and

Strengthening co-operation with national institutions in order to build regional networks.

As well as follow the overall development goals of the Swedish International Development such as good governance, anti-corruption, inclusiveness and gender.

1.4 SPECIFIC POINTS OF ADDED VALUE OF THE SUPPORT TO ATU AND THE SQIA-PROGRAM

The SQIA-Program delivers unique points of added value compared to other development initiatives:

The SQIA-Program is *demand driven*: It was established at the request of the ATU and the four Agadir countries.

The principle of *openness and transparency is inherent* in the Program: The work on quality infrastructure relies on transparency, integrity and trust.

The Program integrates the *principle of participation*: Together with technical assistance provided throughout the program, the member countries together with the regional coordination body ATU are to implement the Agreement themselves. For every product area to harmonise meetings between relevant national institutions among the four countries need to occur. The program is therefore dependent by a high level of participation of the member countries to set up mechanisms for harmonisation to reduce technical barriers to trade.

MID-TERM REVIEW

2.1 OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the evaluation is to provide the project partners i.e. Sida, ATU and Swedac with an independent mid-term review of the status, relevance and performance of the program as compared to the main project document, identify and assess the basic results, outcomes and impacts as to their sustainability and suitability for replication in other areas. The evaluation results are envisaged to identify and describe the lessons learned, through measurements of the changes in the set indicators, summarize the experiences gained, technically and managerially.

2.2 SCOPE

The scope of the evaluation will cover the success in achieving the targets, in removing trade barriers, raising public awareness, strengthening technical capabilities, appropriateness of policies, and the impact and sustainability of activities and outputs.

The assessment of the achievements of the program "Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries" will be carried out as a mid-term review to support Sida as the donor to follow up the re-shaping of the support under the program. The mid-term review will also give ATU and Swedac the possibility to receive objective comments on this project.

The mid-term review shall cover the period from April 2014 to April 2016. It shall provide Sida, Swedac and ATU with information on the results of the program. To that effect, it shall focus on the outputs, outcomes and possible impacts that have been achieved through the activities. Local ownership, long term sustainability and countries' inclusion and commitment in the process shall be assessed, as well as financial and managerial capacity of the ATU and the staff appointed to the program. Cooperation with and the commitment of the National Focal Points within each country shall be reviewed. The mid-term review shall examine this based on the mandate of the ATU and Swedac. Particular emphasis of the review shall also be on assessing the implementation of gender through a trade perspective within the project.

The mid-term review shall consider the grant agreement between the Swedac and Sida, the grant agreement between Swedac and ATU including its annexes and amendments, and the following documents:

The Phase 1 analysis with recommendations for continuation for the program
The Phase 2 Project Proposal
The SQIA Gender Policy
The SQIA Anti-corruption Policy and Capacity Building Plan
Sustainability plan for the cooperation on issues regarding technical barriers to trade among the four countries under the Agadir Agreement.

2.3 ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE MID-TERM REVIEW

Assessment of the program progress towards attaining its objectives and outcomes and recommend measures which can improve the program.
Investigation of the relevance of these objectives to the national development objectives and priorities, areas of interest and the needs of beneficiaries.
Review of the appropriateness and clarity of the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and the level of coordination between them.
Review of the program concept and design with respect to clarity of the addressed problems by the program and soundness of the approaches adopted by the program to solve these problems.
Assessment of the performance of the program in terms of timeliness, quality, quantity and cost effectiveness of the activities undertaken including program procurement: experts and equipment, training programs, etc.
Review of the logical framework matrix and the indicators to assess their appropriateness for monitoring the program performance and to what extent they are being used by the program management.
Assess the prospects of the sustainability of the program outcomes and benefits and recommend measures for their further improvement.
Identify and describe the main lessons learned from the program performance in terms of awareness raising, strengthening of technical and financial capacity, efforts to secure sustainability and approaches and methodologies used. Lessons learned in the following areas should be highlighted:
End users awareness raising efforts and the impact on the quality infrastructure development;
Effectiveness of the training activities and their impact. The sustainability of these activities should take into consideration the role of the ATU and its commitment;
Appropriateness of the current inter-linkages between the major stakeholders and recommend measures for their improvement.
The future of sustainability of different program achievements in relation to the roles and linkages among the stakeholders.

The mid-term review shall primarily focus on questions related to:

Effectiveness – Have the activities undertaken by the program improved and has the program managed to re-shape its structure based on the changes in the region and the recommendations of the concluding report from phase 1 of the program? Have the activities generated further political awareness and expert consensus on the priority areas for reform at the regional level? In particular, have these activities led to effects in terms of policy, normative, institutional or similar changes in the target countries? Have such changes subsequently been effectively implemented?

Relevance – Have the changes that have taken place been relevant to the needs and priorities of the intended beneficiaries, and to the conditions of people living in poverty? Have gender considerations been included in the design of the project? Also, have the activities undertaken provided the donor community with relevant information. Have any efforts been made on the harmonization process related to environmental and climate sustainability?
Could any conclusions be drawn on a link between the agreements, the process on harmonization and bringing down TBTs for long term sustainability?

Efficiency – Could the same results have been achieved with fewer resources? Follow-up, planning and reporting to donor: has ATU carried out internal follow-up on the ongoing support, how have they been presented, are target countries involved in planning and needs assessment? How and in which way is ATU/Swedac reporting the Swedish support within and outside the four Agadir countries?

Reporting and Planning – ATU has developed a result based matrix to simplify the follow up of the support. ATU is producing several studies/assessments which are presented under the program. How have these been presented, is the planning and involvement from experts and institutions in the MENA region structured, can more be done to follow the Paris Declaration on ownership?

2.4 METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will be based on the findings and factual statements identified from review of relevant documents including the program document, quality reports, annual program reports, program implementation reports, in addition to the technical and financial reports produced by the program and the different promotional materials. A list of the above reports will be shared with the consultant before the beginning of the mission.

The mission will also undertake field visits and interview the stakeholder's including the target beneficiaries, and government officials (both at the national and regional levels). Participation of stakeholders in the evaluation should be maintained at all the times, reflecting opinions, expectations and vision about the contribution of the program towards the achievements of its objectives.

The primary source of information for the evaluation shall be interviews with public officials and stakeholders in the countries where the Program has been implemented. Information contained in the Program's documentation such as quarterly and annual reports will be an important source of background information, which will help the consultants elaborate questions and identify interviewees.

2.5 IMPLEMENTATION

The Consultant shall proceed with the mid-term review that will consist in the following:

1. Preparation of a brief inception report (maximum 60 hours in total)
On the basis of written documentation from the Program combined with interviews or questionnaires (possibly over the phone) with stakeholders within the countries of co-operation, the inception report should:
Formulate, in accordance with the above focus and on the basis of the Initiative's logical framework, the main questions/problems, which will be studied at field level. Provide a proposed outline of the final evaluation report.

The inception report should be submitted to Sida.

2. Field visits (maximum 320 hours in total)
The consultant should undertake field visits to all of the four countries – Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan – where the Program has been implemented. For the performance of field studies, the team members may work separately.

3. Submission of the interim report (maximum 40 hours in total)
The objective of the interim report is to provide preliminary results and ensure that the evaluation is carried out in accordance with expectations. Subsequent to the submission of the interim report, Sida, ATU and Swedac should be given the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions as to the focus of the evaluation and additional material to consider.

4. Submission of the final evaluation report (maximum 60 hours in total)
Apart from reporting on the findings of the evaluation, the consultant will be asked to provide recommendations for how the Program's effectiveness can be enhanced.

2.6 REPORTS

All reports shall be finalised by the consultant in English. Also, for concepts and definitions of key evaluation terms, please refer to DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, Appendix C.

TIME PLAN

The final evaluation report (in accordance with para 2.5, pt. 4 in this document) the must be submitted to Sida by mid July 2017 at the latest.

BUDGET

The maximum budget for the assignment is SEK 550 000. The total budget shall include reimbursable costs amounting to a maximum of SEK 200 000. The tenderer should not submit a budget that exceeds the total budget (i.e. SEK 750 000).

PRICE

The tenderer may, in connection with the call-off improve (lower) the fee/hour level. Otherwise will the fee/hour rate, provided in the framework agreement by the tenderer, be used for the final selection process.

The tenderer must specify fees per hour for each consultant mentioned below:

Specify fee per hour (Consultant level 1):	
Specify fee per hour (Consultant level 2):	

EVALUATION OF CALL-OFF RESPONSES

6.1 COMPETENCE

The evaluation team must have a team leader who is a core team member according to the framework agreement. It must be stated in the proposal the person who will be the team leader.

The requirements below are according to the consultant's professional and technical capacity as described in the minimum requirements for personnel in the framework agreement with Sida on Evaluation Services, see Appendix 1 - Qualifications and competences of consultants. The suggested consultant(s) must comply with all the stated 'must' requirements for level 1 and/or level 2. Maximum two consultant levels (level 1 and level 2) may be included (of which at least one has to be a level 1).

The consultant(s) must between them (together) have the following qualifications:

Full professional proficiency in English according to Appendix 2 - Sida's Language Level Definition.

Academic Education, at least Master´s degree or equivalent post graduate degree in trade policy field (WTO procedures and Technical Barriers to Trade) with at least 12 years of relevant work experiences in the trade policy area.

Knowledge of regional economic integration issues and difficulties in developing countries and in the Middle East and North Africa.

It is preferable that the consultant(s) between them (together) have the following merits:

Experience of macroeconomic environment, cultural and socio-economic conditions in the Middle East and North Africa.

Experience in the fields of similar projects' formulation and execution.

Knowledge of the complex political development and security issues in the Middle East and North Africa.

Proficiency in Arabic according to Sida's language definition.

The merits above will be evaluated according to the scale in para 6.2 in this document.

The call-off response must include the following:

Suggested personnel for the assignment and a short explanation of the suggested persons' suitability for the assignment according to Appendix 3 - CV-Template. Please use one CV-Template for each consultant.

6.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Sida will use the following evaluation criteria for this call-off for choosing the best proposal:

Evaluation criteria for this call-off are:

Criteria		Max point/criteria
1.	Experience of macroeconomic environment, cultural and socio-economic conditions in the Middle East and North Africa.	40
2.	Experience in the fields of similar projects' formulation and execution.	25
3.	Knowledge of the complex political development and security issues in the Middle East and North Africa.	10
4.	Proficiency in Arabic according to Sida's language definition.	5
	Total max point technical criteria	**80**

The scale of grades that will be used when assessing the criteria (except price evaluation) are:

The number of points that can be awarded under each of the technical evaluation criteria. For example, if a maximum of 20 points can be awarded for a given criterion, "Good" will mean 0.8 x 20 = 16 points. (In the evaluation, the levels (in %) will have fixed values, which means that there will be no intermediate values).	Poor[23] Not entirely satisfactory[24] Satisfactory[25] Good[26] Very Good[27]	0 % 40 % 60 % 80 % 100 %

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[23] Not addressed or not sufficient

[24] Sufficient in some aspects but not as a whole

[25] Sufficient but lacks substantial advantages or has uneven quality

Minimum score to proceed to price-evaluation	The call-off response must achieve a minimum of **54** points as a condition for further price evaluation

PRICE-EVALUATION

To calculate an evaluation price, we will calculate the assessment rate as follows:
(Fee per hour for consultant level 1 * 270 hours) + (Fee per hour for consultant level 2 * 210 hours) = Evaluation Price
Price will be assessed according to the following model:
The call-off response that submitted the lowest call-off price achieves maximal price points. The other call-off responses achieve points according to percentage difference between the individual call-off price and call-off with the lowest prices.

Price point = (Lowest call-off price / Individual call-off price) * Max point price criterion

Criterion		Max point/criterion
6.	Cost of the assignment	20
	Total max point price criterion	**20**

DECISION REGARDING CONTRACT AWARD

All the tenderers will be informed of the decision regarding the contract awarded. A call-off contract can at the earliest be signed 10 working days after the decision of contract award has been sent out to all the tenderers.

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[26] Adequate and well suited to the purpose
[27] Gives added value and shows high quality on the whole

Annex 2 – List of persons met/interviewed

Sida
Alexander Atarodi, Senior Programme Manager
Margareta Davidson-Abdelli, Counsellor - Embassy of Sweden

Swedish Partners
Heidi Lund, Senior Advisor, Department for Trade Agreements & Technical Rules, Kommerskollegium National Board of Trade
Carina Svensson, Senior Project Manager, International Development Cooperation Department, Swedish Standards Institute
Per Lundmark, Head, International Development Division, Swedish Board for Accreditation & Conformity Assessment (Swedac)
Henrik Carlborg, Legal Advisor, Legal Affairs & Internal Market, Swedish Board for Accreditation & Conformity Assessment (Swedac)
Pia Langeqrantz, Developer of HiQ platform for SQIA
Graham Talbot, Organisational Expert & Swedac Steering Committee member

Agadir Technical Unit
Fakhry AlHazaimeh, Executive Director
Mourad Ben Hassine, Local Programme Manager, SQIA
Bochra Lejmi, ATU contact person & Senior Advisor
Mohammed Nusair, Financial & Administration Manager
Mohamed Tolba, Senior Advisor
Lubna Al Zu'bi, Senior Advisor
Moulay M'hammed Maoukil, Senior Advisor
Rula Al-Shaweesh, Programme Officer, SQIA

JORDAN

Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, Jordan
Yousef Al-Shamali, Secretary General & National Focal Point
Zaher Al-Qatarneh, Director Foreign Trade Policy & Relations & National Focal Point
Ra'fat Al Rawabdeh, PSC Member & National Focal Point

Jordan Chamber of Industry
Mohammed F. Al Refai, First Chairman Board of Directors
Adnan Abu Al Ragheb, Chairman, Board of Directors

Adel M. Tawileh, Board Member / Secretary General, Leather & Garments Industry
Hasib Salameh, Coordinator of the Center of Technical Support

United Cables Industry Company
Saleem Ahmad Massad, Quality Control Section Head, United Cables Industry Company
Adel Marzouqa, ex-Factory Manager, United Cables Industry Company

Jordan Standards & Metrology Organisation
Rula F. Madanat, Director of Accreditation & Standardisation Systems
Lana Marashdeh, Director Accreditation Unit
Areej Al Hayasat, Accreditation Officer
Trad Raqad, Accreditation Officer, Assessment Section
Claudia Zayadin, Standardisation Department
Wafa'a Al-Momani, Head of Market Surveillance
Fadia Abdel Ghani, Standardisation Officer, Technical Regulation Division
Mahmoud Abutieneh, Standardisation Officer, Industries Engineering Division
Qais Azzam, Division Head of Engineering Industries, Standardisation Department
Mohammed Tarawneh, Accreditation Officer
Hanaa Al Ghizzawi, Acting Head for Food Processing Division, Standardisation Department
Ruba Al-Thawabeia, Chemical Industries Division
Ghaida' Al-Sabe', Head of Technical Regulations Preparation Division
Mahmoud Abu Tineh, Standardization Officer

MOROCCO

Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Investment and Digital Economy
Fatiha Akharif, Director, Quality & Market Surveillance
Brahim Yahyaoui, Head of Division, Quality & Market Surveillance
Mohammed Mrabet, Head of Depertment, Division of Quality & Market Surveillance
Yassin Abarri, Inspector, Division of Quality & Market Surveillance
Abderrahim Taibi, Director, National Standardization
Mekki Kebbaj, Head of Standardization Department
Abdel Aziz Sadikki, Standardization Department
Issam Alouz, Head of Dept., National Standardization
Halima Jabbar, Director, Accreditation Division
Amina Ouezzan, Head of Dept., SEMAC
Moulay Ismail Taqui, Head of Commercial Relationships outside Europe / National Focal Point

Other
Adnane Essammar, Director of Laboratory, Laboratory of Expertise & Control
Taoufiq Abounacer, Director of Laboratory, Public Laboratory of Trials & Studies
Youssef Tagmouti, Chairman, Les Cableries du Maroc

Abdelaziz Jebari, President of Standardization and Regulatory Commission, National Federation of Electricity, Electronics and Renewable Energies

Mohammed Berrada, Metrology Expert, Metrologie Maitrisee

EGYPT

Ministry of Trade & Industry - Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC)
Mohamed Osman Hassan, Accreditation Director General, Chief
Rasha Moussa, Testing Lab. Accreditation Manager
Ayman Fathy Farrag, Calibration Lab. Accreditation Deputy Manager
Ahmed Mohamed Nasr, Quality Specialist

Ministry of Trade & Industry - General Organization for Exports & Imports Control (GOEIC)
Gen. Ismail Gaber, Chairman
Gen. Hosam Eldin Hosny Ahmed, Deputy Minister, Exports & Origin and Research & Technical Guidance
Mamdouh Abdel Bari, General Manager, Quality
Abdeljaleel Salamah, Responsible of Agadir MoU on Certificates of Conformity

Ministry of Trade & Industry - Egyptian Organisation of Standardization (EOS)
Ali Momamed Ramadan, Standardization Dept. - Cables
Marwa Ibrahim Hamed, Standardization Dept. - Cables
Nermee Mohamad Ali, Standardization Dept. - Cables
Heba Hammad, Standardization Dept. - Textiles
Rokya Saber, Standardization Dept. - Textiles
Hany Sharkawy Hassan, Director General, Standardization Dept.

Ministry of Trade & Industry - Trade Agreements Sector
Tamer Mahmoud Abdelaziz, Director of Regional Trade Agreements Department - Technical Office of the Head of TAS / National Focal Point
Hana Mohamed Ibrahim, Manager, Agadir National Focal Point
Aslam Carem, Agadir National Focal Point Office

Federation of Egyptian Industries
Hoda El-Merghany, Federation Advisor for Technical Affairs & Policy Advocacy
Rania Abd El Aziz El Nady, Head of SMEs Unit

Egyptian Chamber of Apparel & Home Textiles
Mahmoud Safwat, Executive Director

Elsewedy Cables
Mohamed Mansour Ali, Design & Development Section Head

TUNISIA

National Institute for Standardization and Industrial Property (INNORPI)
Nebil Ben Bechir, General Director
Narjes Rezgui, Head of Service Bilateral Cooperation Foreign Relations Unit & PSC Member
Chahir Jihene, Head of Service Normalisation & PHCC & PWG Member

Tunisian Accreditation Council (TUNAC)
Anouar Zouari, General Director
Noura Haddaoui, Head of Service Analysis Laboratories and Accreditation Manager; PHCC & PWG Member
Ghada Allani, Responsible Accreditation, Analysis Section
Sonia Mahdoui Melki, Quality Manager, Head of Testing & Certification Sections
Olfa Bzeouech Belkacem, PHCC Member
Maher Sassi
Amira Gannouni

CETIME (Conformity Assessment Body / Electrical cables)
Tarek Mahdaoui, PWG Cables member
Hamadi Trigui, Director; PWG cables member

CETTEX (Conformity Assessment Body / Textiles)
Hedia Blanco, PWG Textiles member
Nour El-Houda Melki, PWG Textiles member
Issam Bach, Laboratory Health/Consumers Safety & responsible IQ platform

Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT)
Adel Slimi, Direction General Mechanical and Electrical Industries,) & PWG Cables member
Saber Ben Kilani, Direction General textiles and garments (MIT) & PWG Textile member
Saida Hachicha, Director, Direction General Economic and Commercial Cooperation & Head of National Focal Point
Tarek Andolsi, Direction General Economic and Commercial Cooperation & National Focal Point (NFP)
Salwa Fatnassi, Direction General of Quality and Internal Trade & PHCC Member

Other
Slaheddine Ktari, Manager "La Griffe" (Private company) & PWG Textile member private sector
Sami Abida, Director R&D, Tunisie Cables (Private company) & former member PWG Cables private sector
Touhami Chabir, local expert Training workshop on inspection (ISO 17020)

Annex 3 – List of documents consulted

1. Call-off Inquiry with renewed competitive tendering via the framework agreement: Evaluation Services by Sida (2017)

2. Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries: Recommendations for phase 2 in the Agadir project by Swedac/ATU (2014)

3. Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries, Phase 1, analysis of the present status in the member countries of the Agadir agreement by Swedac/ATU (2014)

4. Amendment to the Service Purchase Agreement "ATU – Harmonising Technical Regulations and Systems, phase 2" between Sida and Styrelsen for ackereditering och teknisk kontroll (Swedac) regarding Budget 2014 and delivery date for reports by Sida (2014)

5. Agreement on the implementation of the second phase of the technical assistance program :Support to the Quality Infrastructure in the Agadir Countries by ATU/Swedac (2014)

6. Agadir Product Survey and Benchmarking Study Mission Report - Arabic and English versions (2015) by Swedac/ATU

7. Audit Report: Support to the Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries Organisational Audit (BA-32) 29-30 October 2014 prepared by Carina Larsson & Graham Talbot (2014)

8. Annual Report: Support to Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries (Phase 2) 4 April – 31 December 2014 by Swedac/ATU

9. Annual Report: Support to Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries (Phase 2) 1 January – 31 December 2015 by Swedac/ATU

10. Annual Report: Support to Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries (Phase 2) 1 January – 31 December 2016 by Swedac/ATU

11. AUTs Quarterly Progress Reports, Q1: January-March 2016 by Swedac/ATU

12. AUTs Quarterly Progress Reports, Q2: April-June 2016 by Swedac/ATU

13. AUTs Quarterly Progress Reports, Q3: July-September 2016 by Swedac/ATU

14. AUTs Quarterly Progress Reports, Q4: October-December 2016 by Swedac/ATU

15. AUTs Quarterly Progress Reports, Q1: January-March 2017 by Swedac/ATU

16. Instructions for dissemination of standard survey and expert survey for outcomes B, C, D, E, F in the Agadir programme 2014-2018 by Swedac

17. Annual Results for SWEDAC's Agadir programme phase II (2015) by Swedac

18. Swedac Results framework for 2015 – 2016 by Swedac

19. Capacity Plan Report: Support to the Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries Capacity Assessment (BA-42) 8-9 December 2014 prepared by Graham Talbot (2014)

20. Swedac Programme Capacity Building Plan 2016-2018 by Swedac

21. Training Needs Analysis for ATU and Swedac Staff ((2015) by Swedac

22. ATU Capacity Building Plan 2016-2018 by Swedac

23. Agadir Harmonisation Structure by Swedac/ATU (2016)

24. Minutes from Swedac steering Committee (SSC) meeting in the Agadir programme on 9.9.2016, 31.1.2017 and 14.3.2017 by Swedac/ATU

25. Minutes of the 7th ATU-Swedac programme steering committees (PSC) meeting on 8th May 2016 - Arabic and English versions by Swedac/ATU

26. Minutes of the 8th ATU-Swedac programme steering committees (PSC) meeting on 30th-31st March 2017 - Arabic version by Swedac/ATU

27. The Agadir Harmonisation Platform (2015) by Swedac/ATU

28. Agadir agreement Harmonisation Structure, Planning Worksop report 15-17 December 2015 by Swedac/ATU

29. Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Product Working Group (PWG) on cables 4-5 December 2016 – Arabic version by Swedac/ATU

30. Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Product Working Group (PWG) on garments 7-8 December 2016 – Arabic version by Swedac/ATU

31. Agadir Harmonisation Platform (2015) by HIQ Stockholm AB.

32. Gender Policy of SQIA prepared by Susan Joekes (2014)

33. Gender Mainstreaming in Agadir Free Trade Agreement – Proposed deliverables till end of Phase II Programme by Swedac/ATU

34. Tasks ahead for implementation of Swedac/ATU SQIA project Gender Policy June 2015 by Swedac/ATU

35. Minutes of meeting for gender policy in support of the Quality Infrastructure: Agadir free Trade Agreement 20-22 March 2017 by Swedac/ATU

36. Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy v.1, Agadir Technical Unit by Swedac/ATU.

37. ATU anti-bribery and anti-corruption policy implementation and procedures (2016) – Arabic and English versions by ATU

38. Policy Statement on Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption (2016)

39. Minutes of 3rd meeting of National Focal Points (2016) by Swedac/ATU

40. Detailed workplan 2017 v.08 15.3.2017 by Swedac/ATU

41. SQIA Terms of Reference for the Development of a Strategy for the Agadir Technical Unit 16 November 2015 by ATU

42. Strategic plan of the Arab Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement Technical Unit "Agadir Agreement" May 2017 by ATU

43. SQIA Programme Exit Strategy 19 December 2016 by Swedac

44. Participants Database 2016 by Swedac

45. Origin accumulation and complementarities' opportunities in the textile-apparel sector in the member countries of the Arab-Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco Tunisia)

46. Management Technology Consulting Regional Study on Reducing Transportation Costs for the Companies Applying Accumulation of Origin among the Agadir Agreement Countries

Mid Term Review of the Agadir Technical Unit and the Swedish International Development Agency, Sida funded project "Support Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries"

This mid-term review of the 2nd phase of the Support to Quality Infrastructure in Agadir Countries (SQIA) was commissioned to provide Sida, the Agadir Technical Unit and Swedac (the implementing agency) with an independent assessment of the project. The project appears as relevant at first sight, but it is unclear to what extent it is technical barriers that hinder trade within the region, given the many other factors that obstruct intra-regional trade. The overall design was too ambitious. Most progress in outputs related to the organisation of project implementation, rather than with the actual harmonisation process. There was no evidence of achievement of project outcomes. The project has led to increased dialogue amongst the four countries, and increased awareness and knowledge. However, that has come at considerable expense and cannot justify the time and resources invested into the project.