

Quality Infrastructure

The Common Language of Global Trade

Finding a common language for their trade and economic relationship is crucial as there is “tremendous potential in India-Germany economic collaboration”, emphasized Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently at the Fourth Indo-German Government Consultations in May 2017. Indian reform initiatives such as “Make in India” have an immense potential for increased economic collaboration.

Standards define quality and safety requirements of goods and services and have gradually gained importance as the language of global trade. Only when countries speak the same quality language, they can collaborate effectively through increasingly complex global value chains. However, speaking a common language requires agreement on several questions: How to prove that products or services comply with required standards (conformity assessment)? Who is authorized to certify conformity (accreditation)? And how is it ensured that no dangerous products are placed on the market (market surveillance)? “Quality Infrastructure” aims at answering these questions holistically. Having internationally harmonized systems of quality infrastructure is essential for overcoming trade barriers and sustainable economic cooperation as well as for ensuring consumer protection and product safety.

Germany is among India’s most important trade partners both bilaterally and in the global context. Ranking 7th among foreign investor countries in India, major sectors attracting investment inflows from Germany are engineering, chemicals and services. For German companies, the Indian market – predicted to be the world’s largest consumer market by 2022 – is more and more attractive.

Within the framework of the strategic partnership Germany and India have established the *Indo-German Working Group on Quality Infrastructure* between the Indian Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (MoCAF&PD) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) in 2013. Together with further line ministries, subordinate government institutions, technical organizations as well as companies and industry associations the Working Group aims to harmonize the countries’ quality infrastructures in areas of mutual interest. Commissioned by BMWi, GIZ supports the Working Group by facilitating the political and technical dialogue between the stakeholders. The project is part of the “Global Project Quality Infrastructure” which comprises further country components in Asia and Latin America and is coordinated from its headquarters in the GIZ office in Berlin.

Based on the key areas of mutual interest, the topics of the Working Group range from charging stations for electric vehicles, machine safety, smart manufacturing, product safety of leather products and toys, to IT and data security. Key questions include: What standards shall apply in the context of renewable energy integration? How can we ensure that automated production machines are safe? How can we guarantee data safety in an increasingly inter-connected digital economy? In order to find answers, the project facilitates experts dialogue and knowledge exchange activities.

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