



ICAEA

International Civil Aviation English Association

Challenges, Risks and Solutions to Inter-regional LPR Standardisation



ICAO Inter-regional English Language
Proficiency Workshop
(Kuwait, 9-11 November 2015)

INTERNATIONAL
CIVIL AVIATION ENGLISH
ASSOCIATION



- Aim of LPRs and testing
- Emerging issues in LPR testing and risks
- Obstacles to implementation
- Way ahead

Aims of the LPRs

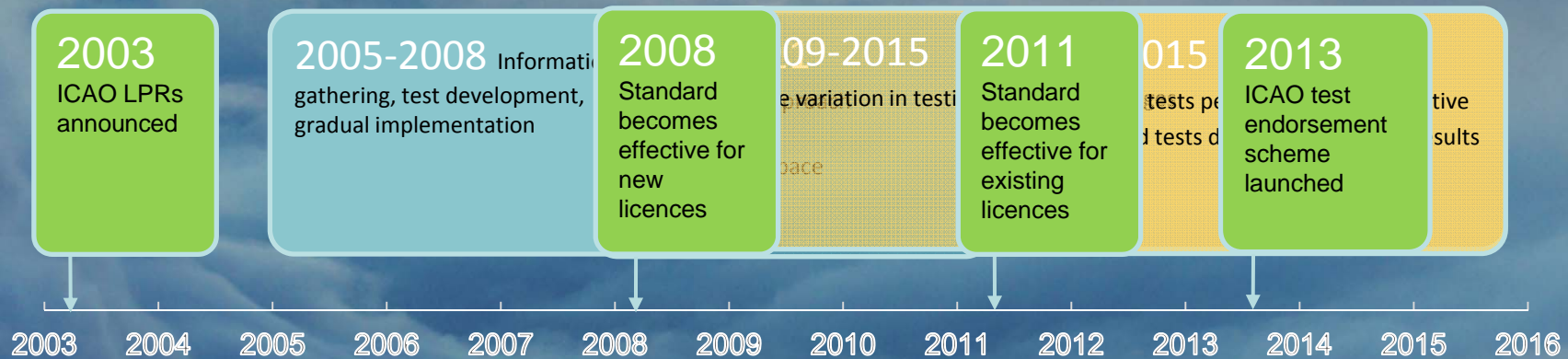
Improve/maintain effectiveness of air-ground communication for safety

- Non-routine situations
- Efficiency (freeing up frequencies, reducing workload or potential knock-on effect scenarios)

Enhance English language standards

- Promote universal language development (effective and ongoing language training)

Recap: LPR Implementation



State approaches to testing

International

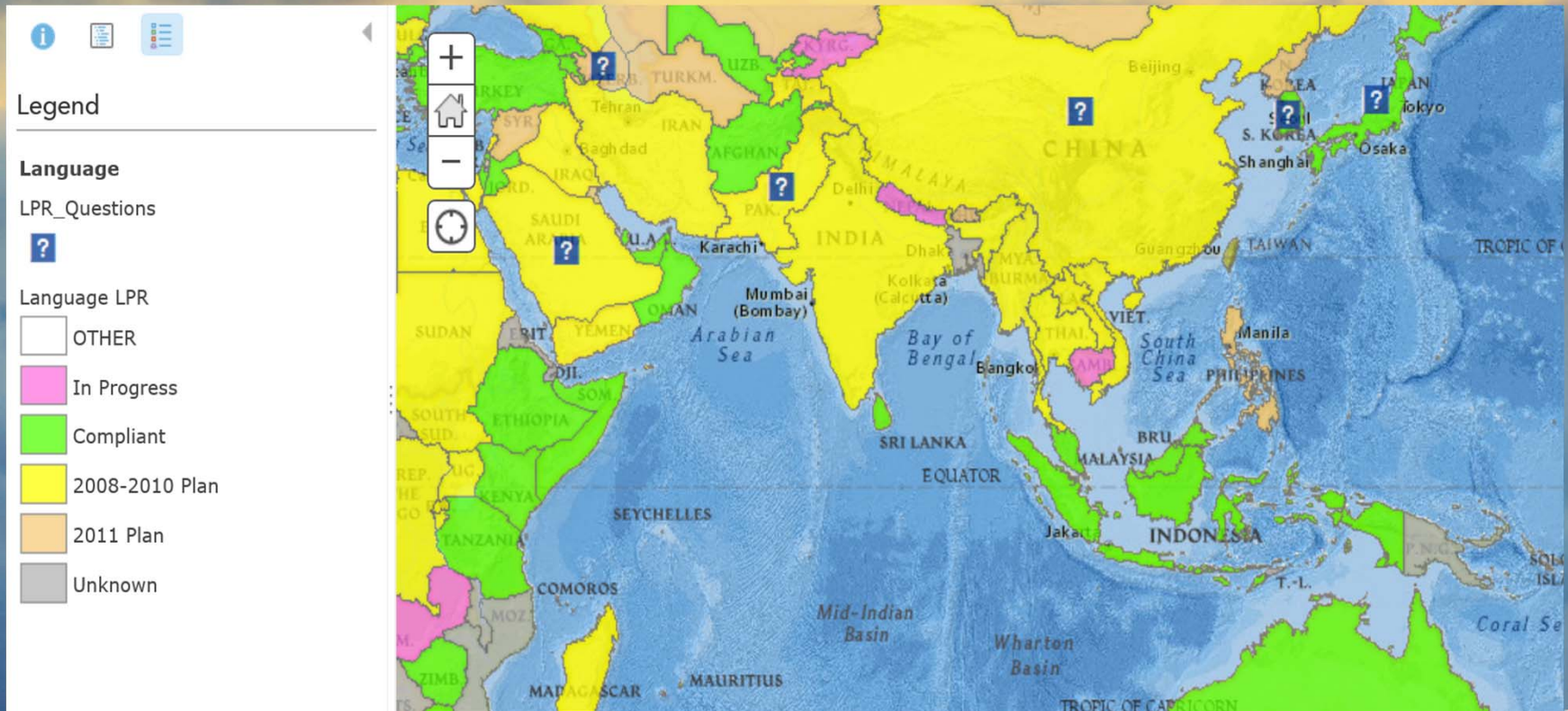
Internationally available testing systems implemented (e.g. ELPAC, RELTA)

Local

Internal tests commissioned on behalf of or developed by licensing authority


Organisations develop and implement test. Approved by local authority

LPR compliance



Emerging issues

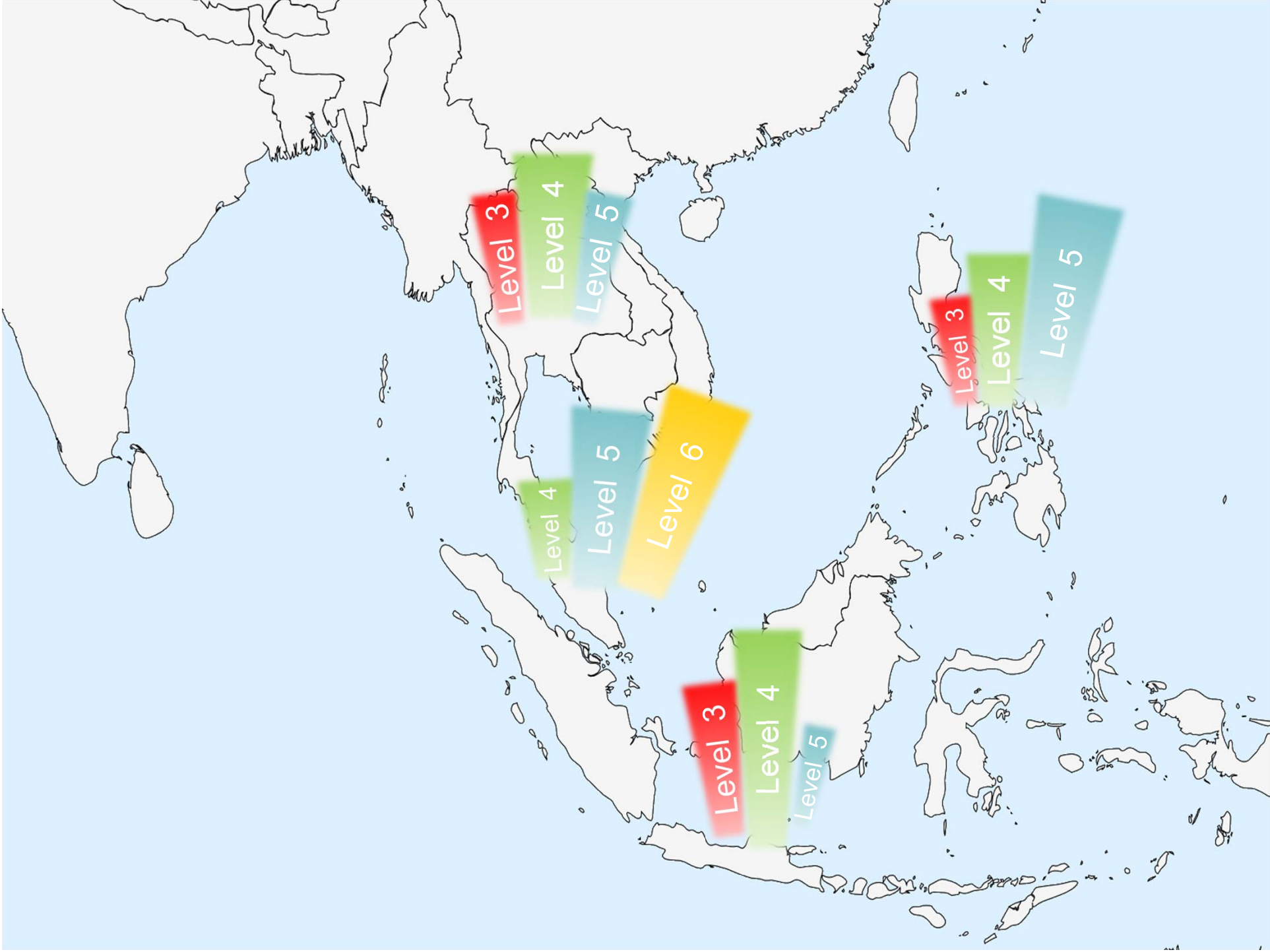
- What is compliance? How can compliance be recognised?
- Uncertainty around what *the standard* really is
- Discrepancies in standards - locally and regionally
- Multiple tests available of varying standards
- Prevalence of sub-standard tests
 - Lacking validity, reliability, breadth/complexity, security and authenticity (language not aligned to needs for air-ground communications)

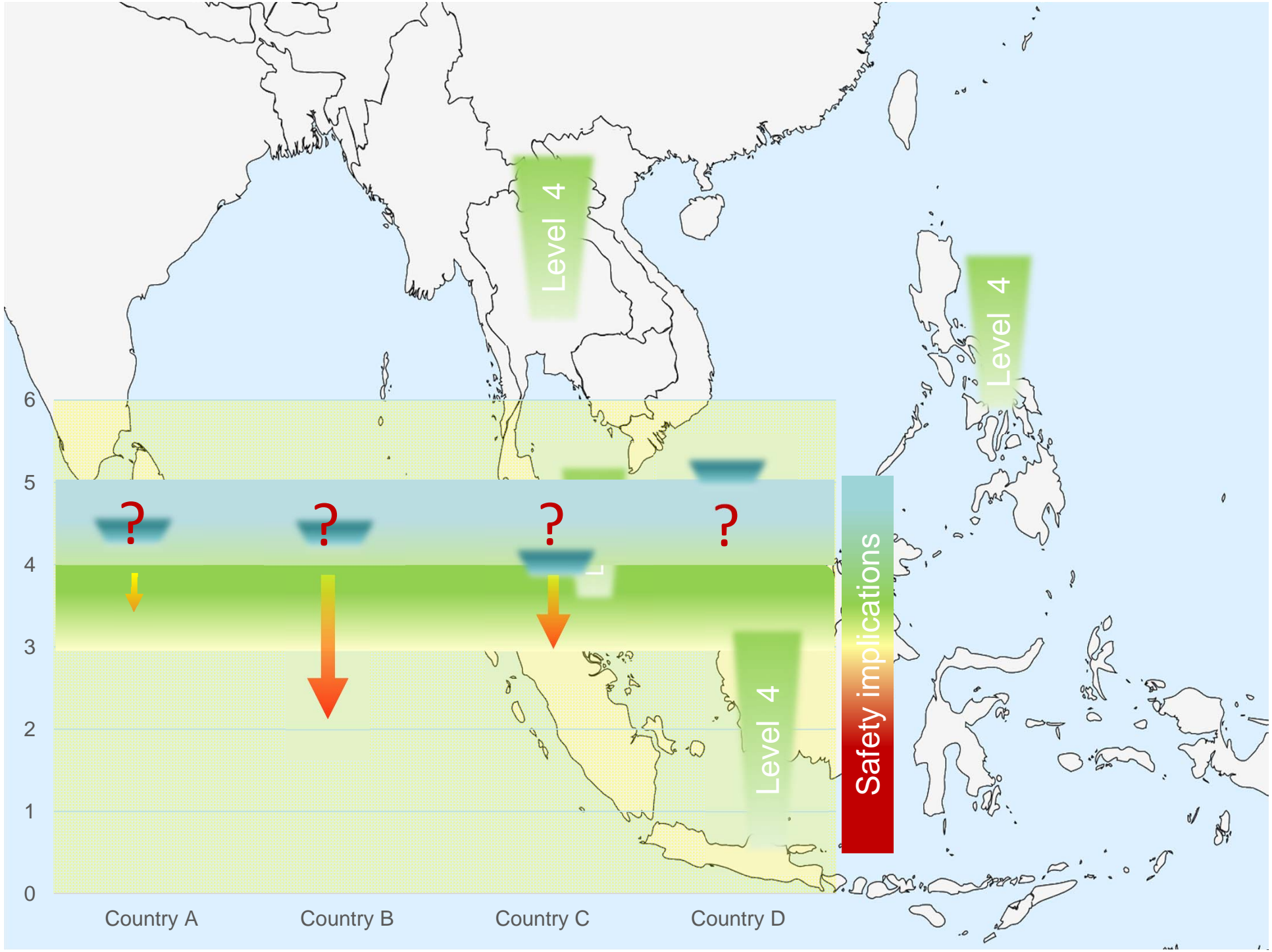


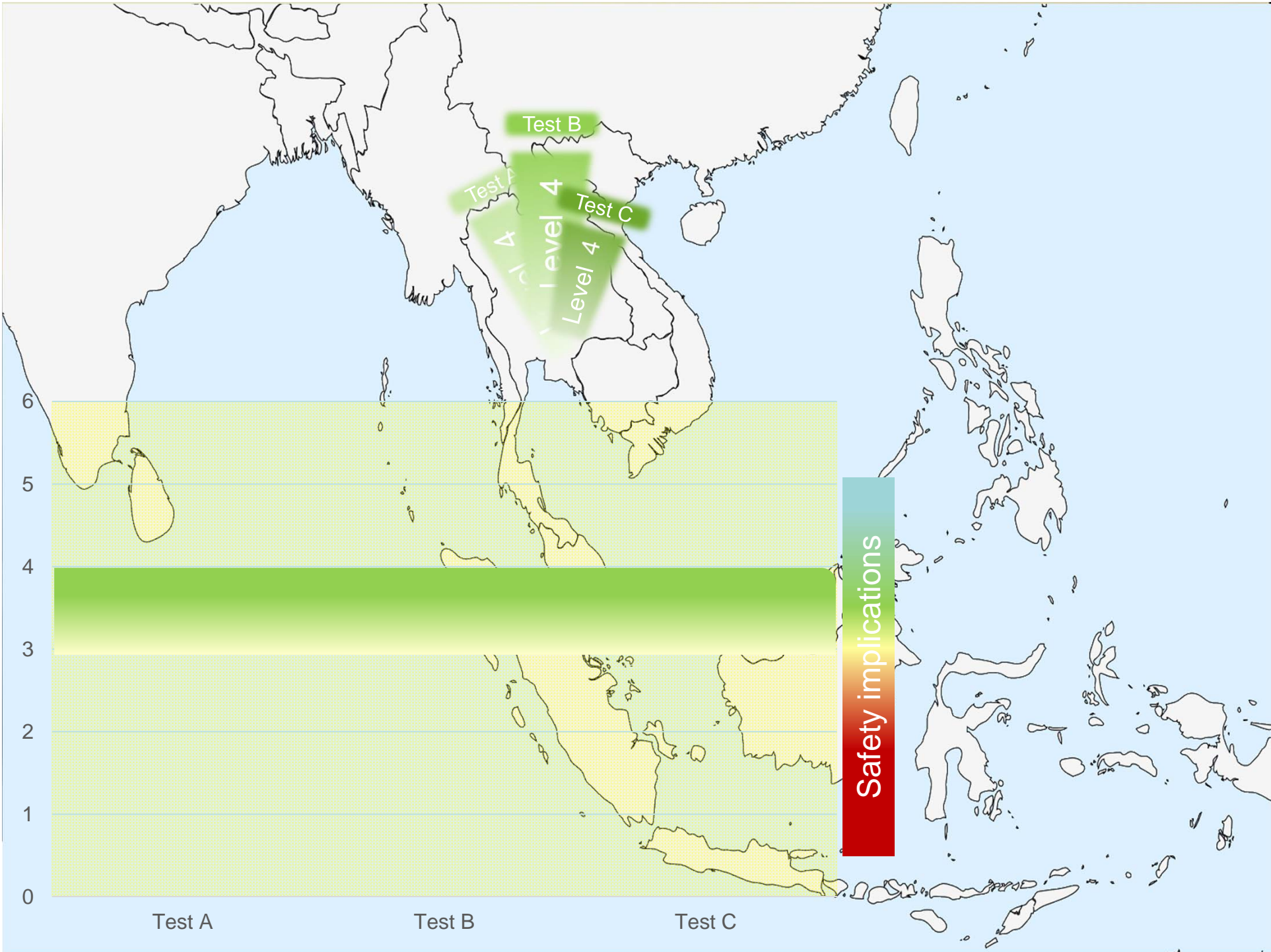
What's led to this and
what are the implications?

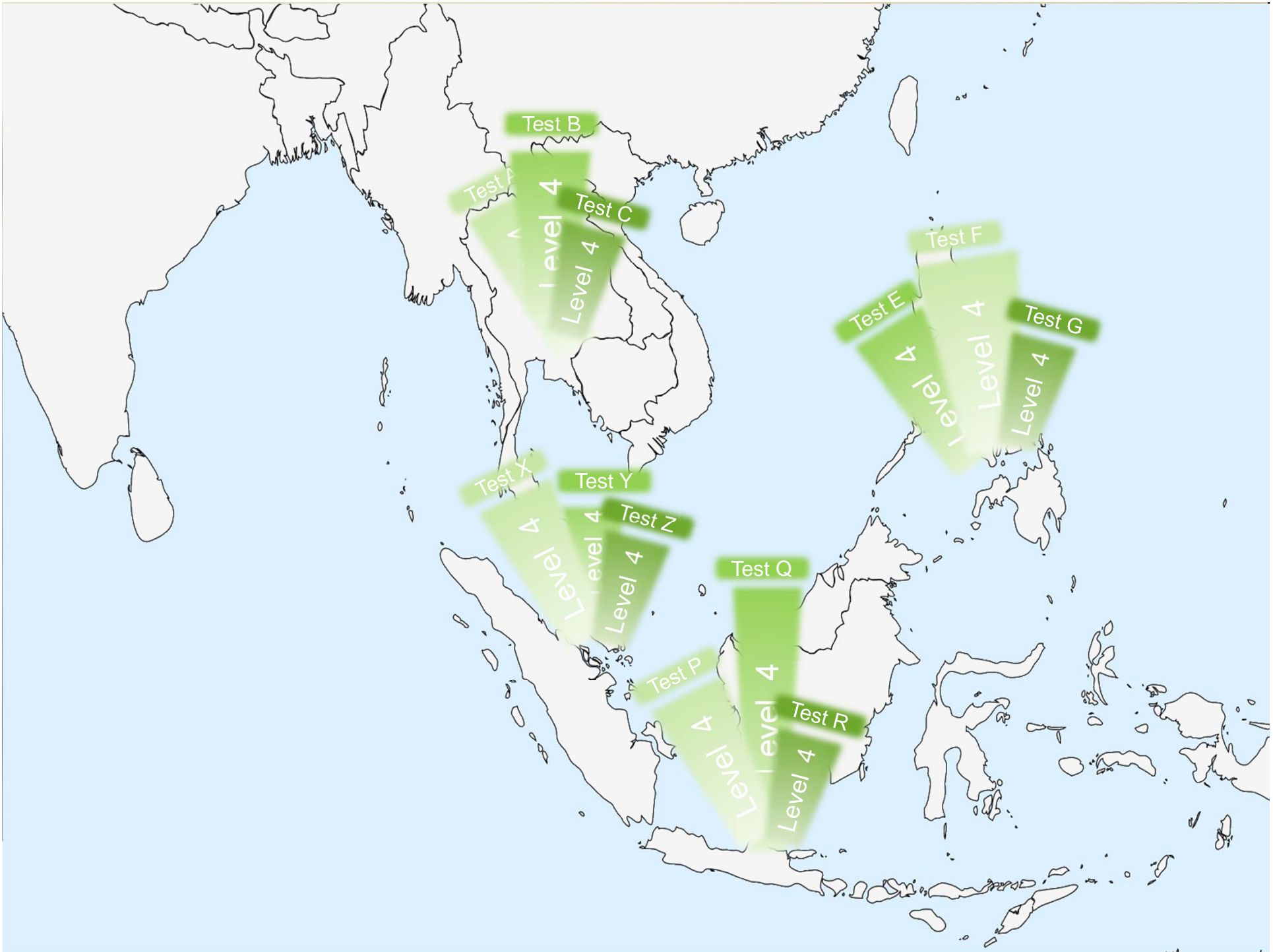
Emerging issues: causes

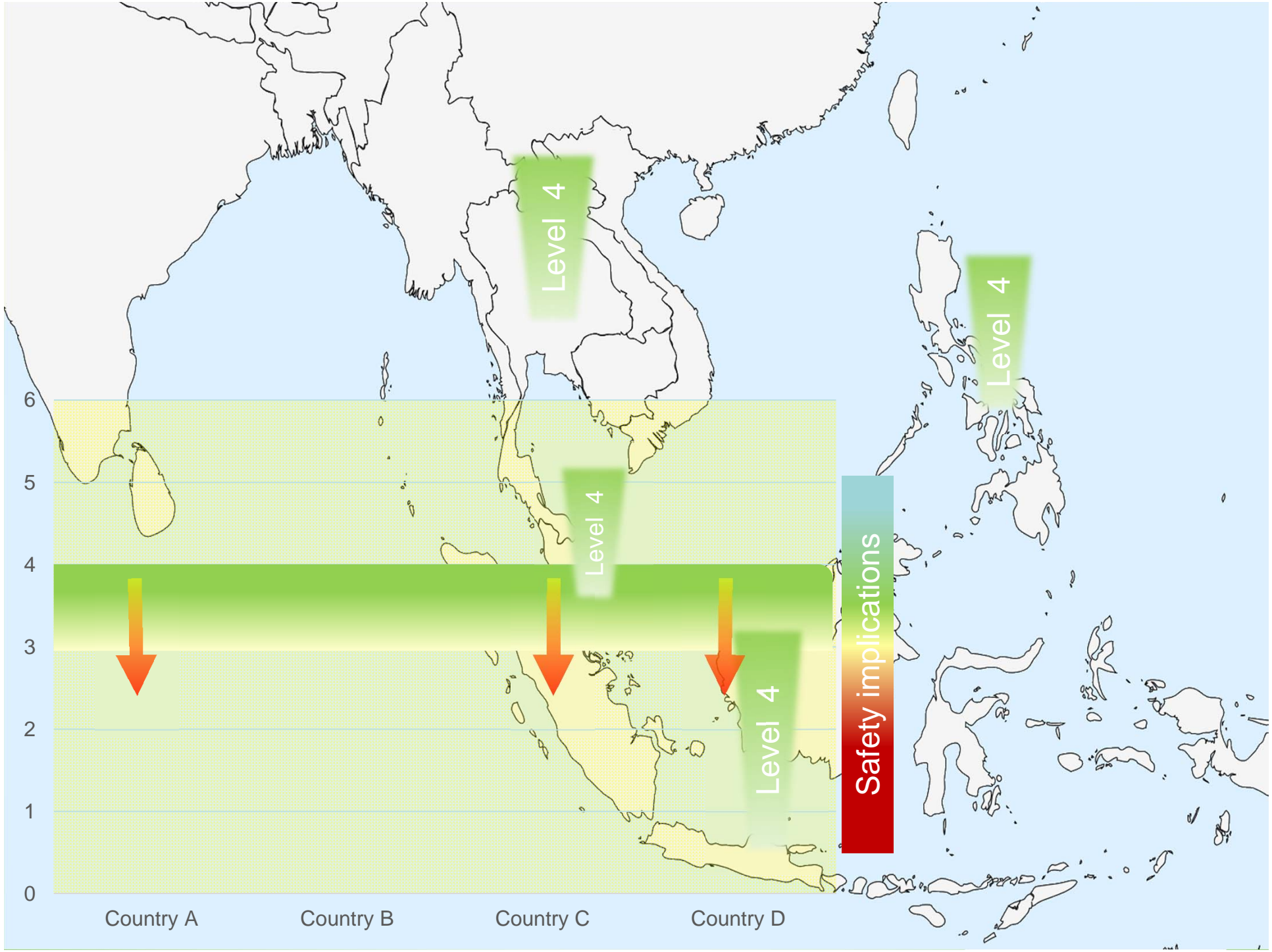
- Resistance
- Pressure to be *compliant* (individuals, organisations, licensing authorities)
- Minimal scrutinising of tests for approval
- Tendency for some regulators to accept tests/results from other jurisdictions
- Prevalence of tests which produce preferred outcomes
- Lax testing standards for issuance of Level 6
- Increasing perception LPRs = bureaucratic hurdle
- Cost-cutting and market forces
- Minimal incentives for ongoing and effective training
- Industry growth and staff shortages

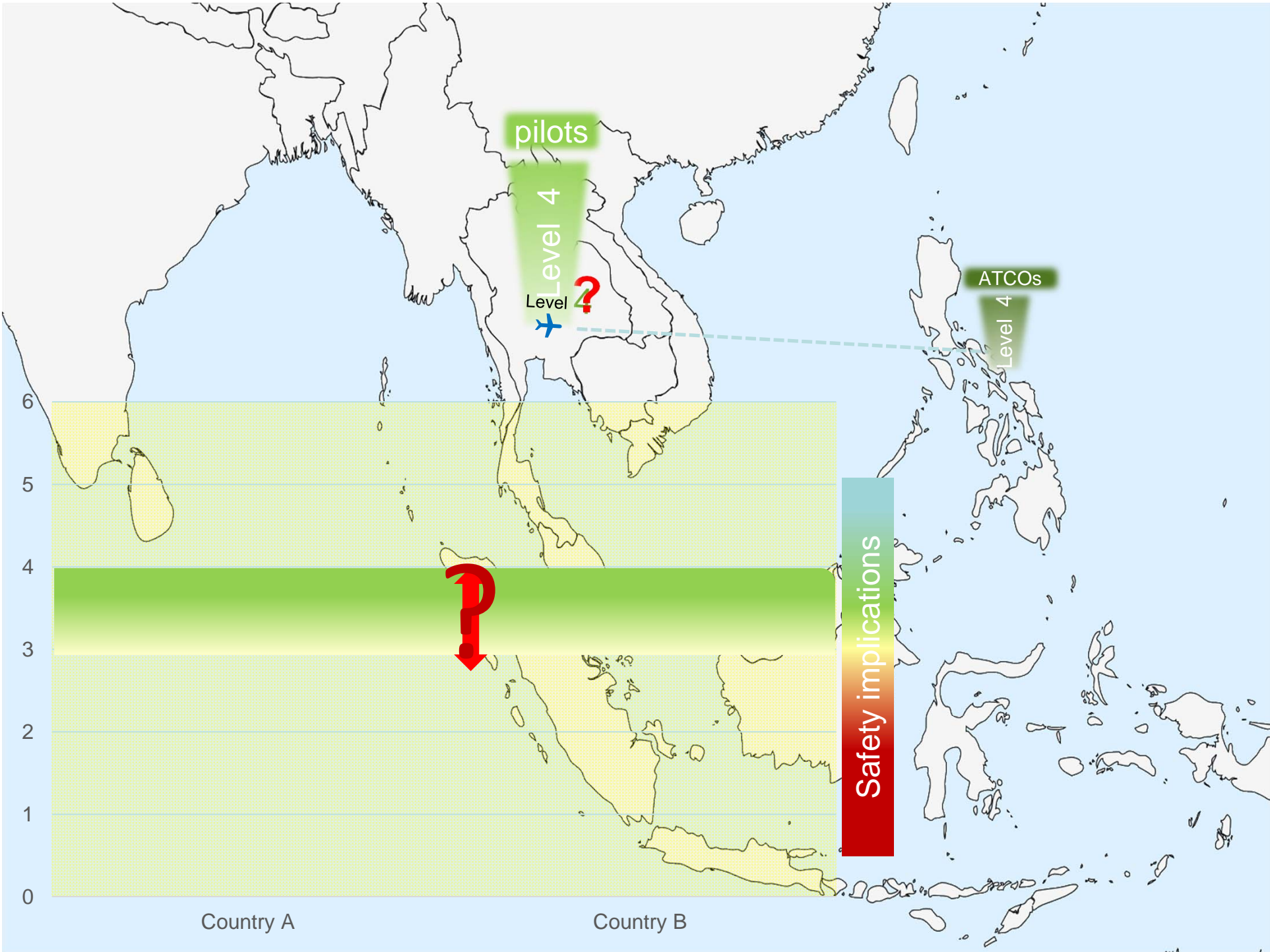


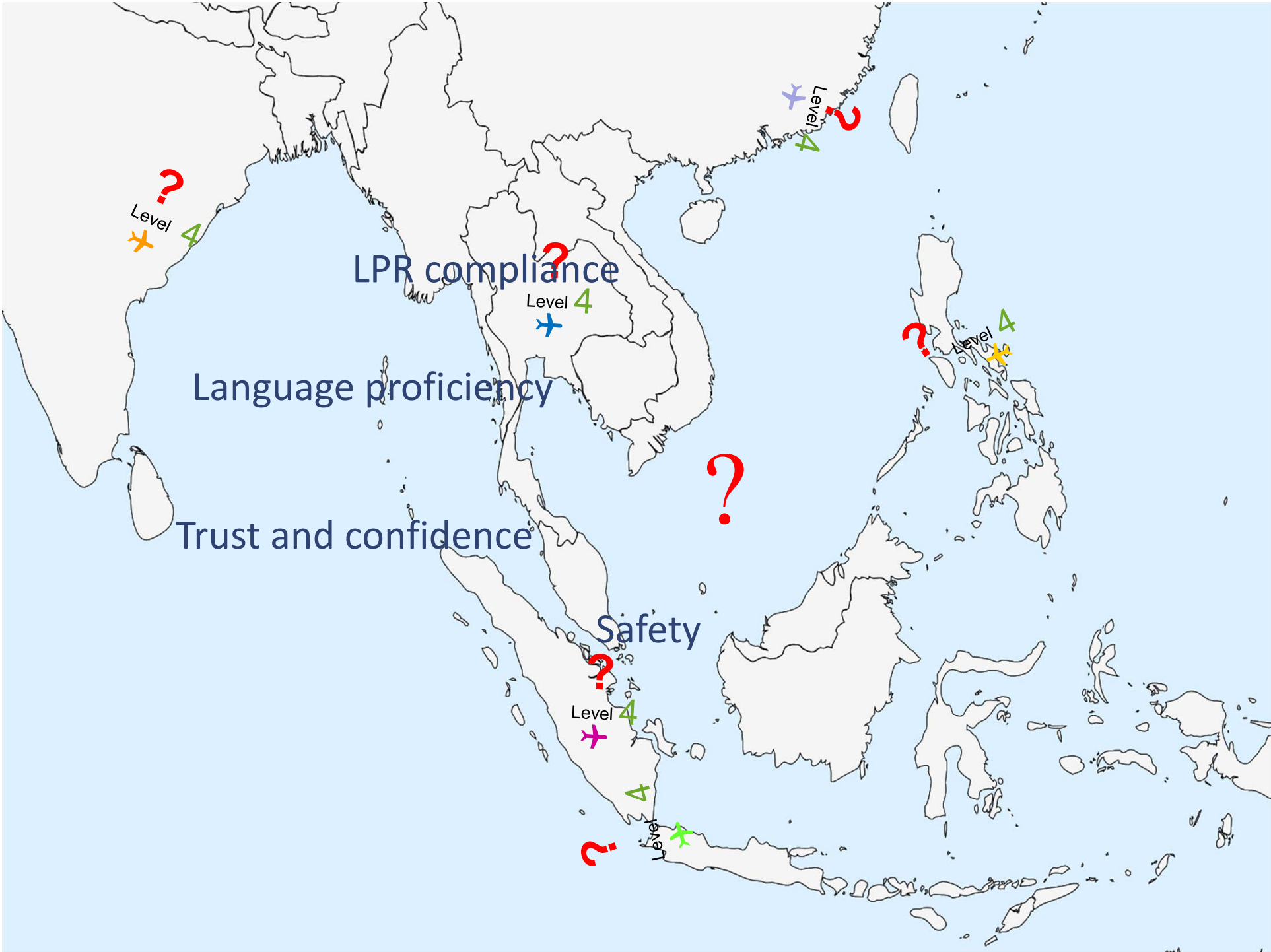




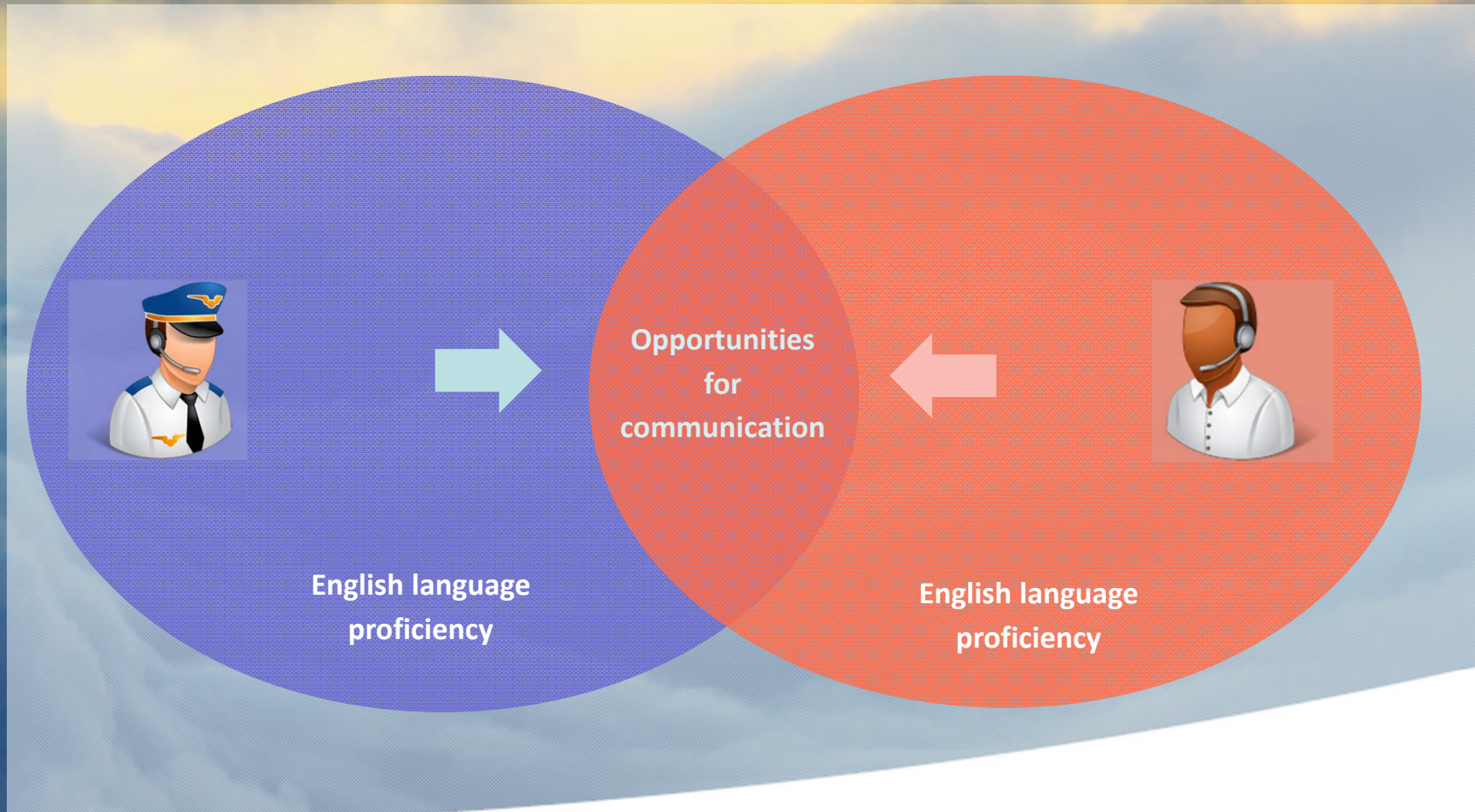








Risks: Communication interface



Optimum scenario



Communication and safety risks



Thai ACC traffic growth



Threats to safety



Threats to safety



Global perspective

- How many tests are in use?
- How many different interpretations of the LPR standards are international ATPL pilots and controllers routinely exposed to?

Obstacles to standardisation

Lacking:

- Drive to develop, approve and implement good quality tests
- Enforcement of testing standards at the local level
- Mechanisms for inter-test standardisation and regional harmonisation
- Mechanisms to share information
- Lack of attention given to design of test instruments
- Expertise

Risky assumptions:

- ✗ Anyone can develop, deliver and rate language tests
- ✗ Good L2 speakers of English = experts
- ✗ Good testing practice is a feature of just good rating
- ✗ Language training = test preparation

Obstacles to standardisation

- Language testing field approach: different (concepts, methods, contexts, attitudes)
- Market forces promoting inferior quality/sub standard tests:
 - Tests producing desired outcomes more popular
 - Pressure to cut costs

Unique expertise?

Aviation

Technical

Objectively measured

Tests developed and administered by aviation industry

Tests developed and administered by language testing experts with aviation expertise

Language testing

Educational field

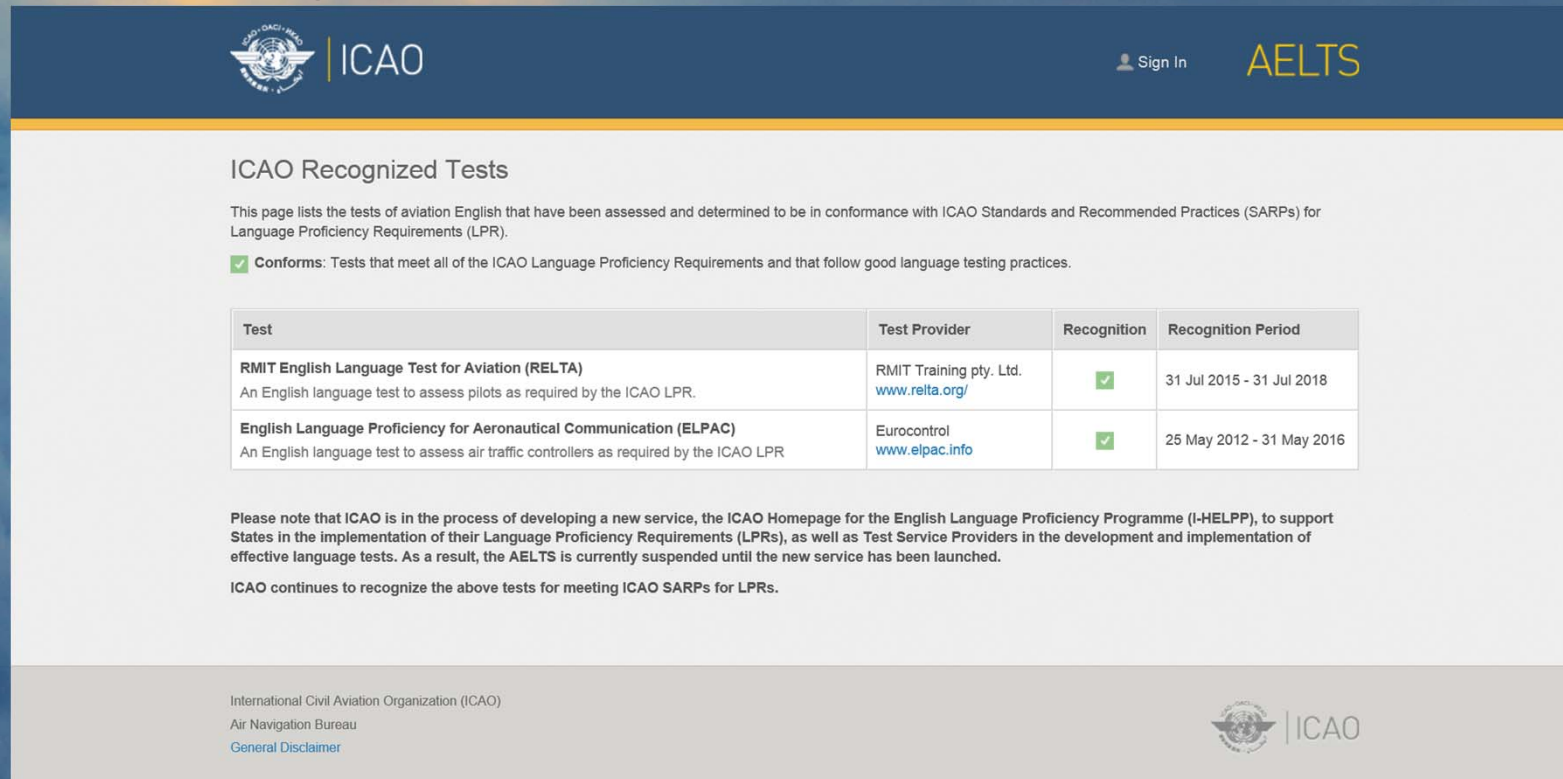
Subjectively measured

Testing developed and administered by education industry

Test equivalence: standardisation

- System for standardisation of different tests?

✓ AELTS



The screenshot shows the ICAO AELTS website. The header includes the ICAO logo and the text 'ICAO | AELTS'. Below the header, the page is titled 'ICAO Recognized Tests'. A paragraph explains that the page lists tests of aviation English assessed for conformance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for Language Proficiency Requirements (LPR). A green checkmark icon indicates that the listed tests conform to these requirements. A table lists two recognized tests: RMIT English Language Test for Aviation (RELT) and English Language Proficiency for Aeronautical Communication (ELPAC). Below the table, a note states that ICAO is developing a new service (I-HELPP) and that the AELTS is currently suspended until the new service is launched. The footer contains the ICAO logo and the text 'International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Air Navigation Bureau General Disclaimer'.

ICAO Recognized Tests

This page lists the tests of aviation English that have been assessed and determined to be in conformance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for Language Proficiency Requirements (LPR).

✓ **Conforms:** Tests that meet all of the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements and that follow good language testing practices.

Test	Test Provider	Recognition	Recognition Period
RMIT English Language Test for Aviation (RELT) An English language test to assess pilots as required by the ICAO LPR.	RMIT Training Pty. Ltd. www.relt.org/	✓	31 Jul 2015 - 31 Jul 2018
English Language Proficiency for Aeronautical Communication (ELPAC) An English language test to assess air traffic controllers as required by the ICAO LPR	Eurocontrol www.elpac.info	✓	25 May 2012 - 31 May 2016

Please note that ICAO is in the process of developing a new service, the ICAO Homepage for the English Language Proficiency Programme (I-HELPP), to support States in the implementation of their Language Proficiency Requirements (LPRs), as well as Test Service Providers in the development and implementation of effective language tests. As a result, the AELTS is currently suspended until the new service has been launched.

ICAO continues to recognize the above tests for meeting ICAO SARPs for LPRs.

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
Air Navigation Bureau
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Way ahead?

Licensing authorities:

- Acquire expertise
- Vet tests approved in own jurisdictions
- Do not automatically accept tests approved by other licensing authorities
- Consider AELTS recognised tests
- Collaborate: consult and share information at the regional level

Cooperation

Regional consultation

- Which tests used/not used, why, how?
- Sharing of resources, experiences and expertise:
 - Assist in selection, evaluation and approval of tests
 - Share training of examiners
 - Limit commercial interests from influencing tests used/outcomes

Vet tests used for licensing

- Don't assume TSPs develop good tests
- Demand evidence showing the test:
 - ✓ Expertise is behind the test
 - ✓ Assesses language skills required for effective air-ground communications for pilots or ATCOs
 - ✓ Aligns with all aspects of Doc 9835 requirements
 - ✓ Is well managed, maintained and administered
 - ✓ Has been checked for validity and reliability: ongoing confidence in the results produced



Summary

- Risk communication is falling behind other fields in aviation: safety concerns
- Effective regulation leads to better LPR testing
- Effective LPR testing improves local, regional and international standards
 - Acquire expertise
 - Evaluate tests
 - Share and collaborate
- Effective LPR testing: uphold ICAO LPR standard and promote ongoing and effective language training

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