

The ICAEA logo consists of the letters 'ICAEA' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized yellow graphic element that resembles a curved ribbon or a wing, extending across the top of the slide.

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)

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

ICAO LPRs

- Operational pilots and ATCOs
- Requirement for licencing
- Minimum standard (Level 4) of 6 levels
- 6 criteria to assess speaking and listening skills
- Retesting at set intervals according to level

Aims of the LPRs

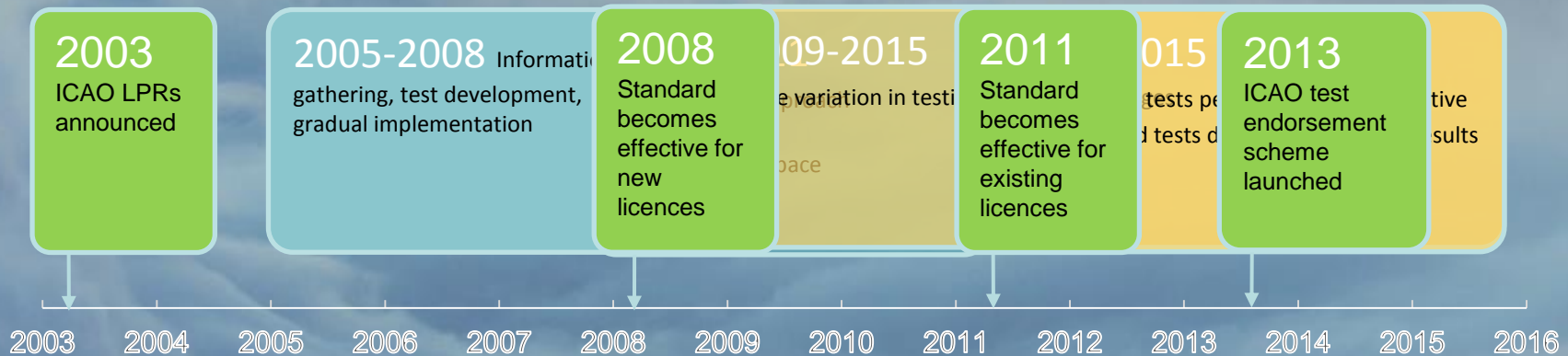
Improve/maintain effectiveness of air-ground communication for safety

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

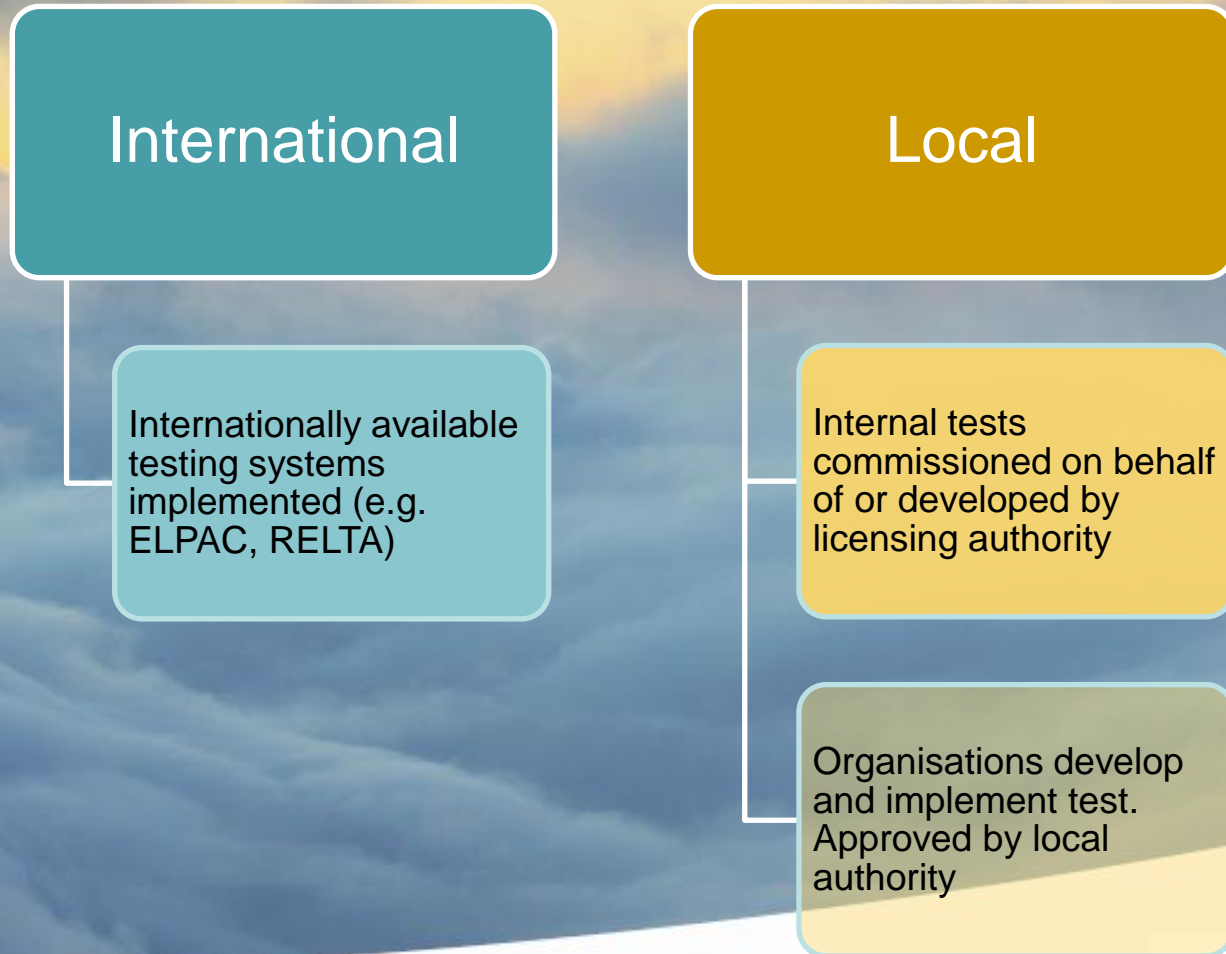
Enhance English language standards

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

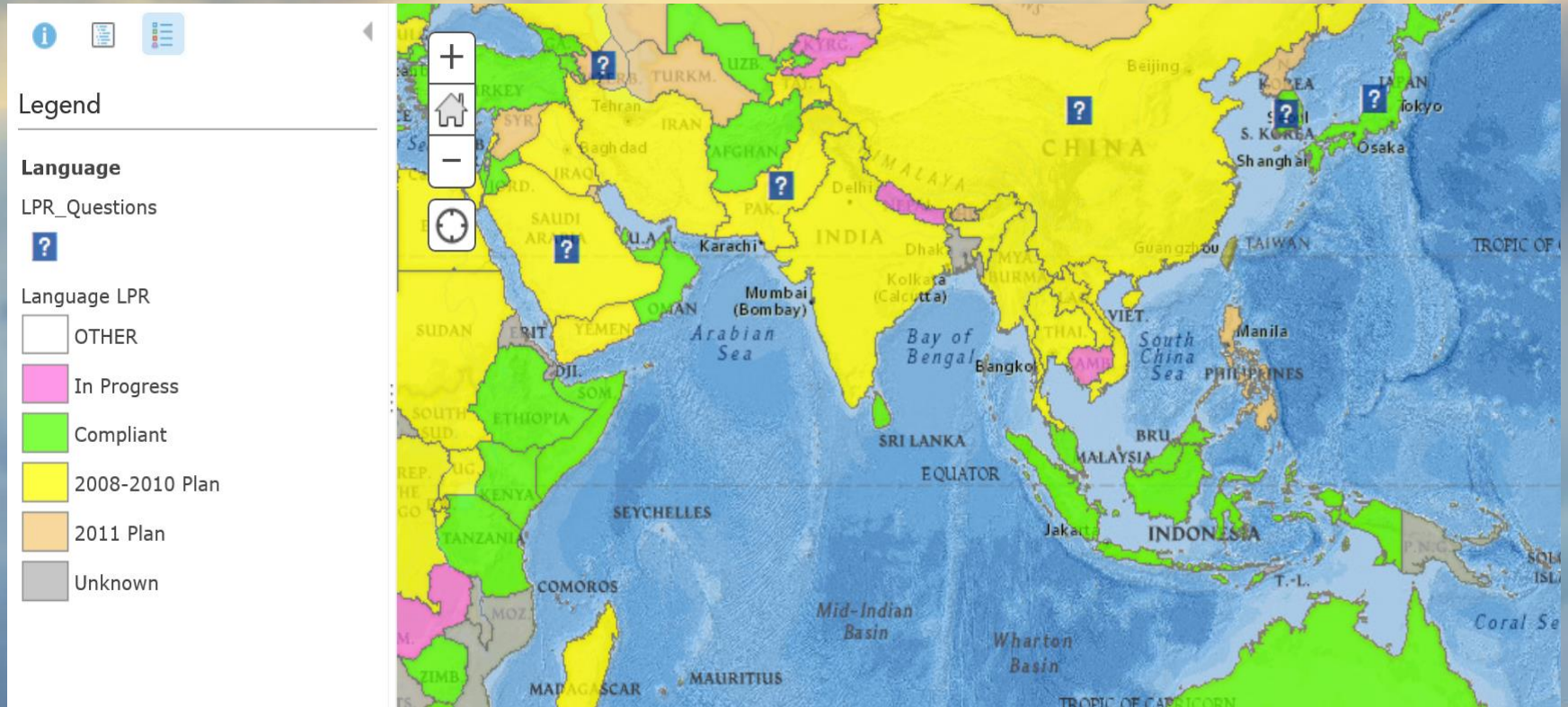
Recap: LPR Implementation



State approaches to testing



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)

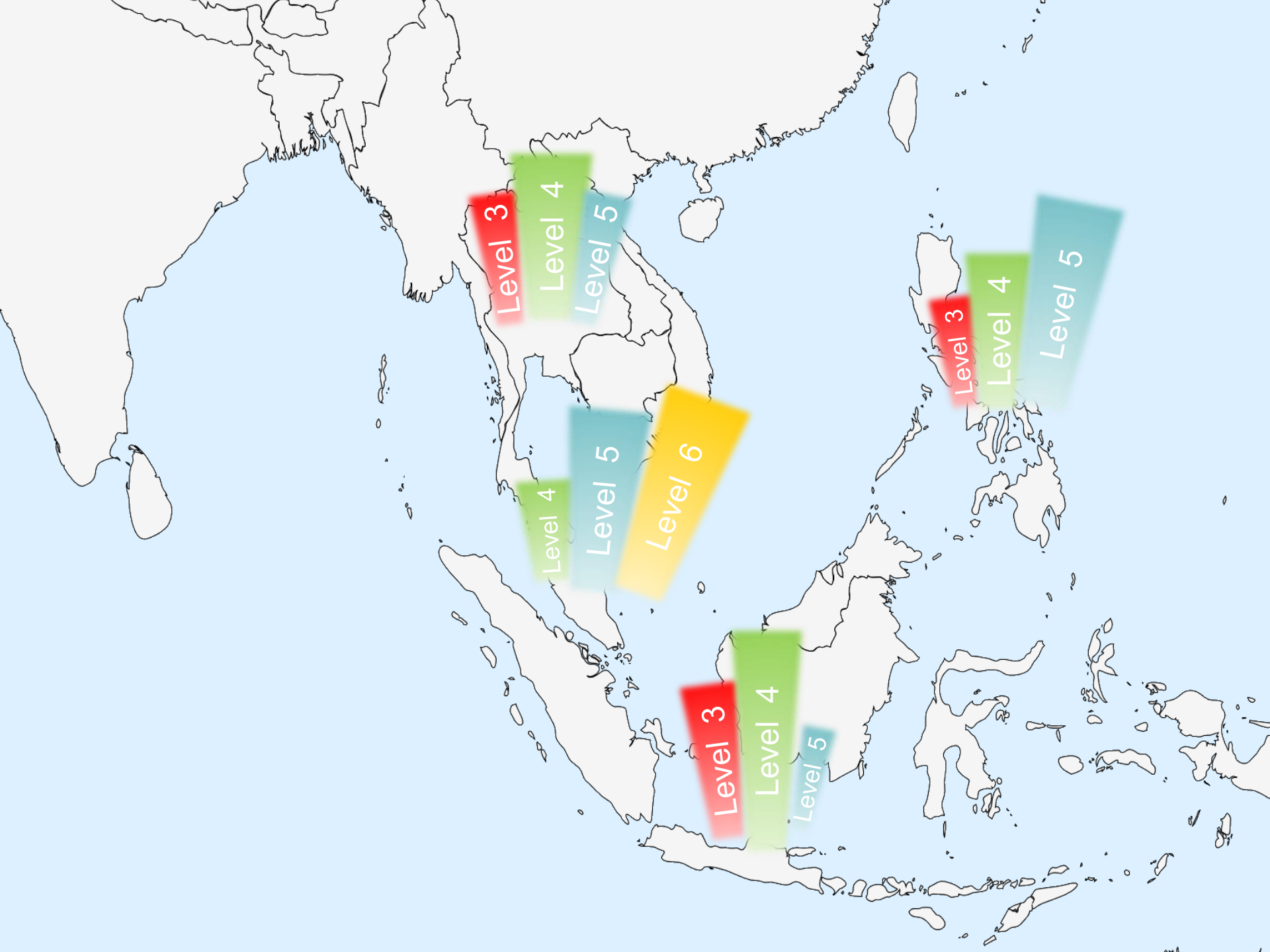
What's led to this and
what are the implications?

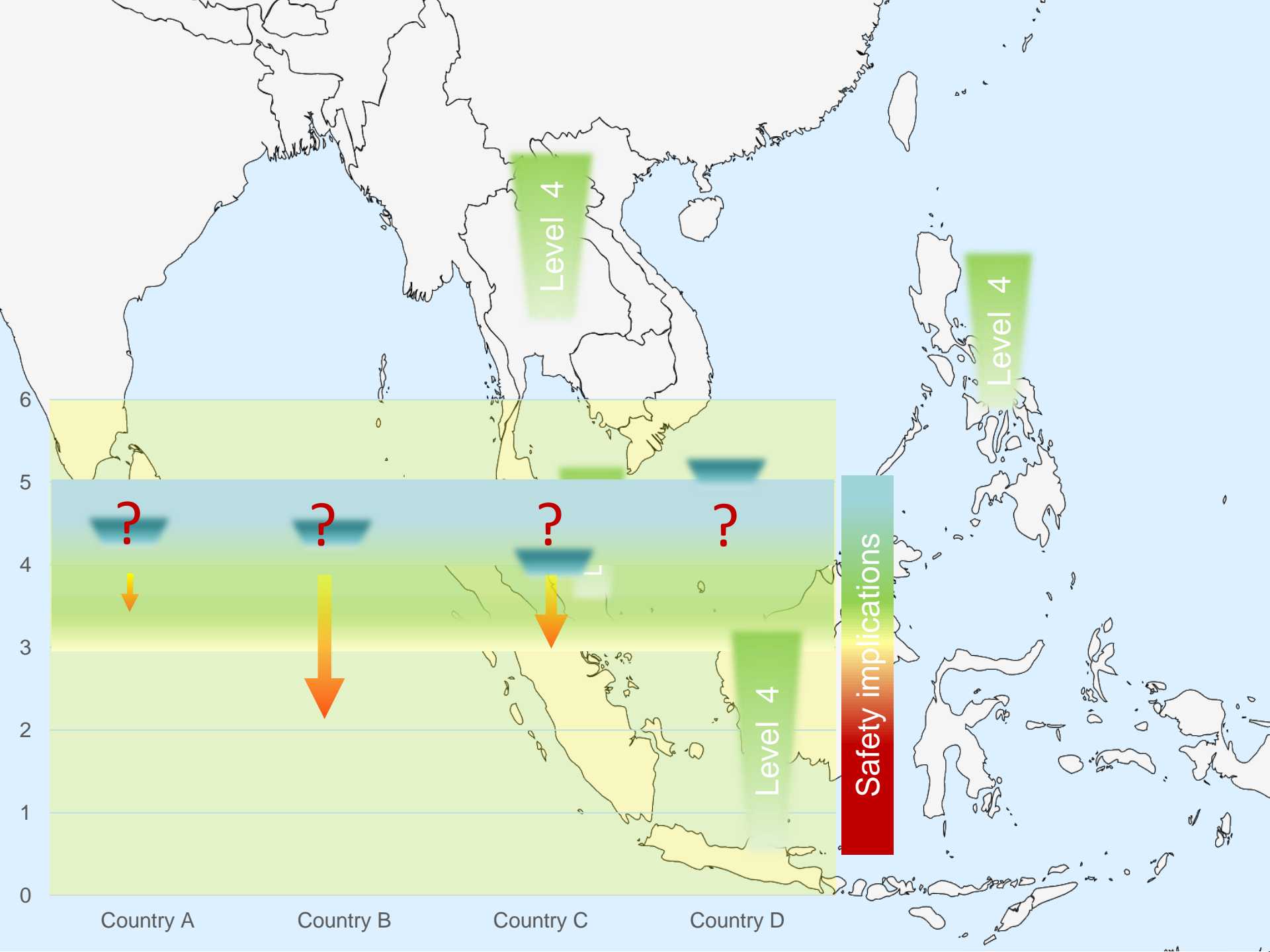
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Emerging issues: causes

- 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





Level 4

Level 4

Safety implications

Level 4

Country A

Country B

Country C

Country D

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

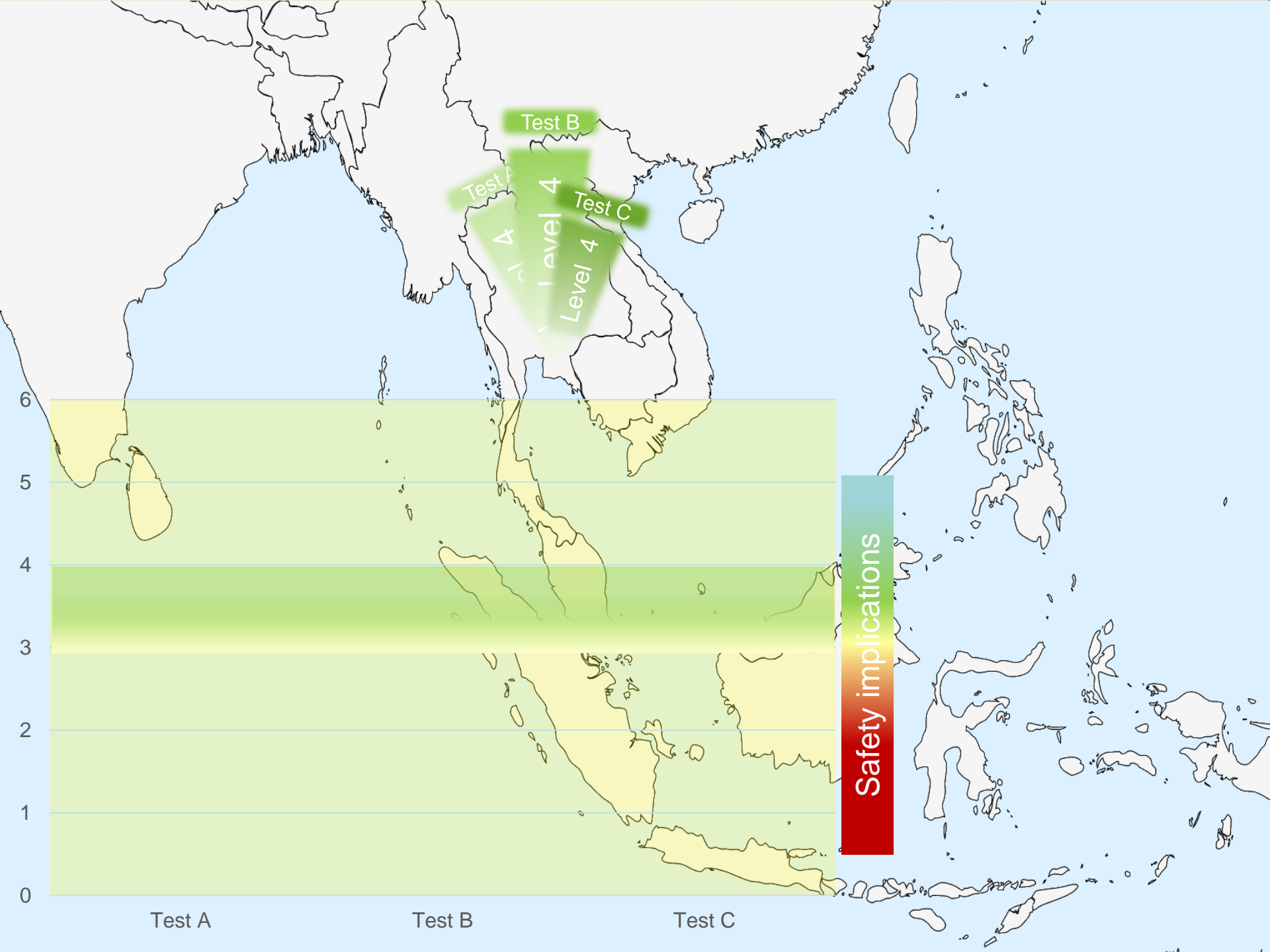
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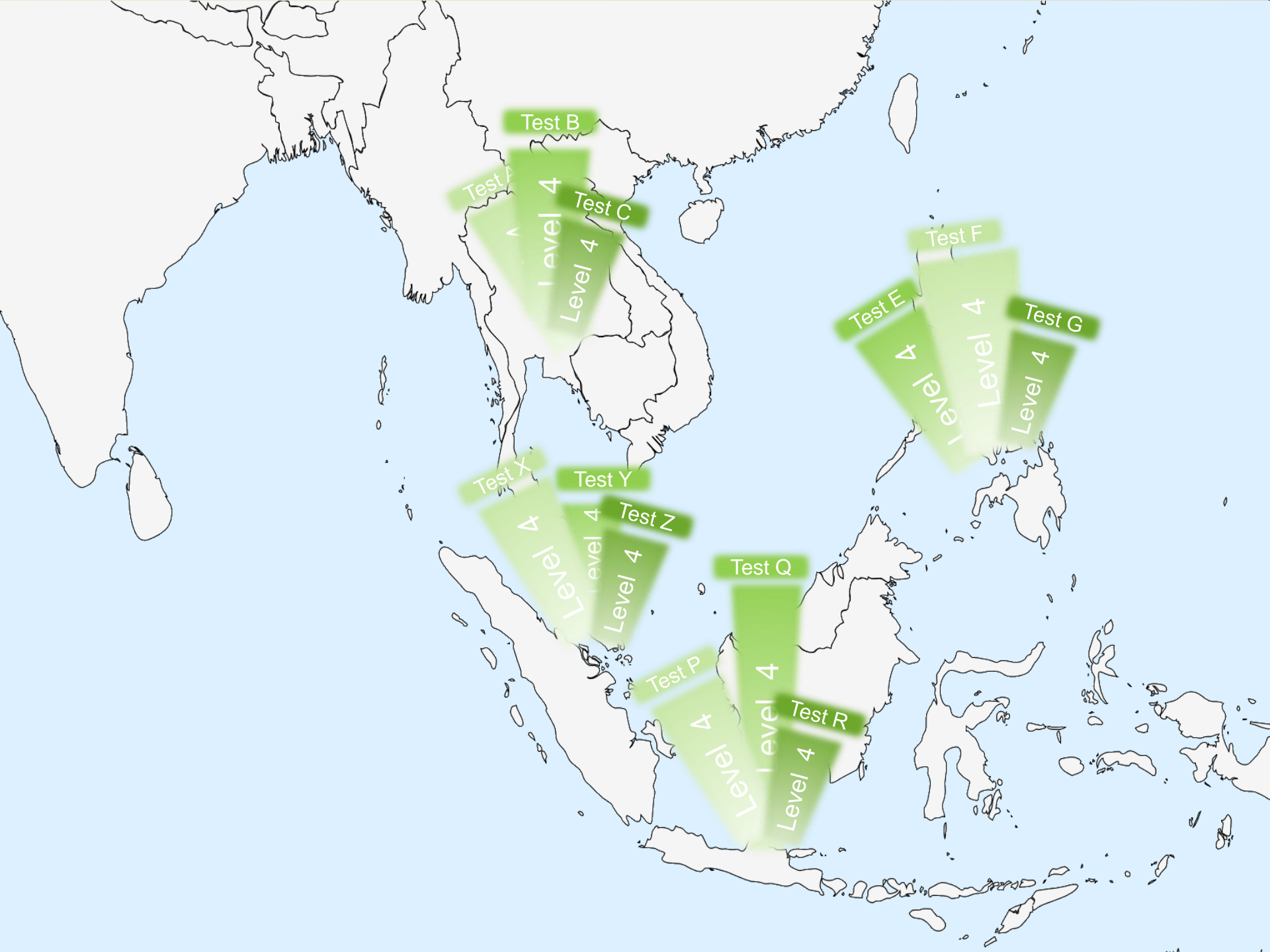
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?

?







Test B

Test A

Test C

Level 4

Level 4

Test F

Test E

Test G

Level 4

Level 4

Level 4

Test X

Test Y

Test Z

Level 4

Level 4

Test Q

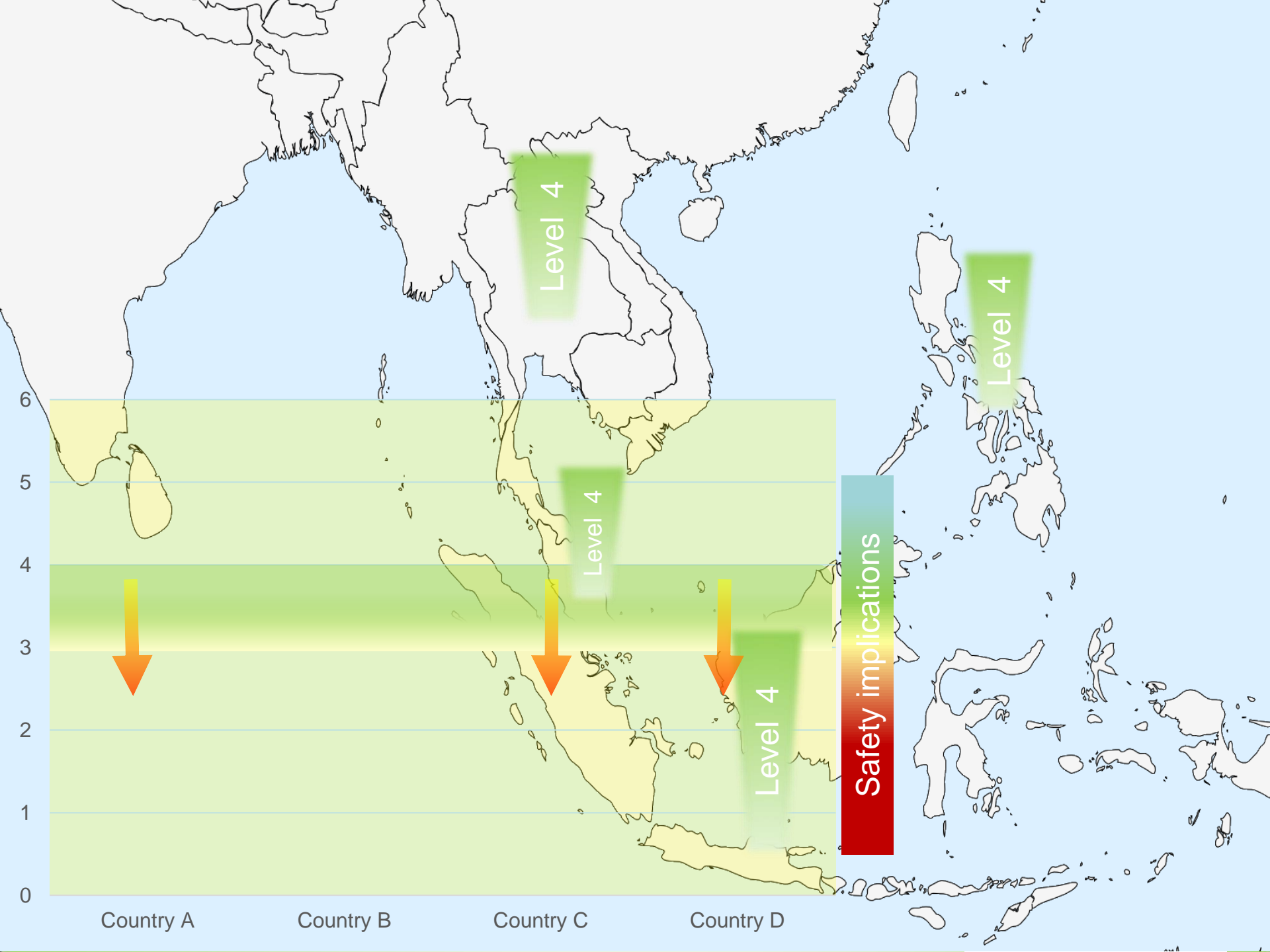
Test P

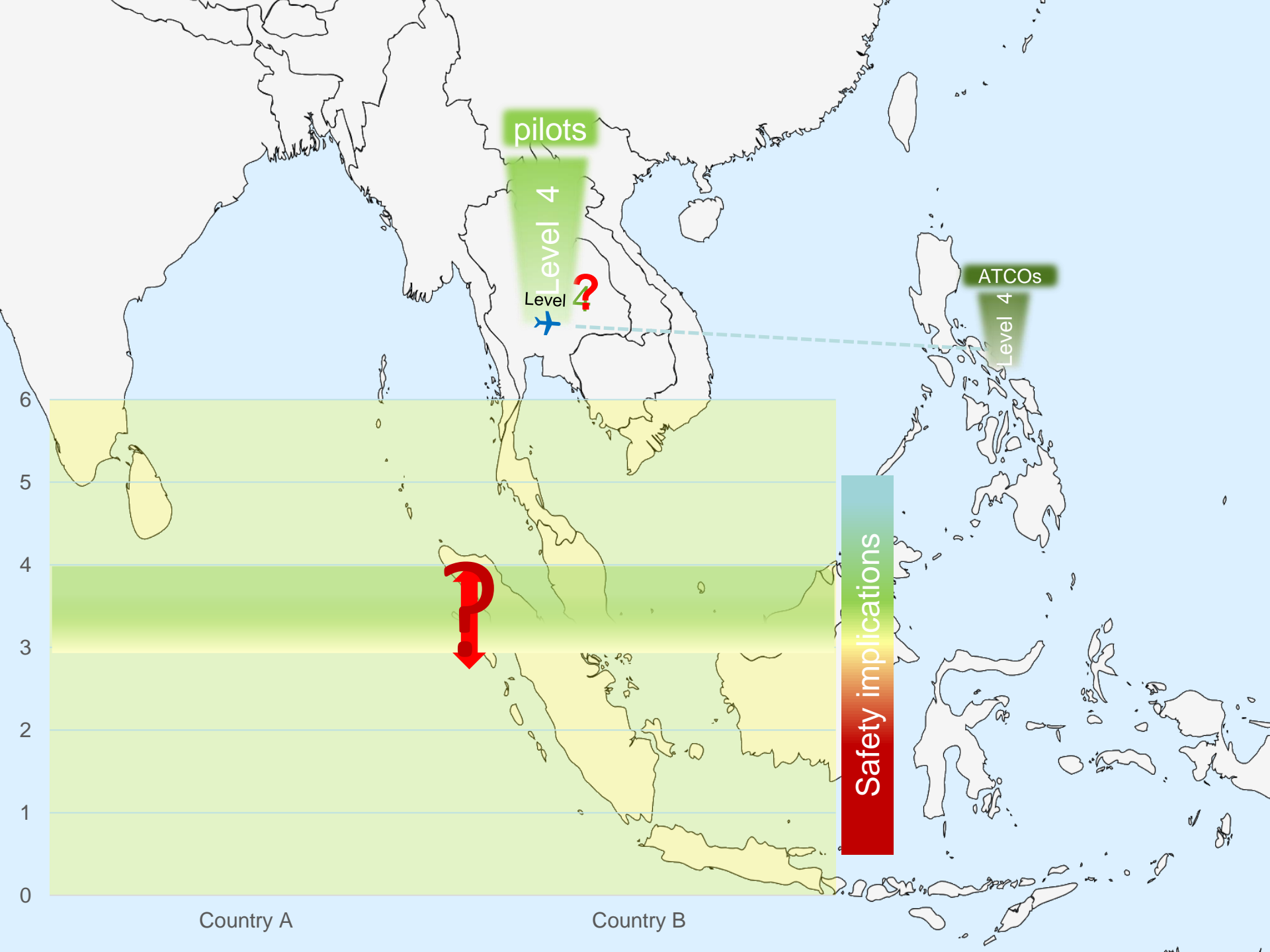
Test R

Level 4

Level 4

Level 4





pilots

Level 4

Level 4 ?



ATCOs

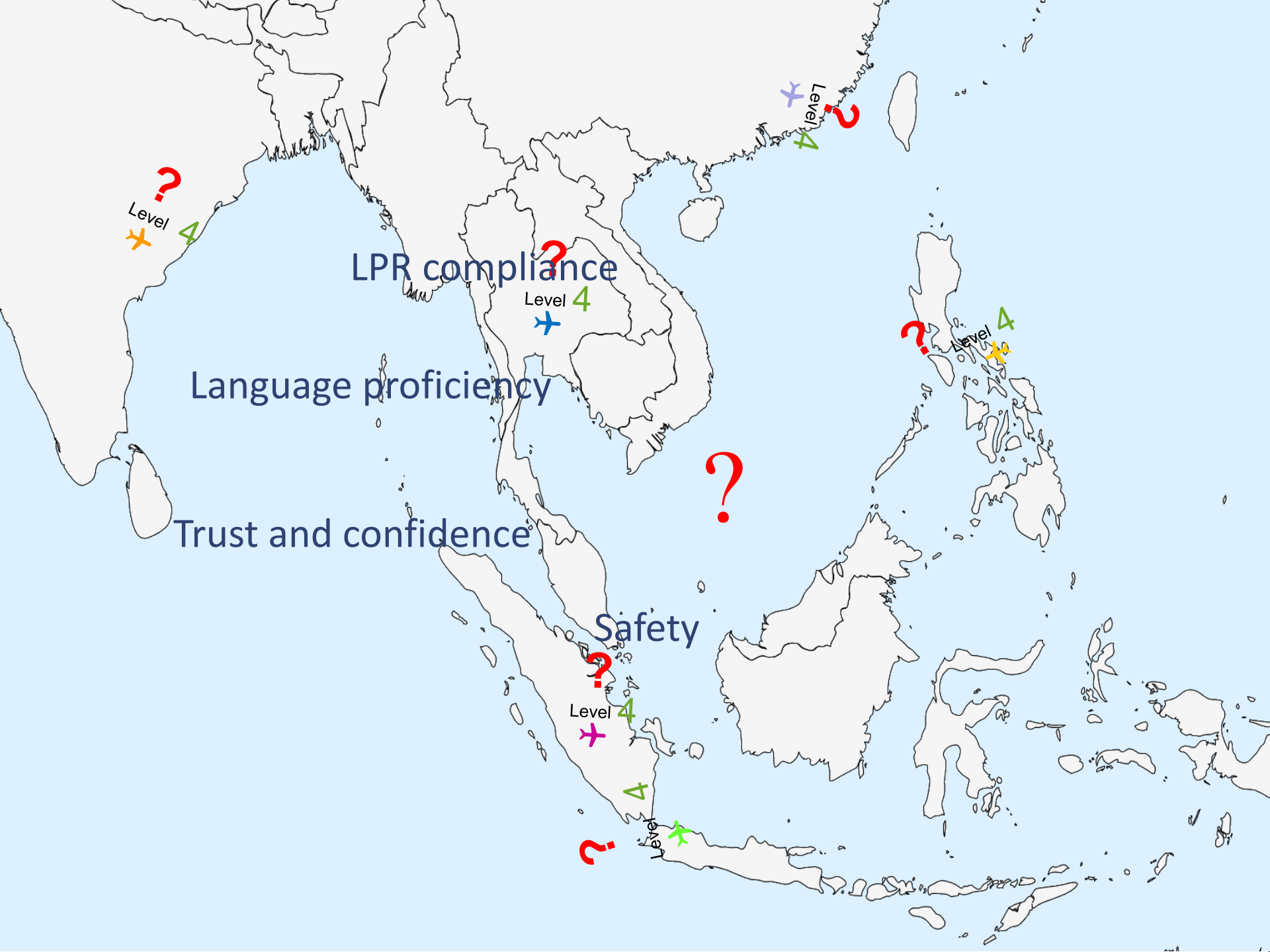
Level 4

Safety implications

6
5
4
3
2
1
0

Country A

Country B



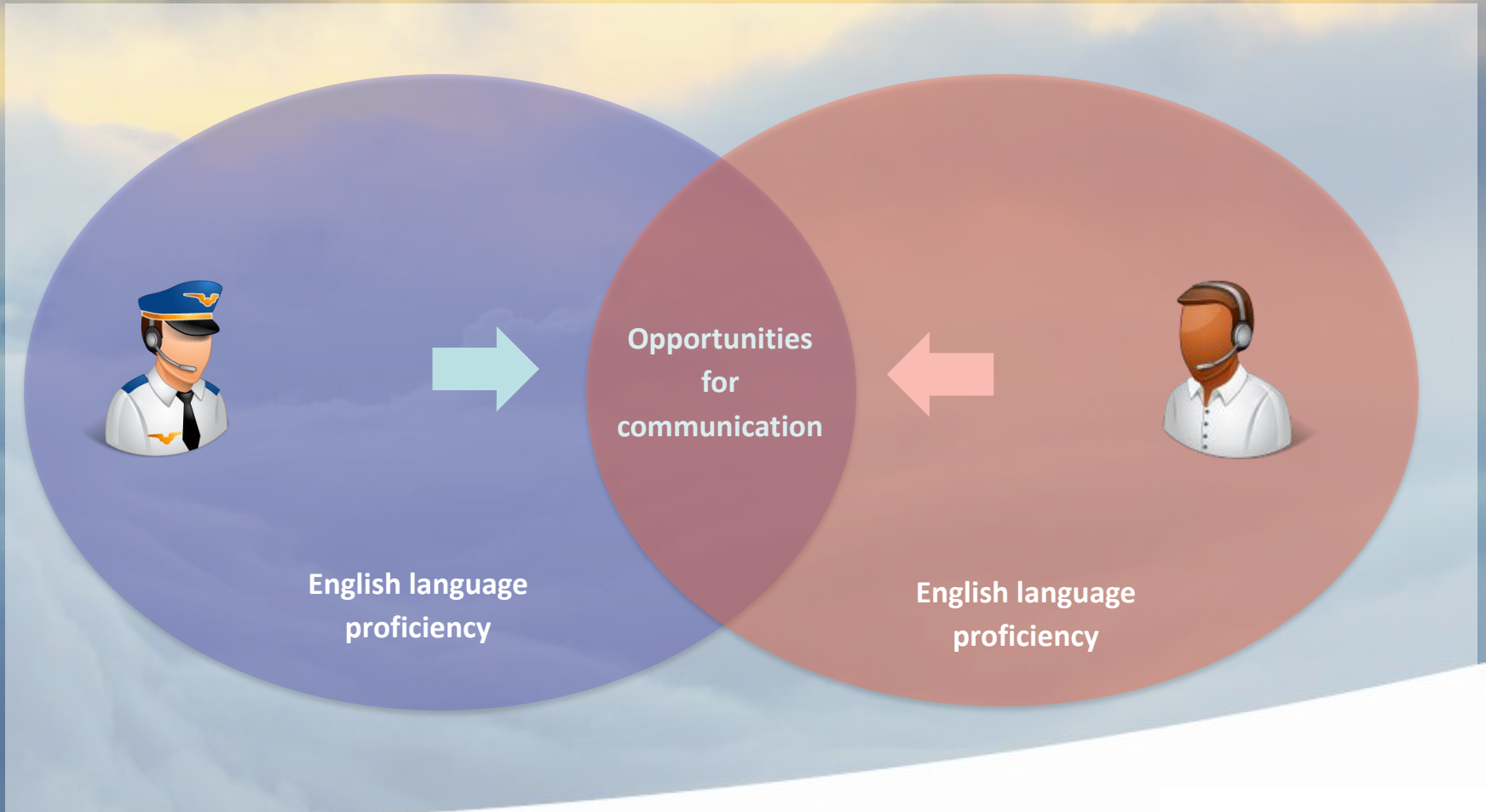
LPR compliance

Language proficiency

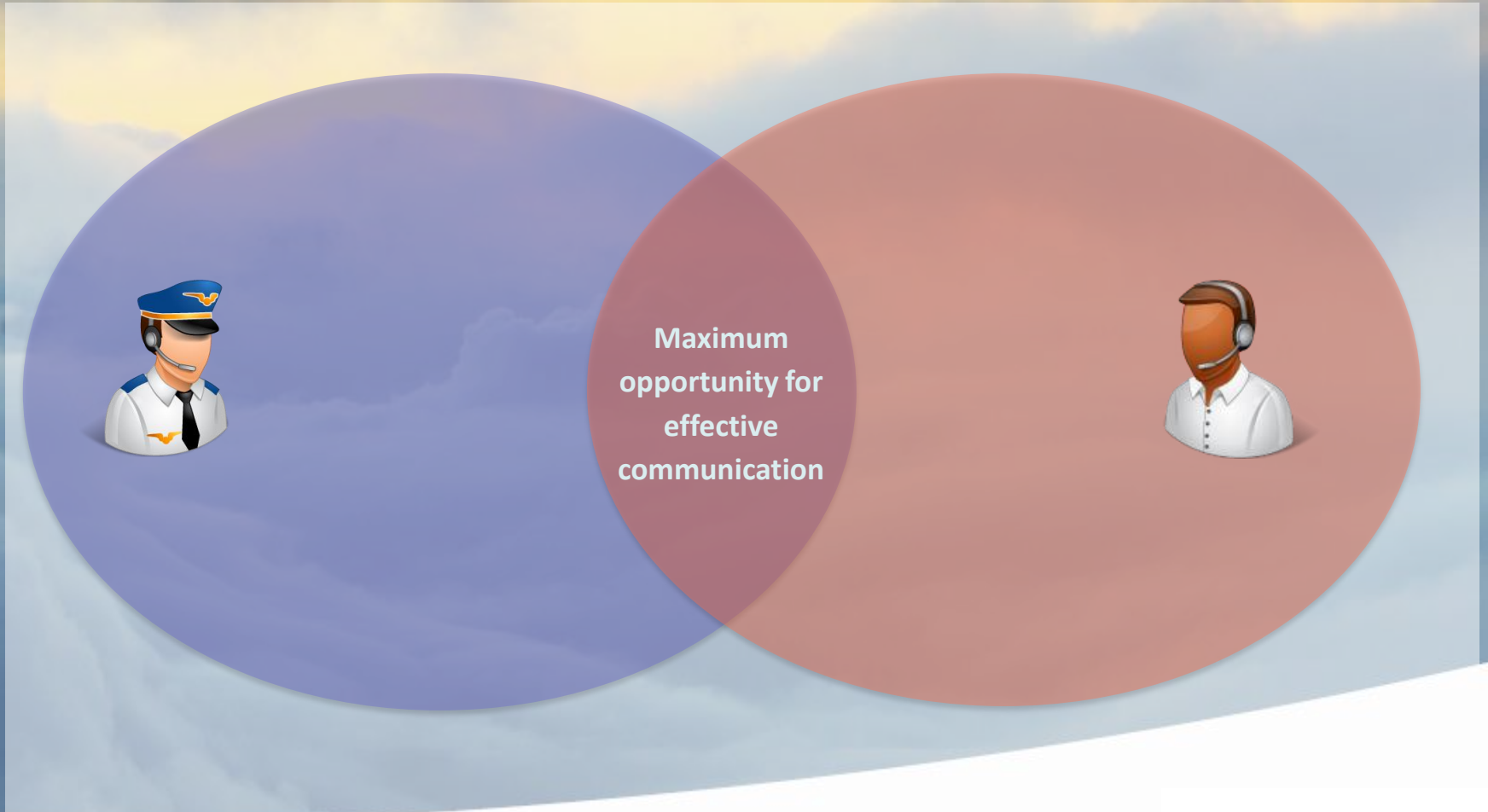
Trust and confidence

Safety

Risks: Communication interface



Optimum scenario



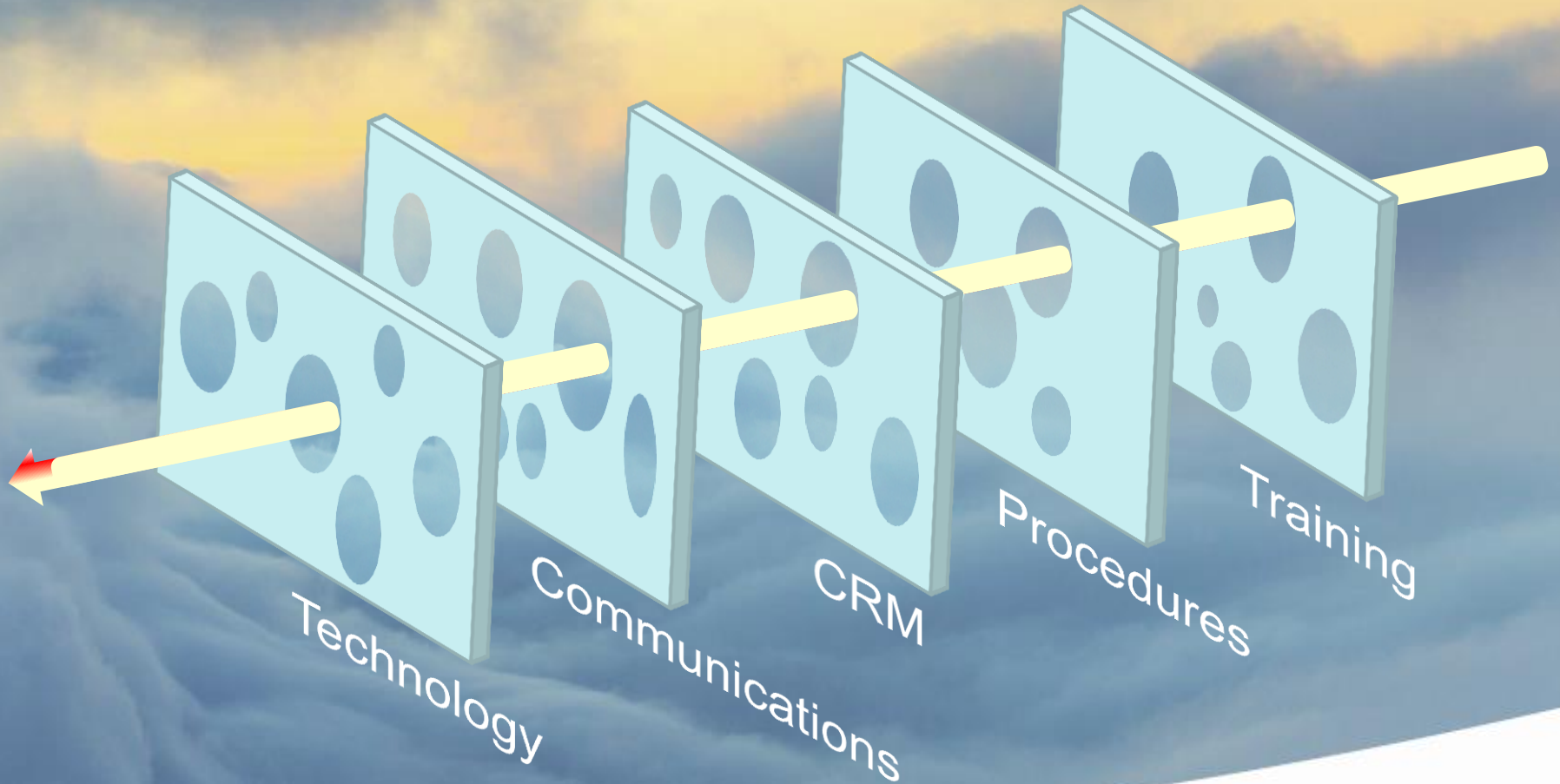
Communication and safety risks



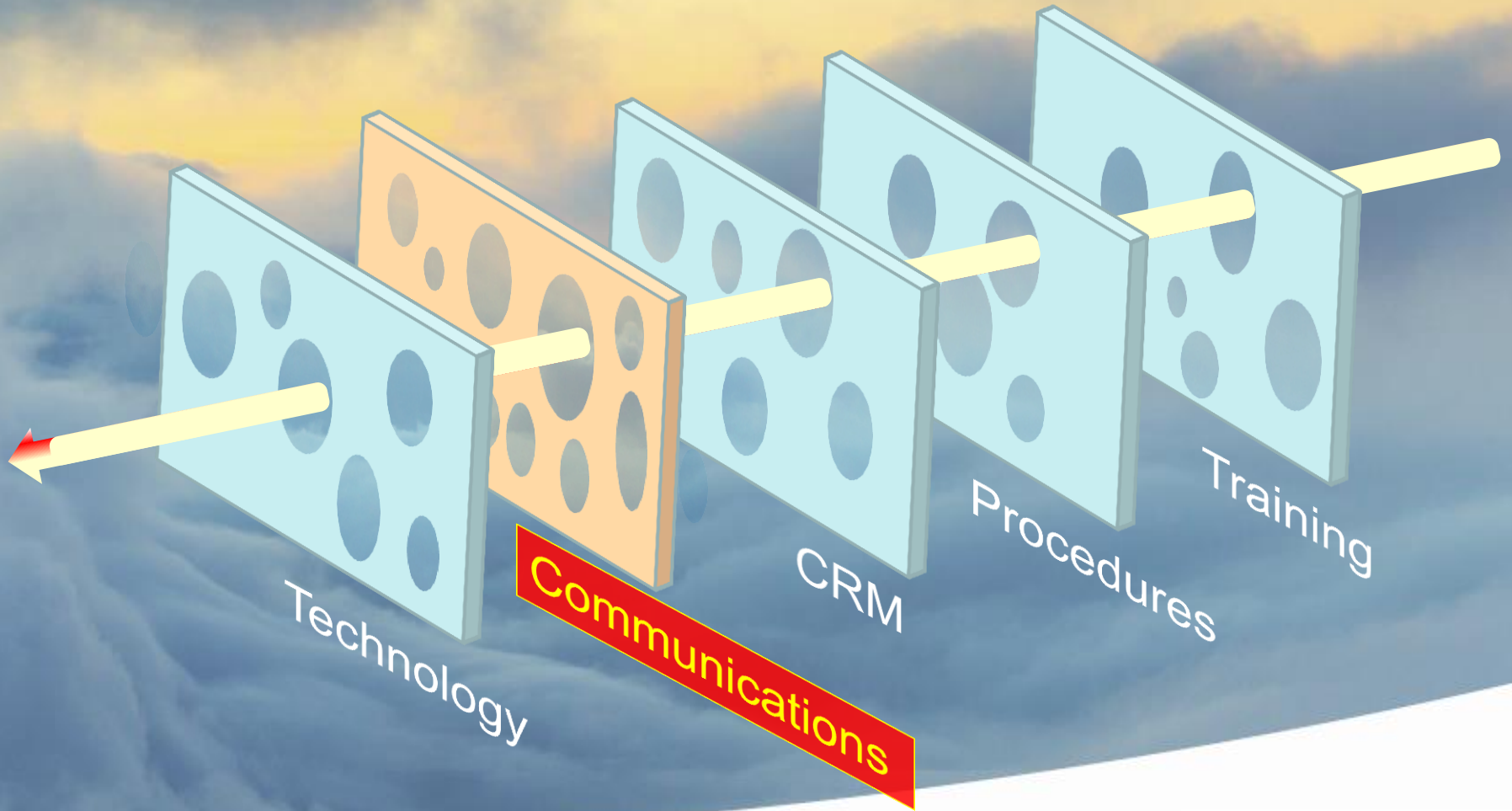
Thai ACC traffic growth



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

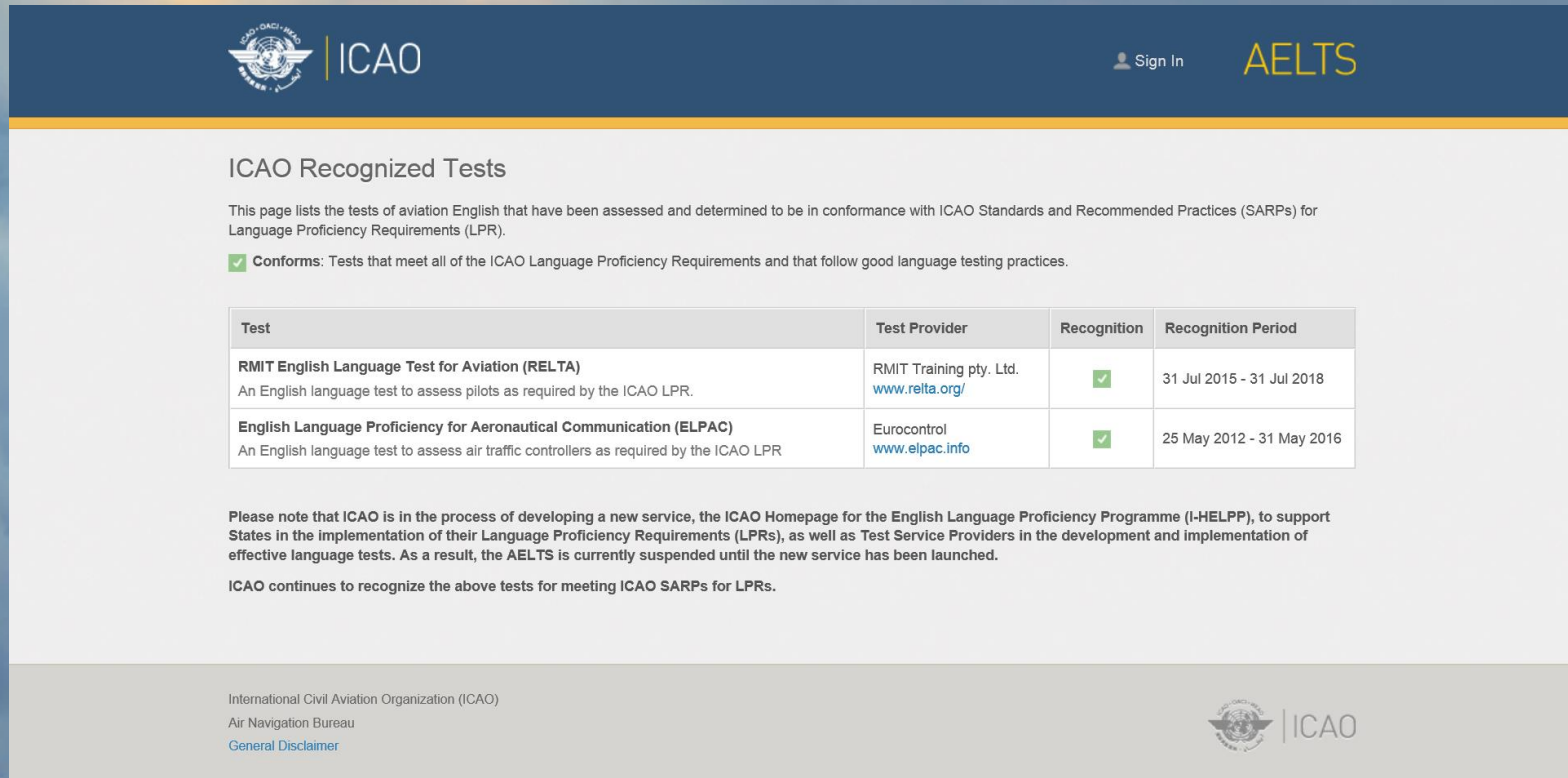
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Test equivalence: standardisation

- System for standardisation of different tests?

✓ AELTS



The screenshot shows the ICAO AELTS website. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the ICAO logo on the left and 'Sign In' and 'AELTS' on the right. Below the header, the main content area is white. The title 'ICAO Recognized Tests' is followed by a paragraph explaining that the page lists tests of aviation English assessed for conformance with ICAO standards. A green checkmark icon is next to the text 'Conforms: Tests that meet all of the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements and that follow good language testing practices.' Below this is a table with four columns: Test, Test Provider, Recognition, and Recognition Period. Two tests are listed: RMIT English Language Test for Aviation (RELTA) and English Language Proficiency for Aeronautical Communication (ELPAC). Both have a green checkmark in the Recognition column. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the ICAO logo and the text 'International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Air Navigation Bureau, General Disclaimer'.

Test	Test Provider	Recognition	Recognition Period
RMIT English Language Test for Aviation (RELTA) An English language test to assess pilots as required by the ICAO LPR.	RMIT Training pty. Ltd. www.relta.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

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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