





MID TERM EVALUATION OF ILO'S SUSTAINING COMPETITIVE AND RESPONSIBLE ENTERPRISES (SCORE) PROJECT, PHASE IV (2022-2024)

QUICK FACTS

Countries: National and international Supply Chains and actions in Bolivia, Myanmar and Tunisia

Evaluation date: 17 October 2023

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: ILO/EMP/SME unit

Technical Office: ILO/EMP/SME unit

Evaluation manager: Suttida Chaikitsakol

Evaluation consultant(s): Frans van Gerwen

DC Symbol: GLO/21/60/MUL (BOL/21/50/MUL, MMR/21/50/MUL, TUN/21/50/MUL

Donor(s) & budget: SECO and NORAD: 6.3 M USD

Key Words: Small and Medium Enterprises, Supply Chains, Decent Work, Sustainable Enterprises, Responsible Business Behaviour

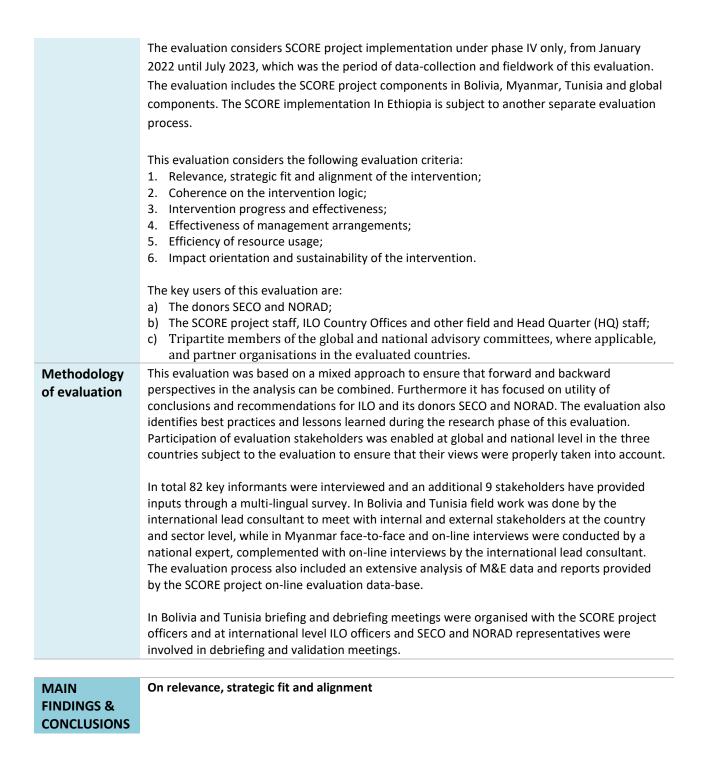
This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office.





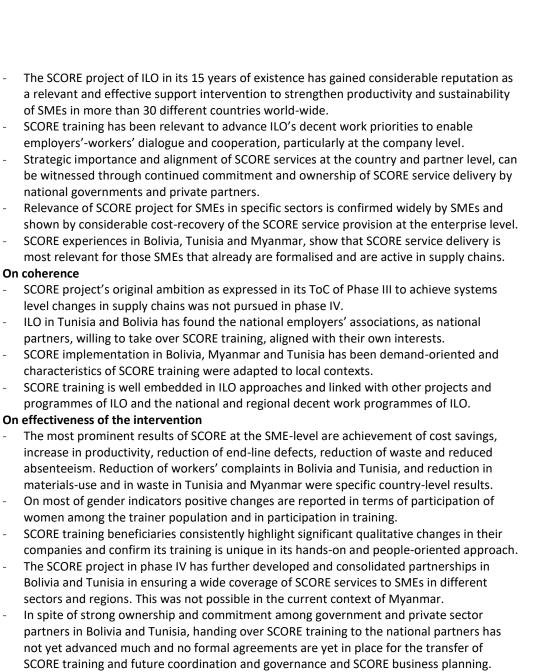
BACKGROUND & CONTEXT	
Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure	The Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) is one the longest running projects in ILO's portfolio. It is a global project focusing on improving productivity and working conditions in SMEs, contributing to achieving ILO's strategic outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work under the ILO's Programme & Budget 2022-2023.
	The SCORE project originally started operations in September 2009 and its fourth and final phase started in 2022 and is scheduled to end in December 2024. It has been historically funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). The SCORE phase IV project is implemented in four countries: Bolivia in Latin America, Tunisia and Ethiopia in Africa and Myanmar in Asia.
	In Phase IV, the SCORE project is focusing on integration of SCORE Training in the national economic development frameworks and inclusion of SMEs in national and global supply chains, except for Myanmar where SCORE project does not engage with the national government and only with private sector actors, since the military coup of 2021.
	 The project plan of SCORE project Phase IV specifies the following two outcomes: Outcome 1. SCORE training is fully sustainable at the national level, being adapted to specific needs of local SMEs and fully integrated in the national economic development framework, including public and private implementation partners; Outcome 2. Small and Medium Enterprises have developed their capacity to link to national and global supply chains, thanks to improved productivity and access to lead buyers.
Present situation of the project	Project activities are at different stages of implementation depending on their starting year of interventions during phase III. The different country projects are offering the SCORE training services in different economic sectors. Some sectors are shared between the countries, such as textile, and agri-food production. The Hospitality (tourism) sector is covered in Myanmar and in Bolivia there is a specific focus of SCORE training on micro-enterprises and informal economy in this country.
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	 The objective of the evaluation is to: Independently assess the progress of SCORE project Phase IV against the logical framework; Inform the ILO on whether the current project strategy (including sustainability strategy at country level) is working, and provide recommendations on what could be changed to increase the likelihood that the project reaches its objectives; Identify good practices and lessons learned that would contribute to learning and knowledge development of the ILO and project stakeholders.
	As the project is in its final stage and will not be continued, particular attention is requested to look at possibilities to feed in lessons learned from SCORE Programme in other projects in the area of productivity related ecosystems, which are also of interest to SECO and NORAD.





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- The pool of trainers and expert trainers for SCORE project in Bolivia and Tunisia need further strengthening and (re)certification of trainers in both countries is one the key activities that still requires significant effort.
- SCORE training at the country level is not yet sufficiently visible and is not strongly communicated and marketed in relevant private sector communities.

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RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES		
RECOMMENDA Main recommend- dations	 SCORE team and the SME unit in the ILO ENTERPRISES are recommended to secure and strengthen the SCORE training focus on the small and medium enterprise sectors in countries with favourable productivity ecosystems environments and potential for stronger integration of SMEs in international and national supply chains; SME unit at ILO Enterprises and SME support staff in regional offices SCORE training are recommended, after the end of the SCORE project to continue to engage and involve its tripartite partners at national level in future coordination and follow-up of SCORE training delivery at national level; SME unit at ILO Enterprises is recommended to explore if SCORE training and technical assistance can be more closely linked with existing (international and national and sector-specific) certification schemes active in specific sectors and supply chains; SME unit and SME/SCORE officers at the national and regional level, are recommended to invest ample time and effort in developing business and marketing and sales plans with its national partners to ensure that SCORE services can continue to be provided, ensuring full cost-recovery (or third-party subsidies) for the national partners and profitability for the (expert) trainers involved; Both in the remaining SCORE project implementation period and beyond, the ILO SME unit, national and regional ILO offices and SCORE partners and national SECO and NORAD are recommended to consider additional efforts to increase visibility of SCORE training at the country and sector level. The ILO SME unit and SECO and NORAD are recommended to consider simplification of its M&E focusing on the key qualitative and quantitative aspects of SCORE training, beyond the current final phase of SCORE project. ILO should keep a light and easy to follow-up to data-entry and analysis of continued SCORE training delivery, beyond current project-duration. SCORE-team in Bolivia is recommended to: 	
	 Further strengthen and expand the existing group of trainers, and dedicate special attention to empower and equip trainers in the network to prepare them for the arrangements for continued SCORE training delivery under coordination of CEPB; Consider continuing SCORE service delivery specific supply chains (coffee and Andean grains) where concrete sustainability perspectives exist. SME unit in ILO and the ILO offices and staff dealing with SCORE project in Myanmar are 	
	recommended to maintain a minimum level of (moral) support to the trainers in the country and to remain in touch with them through a loose and informal network, even if they are not able to continue to be able to effectively market and sell their SCORE services on the short and medium term.	



	 9. SCORE team in Tunisia is recommended to: With support from the SME unit at ILO HQ continue and speed up efforts in establishing and consolidating the institutional setup for continuation of SCORE services on the Tunisian market beyond the project duration; With support from the SME unit at ILO HQ develop a policy to ensure that SCORE training and TA is offered in Tunisia against market prices and appropriate payment conditions and arrangements; Feed and support further learning and innovation on specific SCORE services (e.g. in platform economy and financial services) in Tunisia relevant for other countries in international SCORE exchanges, including in other French speaking countries, where thus far, SCORE services are thinly spread.
Main lessons learned and	 Key good practices SCORE training and in-company technical assistance is unique in its participatory, hands-on
good practices	and empowering approach, visualised by the enterprise improvement teams that usually
	 remain in place also after SCORE trajectories; Smooth cooperation relations between SME staff at HQ, regional and country and project
	level have enabled exchange of experiences and knowledge, that allow different SCORE
	 project countries to easily mine upon other experiences; SCORE training modules have been upgraded and adapted continuously to ensure that the
	SCORE service delivery remains relevant in changing contexts (such as COVID-19 and climate
	change);
	 National partners have been empowered to implement the SCORE training delivery and to manage and coordinate the national trainer networks, providing good sustainability prospects;
	Key lessons learned
	 It is very important to start new SCORE project-phases with planning for exiting and sustainability and not leave actions directed at transfer and sustainability for the final phase of the project;
	 ILO's communication and marketing around SCORE project has not been strong and too
	much confined to ILO's own networks and not in broader private sector networks;
	 The SCORE training approach to build ownership of SMEs and strengthening sustainability of SCORE training requires consistency in asking for payment for SCORE services, while existing
	national Government subsidy arrangements may be used to facilitate access to SCORE
	services; - A supply chain approach should focus less on lead buyers with principally financial support
	and sustainability in mind. A better approach is to focus on supply chain integration and governance and on due diligence requirements allowing a stronger buy-in of key actors in
	 these supply chains; Quantitative KPIs to measure SCORE training induced changes at the specific SME-
	enterprise level are not always reliable and difficult to measure and some employment related indicators, may not be appropriate to measure SCORE training effects and impact.

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