

ILO EVALUATION

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- **ILO Technical Backstopping Office:** **DEVINVEST**
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- **Evaluation Manager:** **Angelica Munoz**
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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

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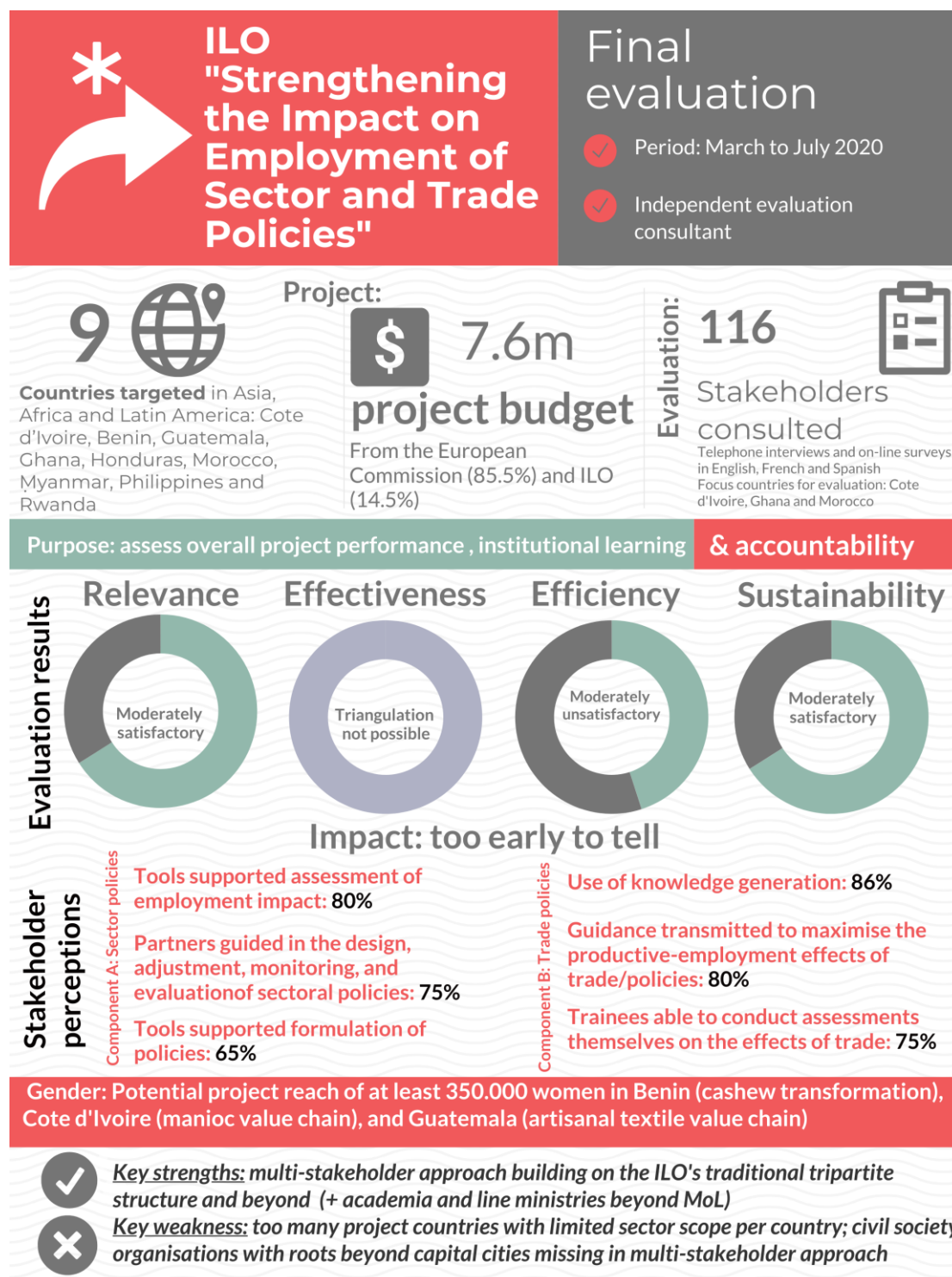
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

COVID - 19	Coronavirus disease
CPO	Country Programme Outcome
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEVINVEST	Development and Investment branch of the ILO's Employment Policy Department
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EC/EEC	European Commission
EMPIA	Employment Impact Assessments
ETE	Effects of Trade on Employment
EU	European Union
EVAL	Evaluation Office (ILO)
GLO	Global
G20	Group of Twenty
HQ	Headquarter
ILO	International Labour Office
IRIS	Integrated Resource Information System
NPC	National Project Coordinators
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STED	Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification
STRENGTHEN	Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRAVERA	Trade and Value Chains in Employment-Rich Activities
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance frameworks
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNPAF	United Nations Partnership Assistance frameworks
VCA4D	Value Chain Analysis for Development
%	Percentage

Figure 1: Overview: Evaluation object and key evaluation results



Executive summary

Introduction: This document constitutes the evaluation report of the final independent evaluation of the ILO project titled: "Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies" ("the Project") (GLO/14/37/EEC).

The Project started in October 2014 and concluded in March 2020, with a budget of EUR 7,600,000, funded with EUR 6,500,000 by the European Commission (EC, 85,53%) and EURO 1,100,000 by the ILO (14.47%).

Project background: The Project aimed to strengthen the capabilities of country partners to analyse and design sector and trade policies and programmes that would enhance employment creation for more and better jobs. It consists of two components:

Component A focuses on Sector Policies and supports and builds capacity among partner countries and development practitioners to enhance the positive impact of sector policies and programmes on employment and is sometimes referred to as the Employment Impact Assessments (EMPIA) component.

Component B focuses on Trade Policies and assists developing countries in harnessing international trade and trade-related foreign investment to provide more opportunities for decent work and increase the number of productively employed workers. Component B is a continuation of the Effects of Trade on Employment (ETE) project, which preceded STRENGTHEN and is sometimes also referred to as the ETE Component.¹

Evaluation background. Scope and time frame: The evaluation covered all components of the Project over the entire duration of the project since its inception. The evaluation consultant contacted all project stakeholders listed by the project team, reaching a total of 116 people.

The persons consulted include 82 out of 219 beneficiaries (37,4% response rate) through an online survey in English, French and Spanish. The evaluator undertook interviews with 15 stakeholders in ILO headquarters (HQ), ILO country offices and National Project Coordinators, including 3 staff of the project team. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of the final evaluation, the evaluator undertook the final evaluation remotely, without field visits or meetings ILO stakeholders in Geneva.

In the focus countries for this evaluation, eighth beneficiaries were reached in Ghana, seven beneficiaries in Cote d'Ivoire and four in Morocco.

Geographical coverage: The evaluation included stakeholders and beneficiaries from all countries benefiting from the project: Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Guatemala, Ghana, Honduras, Morocco, Myanmar, Philippines and Rwanda, with a focus on Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Morocco, as agreed in the evaluation's inception phase.

Clients and beneficiaries of the evaluation: The main clients for this evaluation are the ILO, including the Employment Policy Department, the donor (the European Commission) and project stakeholders in project countries such as tripartite constituents, academia and other line ministries .

¹ ILO, 2020: Terms of Reference, Final Independent Evaluation, "Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies," page 3.

The **purpose** of the final evaluation was to provide an independent assessment of progress on the achievement of the project's development objective, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis the strategies and implementation modalities chosen and project management arrangements. Besides, the evaluation aimed at identifying strategic recommendations, good practices and lessons learned.

This and all evaluations in the ILO are expected to promote accountability and institutional learning. Evaluation aims to understand why – and to what extent – intended and unintended results were achieved. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking and organizational effectiveness.

The theory-based **evaluation methodology** built on an evaluation matrix and included a mixed-methods approach, as presented in Annex 5 . Given the large number of evaluation questions the evaluation had to focus on breadth rather than depth in the analysis of issues, as explained in the inception report.

Main evaluation findings: The main evaluation findings are listed by the evaluation criteria suggested in the Terms of Reference (ToR): relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and the likelihood of sustainability and impact. Gender figured in the ToR as a cross cutting issue.

Relevance: The evaluation shows that the project's relevance was moderately satisfactory.

Global level

The project contributes to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, indicators 8.2, 8.3 and 8.5. The relevance of the project to the national context of project countries is given, reaching 81% for project countries' employment policies and development frameworks. A contribution shows to the 2020-2021 Programme and Budget, output 3.1 and The project is also aligned to three out of the four areas of work of the ILO Employment Policy Department's Development and Investment branch DEVINVEST: i) Economic diversification and structural change to maximize the employment impact of trade and sectoral policies; ii) Developing approaches for employment and productivity enhancements; and iii) Supporting the planning and implementation of employment-intensive investments.

Country level

The project contributed to one Country Programme Outcome CPO in each of the nine project countries. The National Project Coordinators (NPCs) and to some extent other ILO staff in the field searched for linkages to other on-going initiatives for complementary action in the area of trade and employment with varying success. Successful cooperation with other initiatives, including the sharing of resources, comprised EC and EU-funded projects in Honduras and the Philippines. The creation of linkages also depended to the extent country offices were involved in the project implementation. Overall the results are moderately satisfactory, given the less systematic approach to linking the project to other initiatives.

Theory of Change

Following the mid-term evaluation, STRENGTHEN designed a comprehensive Theory of Change with a logical results chain. However, at least two out of the five key assumptions show a high risk of not materializing.

Efficiency: Overall, the project's efficiency showed a moderately unsatisfactory performance.

Project design

The budget was sufficient for the project and its two components, however with an imbalance in favour of component B and comprising too many countries for a leave a deeper project footprint. This shortcoming of the uneven budget distribution was already highlighted in the mid-term evaluation and rooted in a design flaw due to the insufficient calculation of project management support in project countries, as stated by the project team. The final evaluation coincides with this finding. The imbalance was partly mitigated for example when repurposing the budget for Ethiopia following the departure of the country from the project. It was beyond the scope of the final evaluation to undertake a fully-fledged comparative analysis of cost of living, currency, and cost for specific activities for the respective project countries to further calculate this imbalance.

In the context of a supply-driven nature of the project as well as the ambitious project design, the project experienced heavy delays in implementation in at least five of the project countries.

Management arrangements

Investments in a national coordinator and administrative support for component B was better value for money compared to the less coherent management arrangements across component A countries operating with consultants. While consultants were the cheaper solution for country-level engagement and appropriate for technical support, the use of NPCs was more appropriate for policy level engagement. Subsequently, consultants required more support from HQ or country offices when engaging with policy makers which made their involvement less cost – efficient and affected the project’s responsiveness.

The project management arrangements between headquarters in Geneva with two Chief Technical Advisors (CTA), various models of country support reaching from project teams to consultants and the at times insufficient involvement of ILO country offices was moderately unsatisfactory.

Project implementation

The project team was cost-aware when planning project activities, for example by focusing TRAVERA and STED studies on the same sectors in the respective project countries.

The project team and NPC leveraged resources where opportunities appeared.

By 9 June 2020, the project’s implementation rate was 98,5%, after two extensions amounting to 18 months to also accommodate additional donor requests.

Mid-term evaluation

Following the mid-term evaluation, the project team prepared a management response to also track the implementation of all seven recommendations, which were however only partly implemented, missing for example the opportunity to make the project monitoring more results-oriented.

Effectiveness: In the absence of results reporting beyond activity-based monitoring and based on the perceptions only of stakeholders in project countries, the evaluation finds that the effectiveness of the project cannot be assessed with sufficient methodological rigour.

Broader project objectives, as listed in the ToR: Based on stakeholder perceptions, the highest results show for the use of information exchange (88%), the use of capacity building (87%) and the use of knowledge generation (86%) of STRENGTHEN.

Ratings are slightly lower for the use of results by national policymakers to optimize the employment effects of the selected sectoral and trade policies (69%), the creation of

national ownership (73%) and the effectiveness in promoting and advancing national policy coherence (73%).

Overall, the expected results **component A** showed satisfactory achievements, with stakeholder perception ratings ranging from 65% (*global tools supporting in the formulation of effective and complementary policies*) to 80% for *global tools supporting the assessment of the employment impact of sectoral policies and projects*

For **component B**, the level of achievements for expected results were also satisfactory, ranging from 76% stakeholder perception ratings for the *improvement of methods to handle developing-country circumstances for assessing the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on productive and decent employment* to 86% for the *use of knowledge generation* by STRENGTHEN.

Impact: it is too early to assess the long-term effects of the project

While the Coronavirus disease (COVID 19) pandemic is likely to affect the project's long-term results due to changes in policy priorities across the globe, even in "normal" circumstances, an assessment would require a time-leg of 5 to 10 years after the end of the project to evaluate any impact on objectives like job creation.

Project stakeholders provide high satisfaction ratings about the changes in their capabilities.

Interviews showed that due to the recent completion of the project, it seems too early to tell whether changes in policy will materialize, which would be one factor influencing the achievement of higher level project objectives such as enhanced employment or attracting international trade. At national level, policy decisions are pending for example in Ghana or Guatemala while in Cote d'Ivoire the upcoming elections have delayed government's decision-making.

As a result, the high ratings given for the projects contribution to enhanced employment and improvements in attracting international trade need to be interpreted with caution, with an average of 59% of respondents not answering the question.

Sustainability: the likelihood of sustainability depends on making financial resources available to replicate the research tool in other sectors and to systematically upscale their use through embedding project tools and processes in national systems.

Stakeholders perceive the likelihood of durable project results as satisfactory but depending on the decision-makers who have received the benefits of the project.

The key strengths positively affecting the likelihood of project results sustainability are the multi-stakeholder approach even beyond ILO's traditional tripartite approach, including academia and line ministries complementing the Ministry of Labour.

The key weakness negatively affecting STRNGTHEN's sustainability are the limited sector scope per country given the large number of project countries. More sectors per country could have been covered if less project country had been targeted. As such, more national stakeholders could have benefitted in more line ministries while for the stakeholders in the Ministry of Labour, the engagement would have deepened. The evaluation also found room for even enhancing the comprehensiveness of the multi-stakeholder approach by systematically including civil society organizations which are rooted also in the rural areas where for example the transformation of agricultural products take place.

Opportunities emerge to apply research tools such as STED or TRAVERA in other sectors with the potential of trained academic partners rolling out training in their countries. The more the objectives and tools promoted of STRENGTHEN such as TRAVERA could be embedded into DWCPs or into the regular work of the ILO in the countries, the higher would be the likelihood that the ILO can provide some kind of follow-up of the project.

COVID 19 pandemic and constituents' response to the health crisis could change constituents' priorities in the project countries

That most significant advancement of gender-related needs is due to the selection of sectors for the research studies, including the elaboration of sex-disaggregated employment data and recommendations about how to promote the inclusion of women into the labour market. Sector such as cashew transformation, the manioc value chain or artisanal textile employ an estimate of 350.000 women in Benin, Cote d'Ivoire and Guatemala. Thus, the project has the potential of reaching out 350,000 indirect female beneficiaries in those project countries. Men were targeted predominantly in the project's study of the automotive sector in Morocco.

Besides, the STED approach also includes a gender element related to gender composition of employment. TRAVERA studies also include gender aspects like gender disaggregated employment data.

Based on the above key evaluation findings, the evaluation draws conclusions which are systematically presented in section 7 and Figure 16. Following those conclusions, a set of recommendation emerges which are valid more generally for the regular work of DEVINVEST.

Relevance

Recommendation 1: DEVINVEST: Country-level projects should be consulted with the Director or Deputy Director of the respective ILO Country Office for discussions in the Country Office's programming team to ensure a close alignment to the DWCP.
Priority: very high. At project design.
Resource implications: medium, particularly requiring additional coordination time

Recommendation 2: DEVINVEST: The project design of any new project should include a Theory of Change to strengthen project planning. Logframe indicators should be results rather than activity oriented, as a means to enable results-based management and to facilitate evaluation.
Priority: very high. At project design.
Resource implications: medium

Efficiency

Recommendation 3: DEVINVEST: In case policy level engagement is required in a project, investments in a national project coordinator and administrative support are required to ensure appropriate country-level implementation. For technical engagement, the use of consultants might be sufficient.
Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: high if national project coordinator and administrative support are required for policy outreach, low in case of national consultants for technical engagement

Recommendation 4: DEVINVEST: When planning for a new project, the number of project countries should be established with realism to allow for efficient project management. The depth of engagement at the country level should be prioritised over the geographic breadth of the news phase. For STRENGTHEN, five to six project countries rather than the initial ten countries would have been more appropriate to allow for efficient project management and leaving a significant foot print in all project countries.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: neutral

Recommendation 5: DEVINVEST: For the selection of countries for any future phase of the project or a follow-up project, priority should be given to the countries engaged in STRENGTHEN. Any other countries should be selected based on a country needs assessment, an assessment of the project's relevance to the respective countries' development plans in the donor's priority region and following consultations with ILO country offices' senior staff and engagements with the concerned country stakeholders to gauge demand for the project.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: neutral

Effectiveness and sustainability:

Recommendation 6: DEVINVEST: When planning a project, a multi-stakeholder approach should be considered beyond the tripartite constituents, including line ministries complementing the Ministry of Labour in selected sectors, academia and civil society organizations.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: medium, particularly requiring additional coordination time

Recommendation 7: DEVINVEST could consider including a training of trainers' module for each capacity development tool implemented in a project to systematically enable the replication of trainings after the end of the project.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: medium

Recommendation 8: DEVINVEST is encouraged find a balance when selecting sectors for any future phase of the project or a follow-up project which are relevant for women and men, as in STRENGTHEN but also to promote gender equality and inclusion in sectors who have traditionally been dominated by a specific gender.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: neutral

Section I: Introduction

This document constitutes the report of the final independent evaluation of the ILO project titled: "Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies" ("the Project") (GLO/14/37/EEC).

The evaluation report is the second main deliverable of the evaluation, following the inception report outlining mainly the evaluation approach and methodology, including data collection tools.

The Project started in October 2014 and concluded in March 2020, with a budget of EUR 7,600,000, funded with EUR 6,500,000 by the European Commission (EC, 85,53%) and EURO 1,100,000 by the ILO (14.47%)².

The Project aimed to strengthen the capabilities of country partners to analyse and design sector and trade policies and programmes that would enhance employment creation for more and better jobs. It consists of two components:

Component A focuses on Sector Policies and supports and builds capacity among partner countries and development practitioners to enhance the positive impact of sector policies and programmes on employment and is sometimes referred to as the Employment Impact Assessments (EMPIA) component.

Component B focuses on Trade Policies and assists developing countries in harnessing international trade and trade-related foreign investment to provide more opportunities for decent work and increase the number of productively employed workers. Component B is a continuation of the Effects of Trade on Employment (ETE) project, which preceded STRENGTHEN and is sometimes also referred to as the ETE Component.³

In October 2017, the Project underwent a mid-term evaluation, according to ILO's Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation.

1.1 Project background

The section describes the project background. The assessment of the project follows in the findings section.

The ToR summarize the project background as follows⁴:

"The Project, funded by the European Union, aims to strengthen the capabilities of country partners to analyse and design sectoral and trade policies and programmes that would enhance employment creation in terms of quantity and quality." The latter is, in fact, the overall objective of the two evaluation components.

² ILO, 2014 : Project document. "Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies"

³ ILO, 2020: Terms of Reference for Final Independent Evaluation, "Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies," page 3.

⁴ ILO, 2020: Terms of Reference for Final Independent Evaluation "Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies," page 4.

Specific objectives comprise:

- “To develop global knowledge on how to strengthen the positive impact on employment of sectoral and trade policies, including in the areas of agriculture and rural development, infrastructure and energy with a focus on private sector development in these sectors as well as on existing and relevant methods for the employment impact assessment of those policies in selected sectors.
- To strengthen country-level knowledge on the impact of sectoral and trade policies on productive and decent employment and on measures to optimize the employment effects of selected sectoral and trade policies and related issues such as structural transformation, labour standards, and skills development.
- To build the capabilities of governments, social partners, development practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders in partner countries to identify, measure, and assess the employment effects of sectoral and trade policies.
- To provide guidance to development cooperation practitioners in partner countries as well as the European Union on how to address the employment opportunities and challenges resulting from sectoral and trade policies including through public policies, trade and investment programmes and operations in key sectors in developing countries”.

The ToR further specify that⁵

- i) “Component A focuses on assessing the impact of sectoral policies on employment and is also referred to as the component conducting Employment Impact Assessments (EMPIA).
- ii) Component B is a continuation of the Effects of Trade on Employment (ETE) project, which preceded STRENGTHEN. Each component had its own partner countries, but in Ghana and Guatemala, both components were implemented”.

Mid-term evaluation

The project benefitted from a mid-term evaluation in 2017⁶. The external evaluators made seven targeted recommendations, omitting however the level of prioritization for the main recommendations. The most important recommendations addressed issues such as a project extension, Results-based management (RBM), project monitoring, the reinforcement of capacity building and knowledge sharing, the need to institutionalise Policy Working Groups or Technical Working Groups and project visibility.

The management response to the recommendations showed a strong buy in and the evaluator had access to the management implementation sheet, indicating progress in the implementation of recommendations.

Project countries⁷

The list of partner countries is presented in the map below.

⁵ ILO, 2020: Terms of Reference^[1] Final Independent Evaluation “Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies,” page 5.

⁶ ILO/ Zarranga, M and Hilfiker, C: (2017): ILO mid-term evaluation - Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies.

⁷ The final partner countries were identified after the project document was signed. Initially, Ethiopia was also a partner country for component A. However, the evaluation ToR (page 5) state that due to a lack of interest and difficulty mobilizing the local authorities, the work in Ethiopia was discontinued, as addressed in the Project’s Mid-Term evaluation.

Country names underlined on the map form part of components A and B (Guatemala and Ghana). Component A was implemented in countries with names presented in grey (Cote d'Ivoire, Honduras, and Rwanda). Country names in red show countries forming part of component B.

Figure 2: Project countries



Management arrangements

“The Project is managed centrally from the ILO Headquarters in Geneva and is located within the Development and Investment Branch (DEVINVEST) of the Employment Policy Department. The head of the DEVINVEST Branch is responsible for the Project. It has two project managers, who are also the lead technical specialists for each of the main project components. In Cote d’Ivoire the activities in the latter part of the project (last two years) were managed by a third technical specialist in agreement with EU/DEVCO.

All country level coordinators and national / international consultants report to the two project managers.

The Project has a joint ILO-EC Steering Committee as its supervisory mechanism, which meets annually⁸.

At the country level, the management arrangements differed for the two components. For component B (ETE), a national coordinator and administrative support were hired in each partner country by the ILO to manage the country-level activities. In Ghana and Guatemala, the national coordinator managed both components A and B. For the remaining component A countries, the management arrangements differed by country. In Rwanda, the activities were managed with the support of consultants, in Cote d'Ivoire with the support of one local administrative support staff, and in Honduras, the National Coordinators for Guatemala also coordinated the Honduras activities.

In each country, Policy Working Groups or Technical Working Groups were established consisting of national partners. The main partners of the Project include governments’, employers’ and worker’s representatives, as well as labour market institutions, statistical offices, research institutions in the target countries. There were supported by several national and international consultants and local experts in the countries, recruited as required. One Ministry in each country has the responsibility of country-level activity coordination as well as liaison with the ILO, but in general, several ministries were included.”⁹

⁹.

⁸ The evaluator did not have access to further information about those meetings.

⁹ ILO, 2020: Terms of Reference for the Final Independent Evaluation “Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies,” pages 5-6.

1.2 Evaluation purpose and scope

The evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR)¹⁰ outline the **evaluation purpose** as follows:

“The evaluation serves the following primary purposes:

- Provides an independent assessment of progress on the achievement of the Project’s development objective, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis the strategies and implementation modalities chosen and project management arrangements
- Provides strategic recommendations¹¹, highlights good practices and lessons learned.

This and all evaluations in the ILO are expected to promote accountability and institutional learning. Evaluation aims to understand why – and to what extent – intended and unintended results were achieved. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking and organizational effectiveness.

Moreover it:

- Contribute to improving project performance and towards organizational learning
- Helps those responsible for managing the resources and activities to enhance development results from the short term to a sustainable long term
- Assesses the effectiveness of planning and management for future impacts
- Supports accountability by incorporating lessons learned in the decision-making process of project stakeholders, including donors and national partners.

Scope:

The evaluation covered all components of the Project and investigated the coherence and linkages among these vis-à-vis the Project's development objective. The evaluation integrated gender equality as a cross-cutting concern through its methodology and all deliverables, including the final report”.

The ToR explain that a next phase of the Project is currently being developed together with the EC. While building on the work of the first Project, the follow-up project will primarily focus on supporting the EC's investment activities through strengthening the potential of sector development, skills matching and improving the overall employment performance in Sub Saharan Africa due to donor priorities. This geographic change justifies the final evaluation's geographic focus on Africa, while the data collection exercise was broadened to all other project countries. Besides, the mid-term evaluation covered the Philippines and Guatemala. The project-related activities were also evaluated in Guatemala as part of an on-going EVAL cluster evaluation.

¹⁰ ILO, 2020: Terms of Reference, Final Independent Evaluation “Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies,” page 6-7.

¹¹ Recommendations relevant to ILO’s Programme and Budgets and its organizational strategies https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/programme-and-budget/WCMS_565196/lang--en/index.htm

COVID-19 disease affecting the evaluation scope

Given that no field visits were possible for the duration of the evaluation due to the public health emergency following the spread of the COVID-19 disease, the evaluation needed to take mitigation measures. The global public health emergency resulted in limitations such as travel restrictions, a very significant reduction in available national and international flights, quarantine or restrictions in meetings. Those restrictions applied for Switzerland and project countries.

A reduction in the depth of the evaluation by focusing on three project countries in Africa through field visits was mitigated by extending the breadth of the geographic coverage through interviews and an online survey, while maintaining a deeper assessment of project results in three project countries in Africa. The evaluator discussed and agreed on this approach with the Evaluation Manager, the Departmental Evaluation Focal Point, and the Evaluation Manager during an inception call.

How does the COVID-19 pandemic affect the final project evaluation?

As stated above, data collection in focus countries was less extensive due to the annulation of field visits and mitigated by also including other project countries in the data collection process. As such the evaluation approach and methodology also required adaptation. The evaluation questions remained unchanged. The kick-off meeting with the project team showed that the pandemic might have influenced the perception of project results, as national priorities might have shifted towards addressing COVID-19 risks. However, the latter was only partly the case.

1.3 Evaluation methodology and approach

In line with the expression of interest for this final evaluation, the evaluator proposes to use a **theory-based evaluation approach**. The suggested approach addresses the expected time-lag between the mainly knowledge-based and capacity building related results of the Project and the Project's overall objective: "to strengthen the capabilities of country partners to analyse and design sectoral and trade policies that would enhance employment creation in terms of quantity and quality."¹²

Tried and tested

The approach was successfully used in recent evaluations for international organizations, including the ILO in 2018 for an EC-funded project¹³. "A theory-based evaluation specifies the intervention logic, also called the "theory of change" that is tested in the evaluation process. The theory of change is built on a set of assumptions around how the project designers think a change will happen. Logically it is linked to the project logframes and its assumptions listed in section 3 of the project document. From an analytical viewpoint, the theory of change goes beyond the requirements of a standard logframe and allows for more in-depth analysis. The project team designed a project theory of change following the mid-term evaluation.

¹² Considering the national policy processes might be required to assess how the project might have strengthened capability

¹³ Engelhardt, A./ILO 2018: Independent Midterm Evaluation. ILO Projects. 1) Improving Indigenous peoples' access to justice and development through community-based monitoring (GLO/16/24/EUR), and 2) Promoting indigenous peoples' human development and social inclusion in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (GLO/16/23/EUR).

Figure 3 outlines the theory-based evaluation approach, using a concept developed by the University of Wisconsin.

Figure 3: Concept of theory-based evaluation



Source: University of Wisconsin, modified, design A. Engelhardt 04/2020
www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html

Added value

The added value of theory-based evaluation is that it further elaborates on the assumptions behind the Project, as well as linkages between outputs, outcomes, and impact, including indicators. Besides, the approach highlights stakeholder needs as part of situation analysis and baseline. The approach includes analyzing the projects' response (activities and outputs) to the problem followed by a results analysis¹⁴.

The final evaluation was based on a rigorous triangulation of data. The cancellation of initially foreseen field visits due to the global public health crisis related to the COVID-19 disease at the time of the final evaluation was actively mitigated through a broader country coverage, as explained above. Besides, the following selection of tailored evaluation tools and processes was applied. Annex 1 presents the evaluation matrix¹⁵.

- a. **On-line kick-off meeting** with the evaluation manager, the Departmental Evaluation Focal Point, and the project team to discuss:
 - Project background,
 - Project stakeholders,
 - Key documentation,
- b. **Desk review** of project documentation and relevant materials such as i) the project document; ii) the project logframe, iii) the mid-term evaluation; iv) project publications; and v) monitoring and other progress reports to the donor;
- c. **Telephone interviews** with the project team and other relevant ILO staff in Geneva;
- d. **Online survey** for project beneficiaries in all nine project countries;
- e. **Skype interviews** with project implementation partners, the donor, and ILO staff based in decentralized offices (WhatsApp or telephone were alternative channels to reach stakeholders);
- f. **Presentation of emerging evaluation findings** in person (public health situation allowing) to the evaluation manager and the project team in Geneva following data analysis;
- g. **Draft report** shared with evaluation manager, DEFP and EVAL (prior to circulation to all stakeholders) for factual and substantive comments and input to be consolidated by the EM, as well as for feedback to the project team, department, concerned Regional and Country Offices, donor, other related stakeholders (factual validation / correction and substantive comments)
- h. **Finalization of evaluation report and presentation** to the evaluation manager, the project team and other stakeholders for finalisation, focusing on conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned, and best practices.

¹⁴ Ibid, page 6.

¹⁵ While the Senior Evaluation Officer (SEO) from EVAL might not be present during all meetings/calls of the evaluator with the evaluation manager and Departmental Evaluation Focal Point, the SEO will be fully informed about each step including receiving an invitation.

For the rating of project results, the evaluator used EVAL's 6-point scale, as presented in Annex 4. **Where stakeholder perception ratings are used for the evaluation, those are aligned to the 6-point scale, as shown below.**

- 6/6 = highly satisfactory (83,4% to 100% for stakeholder perception ratings)
- 5/5 = satisfactory (66,8% to 83,3% for stakeholder perception ratings)
- 4/6 = moderately satisfactory (50,1% to 66,7% for stakeholder perception ratings)
- 3/6 = moderately unsatisfactory (33,4% to 50% for stakeholder perception ratings)
- 2/6 unsatisfactory (16,8% to 33,3% for stakeholder perception ratings)
- 1/6 = highly un satisfactory (0% to 16,7% for stakeholder perception ratings)

When calculating the stakeholder perception rates, the evaluator excluded the ratings which the project team provided to prevent any bias.

The evaluation reached a total of 116 people, including project stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The persons consulted include 82 out of 219 stakeholders (37,4% response rate) through an online survey in English, French and Spanish¹⁶. The evaluator undertook interviews with 15 stakeholders in ILO HQ, ILO country offices and National Project Coordinators, including 3 staff of the project team.

In the focus countries for this evaluation, eighth stakeholders were reached in Ghana, seven stakeholders in Cote d'Ivoire and four in Morocco.

As suggested in the ToR, the evaluation consultant applied standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and progress towards sustainability and impact of project outcomes.

The evaluation questions are listed in detail in the evaluation matrix in Annex 4. The evaluation answered the following main evaluation questions:

The evaluation questions follow the OECD/DAC international evaluation criteria, adapted to the ILO context. The ToR identified the following seven evaluation criteria:

- i) **Relevance and strategic fit** – the extent to which the objectives are in keeping with Sub-Regional, national and local priorities and needs, Constituents' priorities and needs, ILO policies, results framework (e.g. P&B and SDGs), departmental strategies and approaches of the Employment policy department and the donor's priorities for the Project countries;
- ii) **Validity of design** – the extent to which the project design, logic, strategy, and elements are/ remain valid vis-à-vis problems and needs;
- iii) **Effectiveness** - the extent to which the Project can be said to have contributed to the development objectives and the immediate objectives and more concretely whether the stated outputs have been produced satisfactorily; in addition to building synergies with national initiatives and with other donor-supported projects and project visibility;

¹⁶ The response rate to the online survey administered in English reached 45,2% (Ghana, the Philippines, Myanmar and Rwanda). The response rate to the online survey in French was 24.7% (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire and Morocco), while the response rate to the online survey administered in Spanish reached 50% (Guatemala and Honduras).

- iv) **Efficiency** - the productivity of the project implementation process taken as a measure of the extent to which the outputs achieved are derived from efficient use of financial, material and human resources;
- v) **Effectiveness of management arrangements**
- vi) **Progress towards impact** - positive and negative changes and effects caused by the Project at the Sub-Regional and National levels, i.e., the impact with Social Partners and various implementing partner organisations;
- vii) **Sustainability** – the extent to which adequate capacity building of Project stakeholders has taken place to ensure mechanisms are in place to sustain results and whether the actual results are likely to be maintained beyond project completion.

Besides, gender is addressed as a cross-cutting issue.

This evaluation complied with UN norms and standards for evaluation¹⁷ and ensured that ethical safeguards concerning the independence of the evaluation were followed¹⁸.

1.4 Sampling strategy

The project team proposed to select Ghana (or Benin), Cote d'Ivoire, and Morocco as focus countries for this evaluation based on the accessibility of project stakeholders, availability of communication channels and project management arrangements. Besides, the donor stressed its interest in countries particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa in line with donor priorities, as those are the scope of the next phase of the project, currently under negotiation. The evaluator cherishes this selection of focus countries.

Complementing the ToR and in agreement with the Evaluation Manager, the Departmental Evaluation Focal Point, and EVAL during an inception call in March 2020, the final evaluation took a broader sampling strategy. As mentioned above, this approach aimed to mitigate the cancellation of field visits during the global public health crisis in 2020.

The outreach to all project countries also mitigated any possible bias of the focus country selection. Concerning the choice of focus countries in Africa, it is important to state that in Benin and Rwanda, national coordinators were no longer project staff, which impacted on the level of cooperation for accessing project stakeholders and beneficiaries. Besides, both countries lack an ILO office, which further complicated support for this evaluation. Those practical and logistical considerations affected the choice of focus countries in Africa.

As such, the final evaluation focused on a broader group of project stakeholders in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Morocco with telephone interviews. The evaluator interviewed selected project partners in the other six project countries, including senior country office staff. Beneficiaries from all project countries were contacted through an online survey, to the extent that contact data was available. While learning would concentrate on countries selected by the evaluator for in-depth review based on recommendations by the project accountability for the work in all project countries would still be ensured.

¹⁷ UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards (2016): <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

¹⁸ UN Evaluation Group code of conduct (2008): <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

1.5 Limitations

COVID-19

During the preparation for this evaluation, a global health crisis erupted with the World Health Organization declaring the COVID-19 disease a pandemic on 11 March 2020. As a result, travel and meeting restrictions applied in Switzerland and across the globe. Consequently, the evaluation manager revised the ToR for this evaluation, stating the field visits would no longer be feasible. The evaluator had a chance to discuss this exceptional situation during an inception call with the Evaluation Manager, the Departmental Evaluation Focal Point, and the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL). This section summarizes the following mitigation measures as a result of the above-mentioned inception call:

- Replacement of the field visits by remote engagement with the project implementation partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries;
- Extension of the geographic evaluation scope from three project countries with emphasis on Africa to all nine project countries also covering Central America and Asia;
- Broadening the evaluation scope to cover all documented project beneficiaries through an online survey.

This approach was based on the assumption that project implementation partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries can be reached by telephone, Skype or WhatsApp. Sufficient internet connectivity and stable electricity supply in the interview partners places of work or their homes¹⁹ were a per-requirements for this assumption to hold.

The project team indicated in the kick-off meeting that the time-leg since the end of project implementation in September 2019 in most project countries might affect access to project stakeholders and beneficiaries. This turned out to be correct.

Evaluation scope

As stated in the inception report, the evaluation ToR focused on breadth rather than depth. This choice strongly affected the analysis of evaluation criteria and issues under review, given the vast number of evaluation questions. The chosen evaluation scope resulted in less possibilities to collect in-depth data on the topics under evaluation. Besides, while data collection from all project countries allowed for collecting a broad base of results, the number of respondents per country does not allow for an in-depth country comparison.

Project monitoring data

STRENGTHEN undertook regular monitoring and reporting based on the project's activity-based logframe indicators. The project results for example concerning stakeholders' use of knowledge or the application of tools are not captured through those indicators. In this context, the evaluation had to rely on stakeholder perceptions and missed an important element for triangulation.

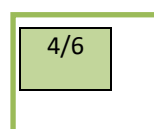
¹⁹ At the time of writing this evaluation report, many governments have limited the freedom of movement of their citizens due to the global health crisis. In those circumstances, many citizens are required to telework from home.

Section II: Findings

2. Relevance and strategic fit: was the project doing the right thing?

Key findings: The project was relevant and fitted strategically to the national decent work situations, the ILO policies and Agenda 2030.

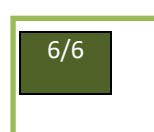
- The project contributes to SDG 8: “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” and indicators 8.2, 8.3 and 8.5.
- The approach to linking the project to other initiatives seems less systematic and shows uneven success, depending also to the extent country offices were involved in the project implementation.
- The relevance of the project to the national context of project countries is given, reaching 75% for institutions’ needs and priorities and 81% for project countries’ employment policies and development frameworks.
- The evaluation finds that the project design focused strongly on gender equality in some countries such as Benin, Cote d’Ivoire or Guatemala while it did less so in others, depending on the country context.
- A contribution shows to the 2020-2021 Programme and Budget, output 3.1 “Increased capacity of member States to formulate and implement a new generation of gender-responsive national employment policies, including for youth”. It also contributed to one CPO in each of the nine project countries
- The project is also aligned to three out of the four areas of work of the ILO Employment Policy Department’s Development and Investment branch DEVINVEST
- STRENGTHEN benefits from a comprehensive Theory of Change with a logical results chain. However, at least two out of the five key assumptions show a high risk of not materializing.



criteria²⁰.

The evaluation finds that the relevance of the project is moderately satisfactory (4/6) based on EVAL’s 6-point scoring methodology. In two out of six sub-criteria the program shows satisfactory or highly satisfactory relevance, while the relevance is less satisfactory for the remaining four sub-

2.1 Alignment to global/national decent work situation and priorities and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda



The project contributes to at least one SDG and three SDG indicators. As such, the evaluation finds that the project is aligned to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, despite the fact that the project as designed before the adoption of the agenda in 2015.

²⁰ For section 2.1: 6/6, section 2.2: 4/6, section 2.3: 5/6, section 2.4: 4/6, section 2.5:4/6 and section 2.6: 3/6.

The project contributes to SDG 8: “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

- Indicator 8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
- 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

Section 2.3 provides insights into the project’s alignment to national decent work situation and priorities.

2.2 Link to other UN or donor activities

4/6

This section analyses the link of STRENGTHEN to other development cooperation activities and the connection to United Nations Development Assistance frameworks (UNDAF) in project countries with uneven results.

Since its launch, the NPCs and ILO field staff, to the extent country offices and Decent Work Country Teams were involved in the project implementation²¹, searched for linkages to other ongoing initiatives in the area of trade and employment with varying success. In countries without ILO country offices, this endeavour was further challenged. Examples from two countries are listed below. Overall the results are moderately satisfactory, given the less systematic approach to linking the project to other initiatives.

Linkages to other activities: In Honduras, where the national employment policy was not developed in a tripartite process, STRENGTHEN cooperated with another EU funded project. In this context, STRENGTHEN coordinated with EUROSociAL+, in the area of social dialogue to enhance the quality of the employment policy. EUROSociAL+ accompanies Honduras in several reforms of its public policies to enhance social cohesion.

EUROSociAL is a cooperation programme between Latin America and the European Union which seeks to contribute to improving **Social Cohesion in Latin American countries**, as well as to institutional strengthening through support to their processes for the design, reform and implementation of public policies. It focuses its action on the areas of gender, governance and social policy.

EUROSociAL is currently in its third stage of implementation. This stage is led by the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies of the Spanish Development Cooperation. It is planned to last five years and have an implementation level of €32 million.

The programme is organized into three action areas: **Gender, Governance and Social Policies**.

Source: https://www.fiiapp.org/en/proyectos_fiiapp/eurosoci-al-programa-para-la-cohesion-social-en-america-latina/

²¹ Not all ILO country offices were involved to the same degree in the implementation of the project.

In the Philippines, STRENGTHEN engaged with the EC-funded Generalized Scheme of Preference (GSP+) project on Freedom of association. The ILO implements GSP+ focusing on Effectively Implement International Labour Standards and Comply with Reporting Obligations.²²

Linkages to UNDAF: The search of UNESCO’s Planpolis database²³ for UNDAF or United Nations Partnership Assistance frameworks (UNPAF) showed results for ILO involvement relevant to the project in three of the nine project countries: Ghana, Morocco and Rwanda. In all other project countries, UNDAFs were in place prior to the project start or contained incomplete data, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: UNDAF references to project related issues in nine project countries

Country	Area	ILO among other UN agencies	Source
Ghana	Outcome 2: Competitive private sector generates decent jobs that increase opportunities for more inclusive economic growth	OK	Government of Ghana and UN in Ghana, 2018 : United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership (UNSDP) 2018 – 2022 Ghana
Morocco	Product 1.2 The convergence of public policies and national strategies, from their conception to their evaluation, is attained at national and regional levels	OK	Royaume du Marco, Nations Unies Maroc, 2017 : Plan cadre des Nations Unies d’aide au developpement (UNDAF) 2017-2021
	Product 5.5 Institutional mechanisms promoting decent employment, entrepreneurship and employability are in place and operational	OK	
Rwanda	Output 1.4: Private and public institutions have the requisite technical and financial capacity to create decent employment, foster skills development, empower and promote entrepreneurship and financial inclusion for all, especially women and youth	OK	UN, 2017 : United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAF) 2018 to 2023 for Rwanda
UNDAF in place prior to the project start or incomplete data			
Benin	UNDAF in place prior to the project start	Not applicable	Gouvernement du Benin, Nations Unies Benin, 2013 : Plan cadre des Nations Unies pour l’Assistance au Développement - UNDAF 2014-2018 République du Bénin
Cote d’Ivoire	UNDAF in place prior to the project start	Not applicable	Gouvernement du Cote d’ivoire, Nations Unies Cote d’ivoire, 2012 : Plan cadre des Nations Unies pour l’Aide au Développement UNDAF révisé 2013-2015 Côte d’Ivoire
Honduras	Results framework without indication of roles for UN agencies	Not applicable	Sistema de Naciones Unidas, 2016. Marco de Asistencia de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo. Honduras 2017-2021
Guatemala	UNDAF in place prior to the project start	Not applicable	Gobierno de Guatemala, Naciones Unidas en Guatemala, 2014: Marco de Asistencia de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo - UNDAF 2015 - 2019
Myanmar	UNDAF in place prior to the project start	Not applicable	Government of Myanmar, United Nations Myanmar, 2011 : United Nations Strategic Framework 2012-2015 UNDAF. Operationalization
Philippines	Annexes on results framework omitted	Not applicable	United Nations – Philippines, 2018 Draft Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2019 - 2023

²² https://www.ilo.org/manila/projects/WCMS_562934/lang--en/index.htm

²³ <https://planpolis.iiep.unesco.org>

2.3 Support the countries' employment policies and development frameworks

The evaluation survey and interviews enquired about the relevance of the project to project countries' employment policies and development frameworks. The results are satisfactory due to the high stakeholder ratings and the alignment to national strategies.

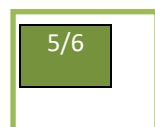


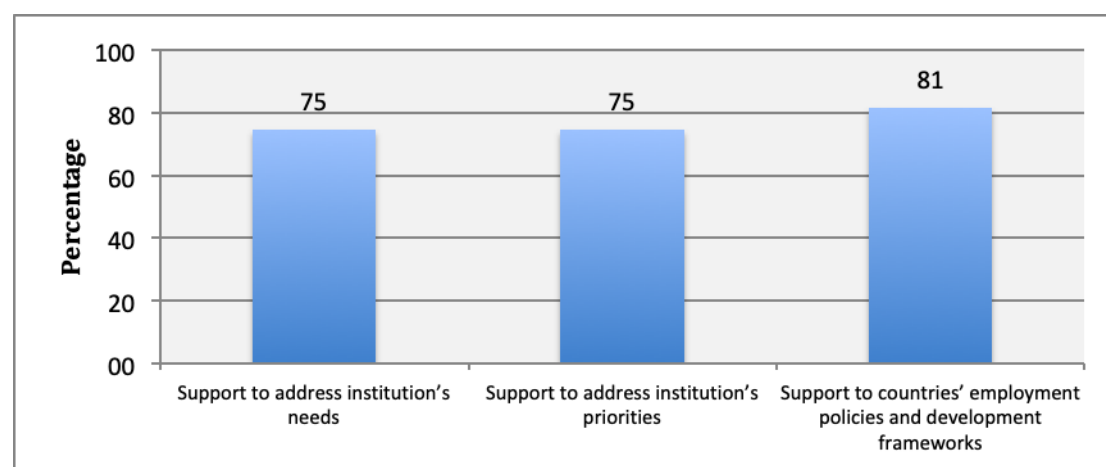
Figure 4 summarizes the relevance of the project to the national context of project countries, reaching 75% for institutions' needs²⁴ and institutions' priorities concerning employment policies and development frameworks²⁵.

The relevance of STRENGTHEN to project countries' employment policies and development frameworks got a total rating of 81%²⁶. The latter is in line with the ratings key stakeholders from Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Morocco provided in the telephone interviews. Across those three countries, there is little variations in the results presented in Figure 4.

The alignment to government policies in the cases of the focus countries is also shown below, based on interview results.

In Morocco, the project contributed in terms of alignment to the National Employment Strategy (2017-2021), the Strategy "Maroc Export (2016-2020) and the Industrial Acceleration Plan (2014-2020).

Figure 4: Relevance of STRENGTHEN to project countries



Source: Evaluation interviews, 2020

Besides, in the Philippines, STRENGTHEN contributed to the Philippine Export Development Plan (PEDP) 2018-2022.

"For the past 2 or 3 successive governments reducing unemployment has featured prominently in governments' development policy agenda. (With its) sector policies government will want to ensure that it implements what will not only grow the economy, but (...) will be an inclusive growth and development process".

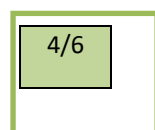
Source: project stakeholder, Ghana

²⁴ n=67

²⁵ n=66

²⁶ N=85

2.4 Contribution of project design to gender equality



The evaluation finds that the project design focused strongly on gender equality in some countries while it did less so in others, depending on the country context. Tripartite constituents were involved in the selection of the sectors, a selection which took place mainly based on national economic priorities for job creation. As a result, the ratings for this criterion is moderately satisfactory. The project included gender considerations through the selection of sectors, sex-disaggregated employment data and recommendations how to enhance the inclusion of women into the labour market.

In Cote d'Ivoire for example, the sector selected for STRENGTHEN research was manioc transformation, where women constitute 80% of producers, 100% of actors in the transformation of manioc and 90% in its commercialization²⁷.

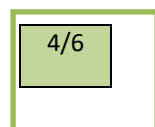
Similarly, the selection of artisanal textile as a focus sector for STRENGTHEN in Guatemala considered its high percentage of female workers in the sector, reaching 63% in the area of producers and 82% in exporters.

In the cashew sector in Benin selected for the STED and TRAVERA studies under the project, women's involvement in the transformation process is up to 90%²⁸.

However, the selection of the automotive sector in Morocco or the coco sector in Ghana seemed less guided by gender considerations but national economic policy priorities.

The TRAVERA study on the automotive sector in Morocco, for example, presented sex-disaggregated employment data. One finding related to the fact that women were often only temporarily employed for less qualified work in the value chain. However, the study does not make any recommendations how to enhance the inclusion of women.²⁹

2.5 Contribution to ILO policies and results framework



The evaluation finds that the project was aligned to the ILO's P&Bs. STRENGTHEN contributes directly to three out of the four areas of work of DEVINVEST and to CPOs in each of the project countries. However, the important linkages to project countries DWCPs are not always given, affecting the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of country level results. As a result, the evaluation finds that the contribution to ILO policies and results frameworks are moderately satisfactory only.

The 2014-2015 ILO Programme and Budget makes reference to trade and decent work under outcomes 1 and 19:

Outcome 1: More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities

Indicator 1.1: Number of member States that, with ILO support, integrate national, sectoral or local employment policies and programmes in their development frameworks.

²⁷ ILO STRENGTHEN , 2019 : Etude sur l'emploi dans les activités de transformation du manioc en Côte d'Ivoire.

²⁸ Gouvernement du Benin, 2005: Appui à la mise en oeuvre du Nouveau partenariat pour le développement d'Afrique – Programme détaillé pour le développement de l'Agriculture africaine, page 4.

²⁹ ILO, 2019 : Renforcer l'Impact du Commerce International sur l'Emploi au Maroc. Etude sur le commerce et les chaînes de valeur dans les activités porteuses d'emploi (TRAVERA) : Cas du secteur automobile au Maroc

Indicator 1.5: Number of member States that, with ILO support, show an increasing employment content of investments in employment intensive infrastructure programmes for local development.

Criteria to be met: A mechanism including government and social partners is established or strengthened to target, monitor and evaluate employment content of public investments in infrastructure within national development frameworks³⁰.

Concerning the ILO’s Programme and Budget, Outcome 19 states that “Member States place an integrated approach to decent work at the heart of their economic and social policies, supported by key UN and other multilateral agencies”, indicator 19.1³¹

The ILO’s focus on trade and employment seems to have sharpened over time. In the 2018-19 Programme and Budget Outcome 1, Indicator 1.4 refer to the “Number of member States in which constituents have strengthened capacities on pro-employment macroeconomic policies, or have developed and implemented sectoral, industrial, trade, infrastructure investment or environmental policies for structural transformation and for promoting more and better jobs and tackling inequalities”.

The 2020-2021 Programme and Budget refers more specifically to growth and employment and trade policies under output 3.1 “Increased capacity of member States to formulate and implement a new generation of gender-responsive national employment policies, including for youth”³²

In ILO’s Employment Policy Department (EMPLOYMENT), the projects is located in the Development and Investment branch (DEVINVEST). Table 2 shows that STRENGTHEN contributes directly to three out of the four areas of work of DEVINVEST:

Table 2: Contribution of STRENGTHEN to the focus areas of DEVINVEST

DEVINVEST area of work	Project contribution
1. Supporting employment-centred policies for countries in the fragile context affected by conflict and disaster to enable recovery and build resilience	
2. Supporting economic diversification and structural change for enhancing employment and productivity growth and developing programmes to maximize the employment impact of trade and sectoral policies	✓
3. Developing approaches for employment and productivity enhancements in rural economy and facilitating transition to formality,	✓
4. Supporting the planning and implementation of employment-	✓

³⁰<https://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/bureau/program/download/pdf/14-15/pbfinalweb.pdf>

³¹ILO, 2013: The Director General’s Programme and Budget Proposal for 2014-15. Indicator 19.1: National or sectoral programmes in fields such as education, health, gender equality, trade, finance, enterprise development, rural development and poverty reduction integrate decent work aspects.

³² ILO 2019: GB.337/PFA/1/1. Programme and Budget for 2020 -21. Programme of work and results framework.

More specifically, the project is also embedded in ILO's project portfolio on trade and employment.

- Component B of the project functions as the second phase of Assessing and Addressing the Effects of Trade on Employment (ETE) (DCI-HUM/2008/164791).
- In addition, the ILO has designed a technical assistance tool, Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED), to help countries align skills policies with sectoral strategies that support inclusive growth and productive employment creation in sectors affected by trade. The project applied the STED tool as an activity.

At the level of country programme outcomes (CPO), the projects contributes to CPOs in all nine project countries³³:

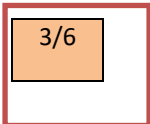
- BEN102
- MAR176
- MMR125
- PHL100
- CIV105
- GHA105
- GTM127
- RWA101
- HND135

In Guatemala, for example, STRENGTHEN coincides with strengthening the national employment policy, with two other ILO projects cooperating with the same national stakeholders as STRENGTHEN did.

However, at the operational level, the project did not engage sufficiently with the Myanmar country office, where the programming unit and the Deputy Director felt uninformed about the project. As a result, country office ownership and synergies with the DWCP were missed.

Section 4.3 on management arrangements further analysis the topic.

2.6 Validity of the project design

 Following the mid-term evaluation, the project embarked on constructing a Theory of Change. The document is comprehensive and contains the results path from activities area to impact, identifies five key assumptions and a measurement plan. The latter includes indicators and references of those indicators to the logframe. However, the latter two sections are only partly completed. Despite specific recommendations in the mid-term evaluation, the project's progress reporting remained rather activity focused as output and intermediate outcome indicators remained unchanged. The latter resulted in insufficient results-monitoring data for the final

³³ While it would have been desirable to assess the level of CPO achievement and the project's contribution to those results, this analysis was beyond the scope of the present evaluation and also not listed in the already very comprehensive evaluation Terms of Reference. The evaluator agrees that this analysis would have been useful as a way to further triangulate information.

evaluation of STRENGTHEN. Overall, those shortcomings result in a moderately unsatisfactory rating for the validity of project design.

The evaluation finds that the **results chain** is logical overall. The Theory of Changes' pathway is logical from the creation of knowledge and tools like through the application of EmplA, TRAVERA or STED to policy and program development, its institutionalization and increased coherence between sectoral and trade polices and programmes. Ultimately, the latter respond to employment challenges, promote decent work, increase competitiveness of sectors and lead to more productive and decent employment.

The project's **key assumptions** are well formulated³⁴. However, at least two out of the five key assumptions show a high risk of not materializing.

The assumption that "once 'proof of concept' and benefit of using the tools/ method etc. is seen, there is a wider uptake and partners decide to institutionalise the tools" strongly depends on the ownership of project results but probably even more so on the extent STRENGTHEN is embedded in the project countries DWCP. While the project team took risk mitigation measures to seek, for example, dialogue with ILO country offices, results seem uneven³⁵.

In Ghana for example, government seems to use EmplA for FDIs. In Guatemala, on-going ILO projects in the area of trade and employment as part of the DWCP implementation ensure continued engagement of ILO with the STRENGTHEN stakeholders even after the end of the project. Besides, an economic research institute, ICEF, adapts and adopts the EmplA tool in Guatemala, Honduras, and other countries in Central America.

In Myanmar, however, where STRENGTHEN was not embedded in DWCP activities, the above assumptions is unlikely to hold.

The second critical assumption identifies refer to the availability "of resources to implement the policies, strategies, programmes, and move from policy formulation to policy implementation".

The later seems to fully depend on national budgets and the level of ownership created for governments to take up and fund the implementation of project results.

Concerning the national budgets, this likelihood seems lower in low-income countries such as Benin or Rwanda, that in upper-middle class economies like Guatemala.

³⁴ STRENGTHEN Theory of Change assumptions:

- That sectoral and trade policies developed using the ILO proposed tools once implemented would lead to employment
- That there are resources to implement the policies, strategies, programmes, and move from policy formulation to policy implementation
- That once 'proof of concept' and benefit of using the tools/ method etc. is seen, there is a wider uptake and partners decide to institutionalise the tools
- That the knowledge sharing/capacity building mechanism will continue to be in place beyond EU funding period
- That knowledge gathered during strengthen is necessary and also sufficient to translate it into formulating robust policies, strategies, programmes that address decent jobs. That no other constrain need to be addressed.

³⁵ Systematic risk assessment and mitigation is part of the Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation System (CMES) used in some ILO interventions. STRENGTHEN did not benefit from a CMES.

The **logframe indicators** of STRENGTHEN are contained in the project document. The mid-term evaluation suggested a revision of the logframe and indicators. Subsequently, the project team engaged a consultant for this purpose, as part of the Theory of Change development. The “measurement plan” contained in the Theory of Change excel document presents two impact level indicators (on job creation and increase in exports) and one outcome indicator, which are all new.

However, the evaluation finds that the activity-driven and largely qualitative logframe indicators remained unchanged at the intermediate outcome and outputs level³⁶. This affects the utility of monitoring data and limits the evaluation of project results.

³⁶ See worksheet titled « LF PDF wACT » in the project theory of Change

3. Effectiveness: were project results achieved, and how?

This section reviews the extent to which project results were achieved based on the broader project objectives listed in the ToR³⁷ and the expected results for components A and B. The findings of this section are primarily based on interviews with key project stakeholders in ILO HQ and the three focus countries Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Morocco. The online survey with a wider group of project stakeholders such as Policy Working Group members in all project countries complements the data from interviews. As stated in the section above, project's monitoring and reporting data focuses on the activity-based logframe indicators, which are less suited for assessing the achievement of higher-level project results. The latter limits the triangulation of project results which are perception based for this section.

Key findings:

Broader project objective (% indicating degree of objectives met):

- The highest results show for the use of information exchange (88%), the use of capacity building (87%), and the use of knowledge generation (86%).
- Ratings are slightly lower for the use of results by national policymakers to optimize the employment effects of the selected sectoral and trade policies (69%), the creation of national ownership (73%), and the effectiveness in promoting and advancing national policy coherence (73%).

Expected results component A (% indicating degree of objectives met)

- Global tools supporting the **assessment of the employment impact** of sectoral policies and projects (80%).
- Global tools supporting the **formulation of effective and complementary policies** (65%).
- **Conduct of employment impact assessments EmPIA** with the help of an analytical tool developed (74%)
- Policymakers, social partners, and other relevant actors gaining the **knowledge and capacity to assess the employment impact** (73%)
- Guiding relevant actors in the **design, adjustment, monitoring, and evaluation** of sectoral policies, investments, and programmes for improving analysis of the employment perspective in development programmes (74%).

Expected results component B (% indicating degree of objectives met)

- Use of knowledge generation (86%)
- Methods improved to handle developing-country circumstances for **assessing the effects of trade and trade policies** as well as trade-related foreign investment on productive and decent employment (76%)
- Policymakers and the social partners trained on concepts and techniques for assessing the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on employment (78%)
- Trainees enabled to conduct assessments themselves on the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on employment (75%)
- Policymakers and the social partners received technical advisory services on an ongoing basis for the assessment of the employment impact of trade and trade policies (78%)
- Tripartite social dialogue and policy design enhanced ⁽¹¹⁾₍₅₈₎ the impact of trade and trade policies on employment (78%)
- Practical guidance transmitted to maximise the productive-employment effects of trade and trade policies is transmitted (80%)

³⁷ The broader objectives complementing the project document were identified in the ToR and subsequently confirmed with the evaluation manager, departmental evaluation focal point and EVAL in the inception report.

The approach to ratings presented in the methodology section applies.

The project documentation provides a rich insight into project deliverables, such as the 49 research reports. However, those documents serve less to assess the results of project on stakeholder knowledge and capacities. The Flash reports 2015, 2016, 2019 and the three Annual Reports are activity-based, in line with the logframe indicators at output and outcome level.

This finding is in line with the donor’s 2017 Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) report about the availability and quality of data for project progress.

3.1 Assessment of project performance

n/a

This section analyses the project performance. The analysis starts with answering the evaluation questions listed in the ToR about the more general effectiveness of the project covering both project components.

In the absence of results reporting beyond activity-based monitoring and based on the perceptions only of stakeholders in project countries, the evaluation finds that the effectiveness of the project cannot be assessed with sufficient methodological rigour. Instead the evaluation uses the 6-point scale shown in the methodology section to present the stakeholder perception ratings for the three rated sub-criteria. The following sections present detailed results on the sub-criteria.

3.1.1 Achievement of broader project results

5/6

Figure 5 summarizes the perception of stakeholders about the achievement of broader project objectives as requested in the ToR, with little variations across the objectives at a satisfactory level.

The highest results show for the use of information exchange (88%) and the use of capacity building (87%) and the use of knowledge generation (86%).

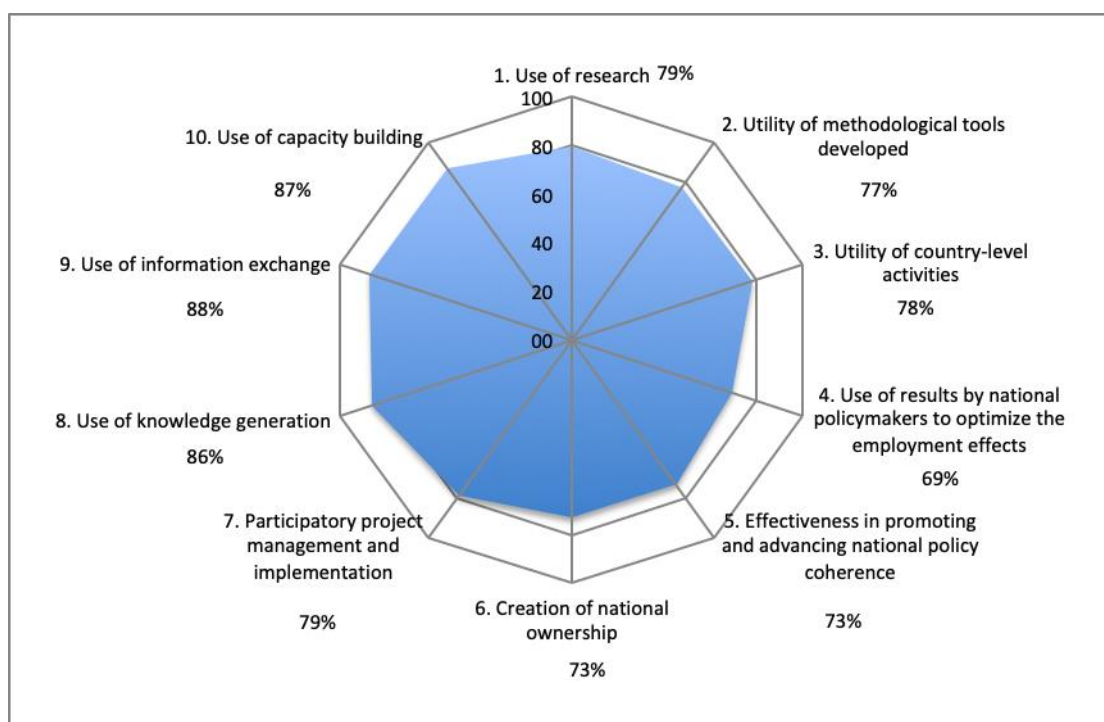
Ratings are slightly lower for the use of results by national policymakers to optimize the employment effects of the selected sectoral and trade policies (69%), the creation of national ownership (73%), and the effectiveness in promoting and advancing national policy coherence (73%).

The donor’s 2017 Results-Oriented Monitoring report found that concerning the quality of outputs, “the global studies produced by the project are significant”³⁸.

A government stakeholder in Cote d’Ivoire reported that the results of the project would be taken into account in the next national employment policy for the 2021-2025 cycle. In the meantime, however, elections have been announced in the country, which could jeopardize this achievement.

³⁸ EC, 2017 : ROM - Strengthening the impact on employment of sector and trade policies, page 5.

Figure 5: Perception about the achievement of project intentions



Source: evaluation survey and interview 2020, n= 74 for issue 1, n=73 for issue 2, n=75 for issues 3 and 7; n=67 for issue 4, n=70 for issue 5; n= 71 for issue 6; n=17 for issue 8; n=16 for issues 9 and 10.

Emerging results from Morocco are also encouraging, as shown in the box below.

"The conceptual and methodological tools developed within the framework of the project will certainly be used in the work of the labor market watch committee, which was created in 2018 to set up the mechanisms necessary for permanent monitoring of job creation and destruction at the national, regional and sectoral levels. (The use of tools is envisaged) in particular at the level of the Working Group to assess the impact of public policies, sectoral plans and strategies on employment".

Source: project stakeholder, Morocco

Another stakeholder in Cote d'Ivoire commented on the reduction of the number of actors by using the project's research tools, which enhances the coordination between government structures and ultimately facilitates the implementation of policies.

"There is goodwill to put the tools in place, knowledge has been reinforced, but several factors (political, financial, relationship between researchers and ministries) could make their implementation difficult."

Source: project stakeholder, Cote d'Ivoire

In Guatemala, government staff involved in the formulation of employment policies was trained by the project, enabling a practical application of newly acquired skills.

Stakeholders in Morocco were keen to express their perception of project results on policy coherence, as shown in the box below.

"On the whole, it can be estimated that the project contributed to promoting knowledge sharing, dialogue, and exchange and interaction between the strategies. Especially those related to international trade and employment. (This was achieved) in particular by promoting coherence between trade policies, national employment objectives, and development frameworks. (Besides, it was accomplished) by improving the employment opportunities resulting from trade policies by providing technical support for the development of professional skills and value chains in the export sector, but also the interrelationships between the departments concerned to improve coordination and, in particular, the consistency of their interventions".

Source: project stakeholder, Morocco

3.1.2 Achievement of project objectives

3.1.3 Achievement of expected project results: component A

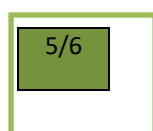
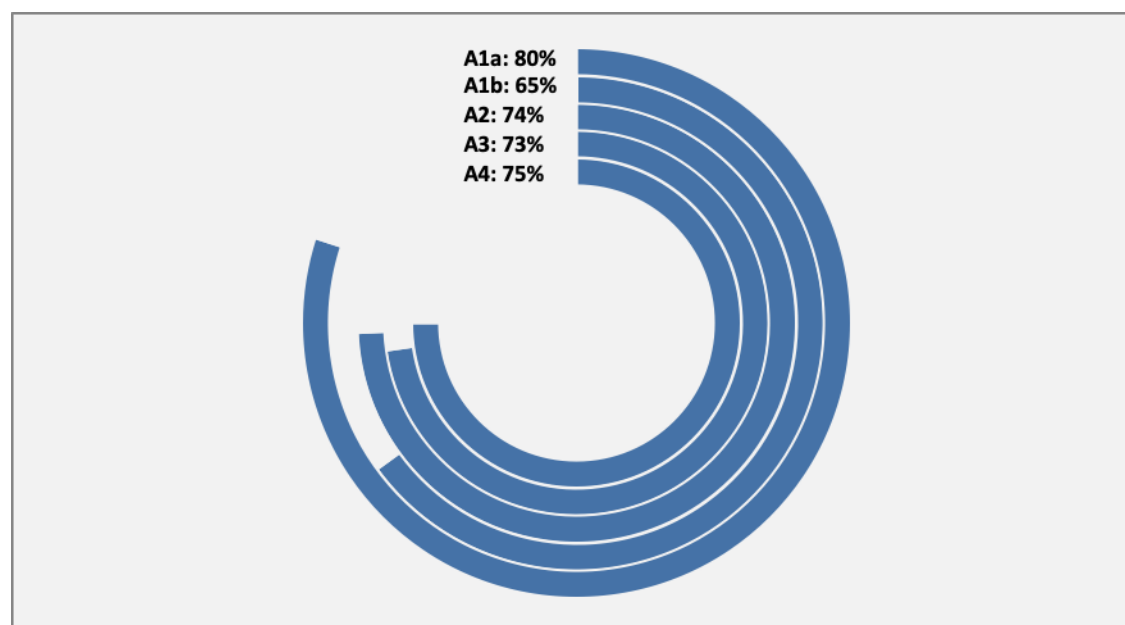


Figure 6 summarizes the achievement of expected results for component A in the focus countries Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana with overall satisfactory results. For the expected result 1, being a composite result, the evaluation broke down the analysis in two parts using two different evaluation questions³⁹. Hence, five scores are reported for the four expected results.

Figure 6: Stakeholder perception of performance in achieving expected results: component A (Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire)



Source: evaluation interviews, 2020. Key: see footnote⁴⁰

³⁹ See questions A1a and A1b in the footnote below.

⁴⁰ A1a: To what extent have global knowledge and methodological tools supported the efforts of policymakers and social partners to **assess the employment impact of sectoral policies and projects**? n = 12

A1b: To what extent have global knowledge and methodological tools supported the efforts of policymakers and the social partners to **formulate effective and complementary policies** to address employment challenges in their operations and promote decent employment? n = 12

A2: To what extent have **employment impact assessments EmpIA been conducted** with the help of an analytical tool developed for selected countries and tailor-made to selected sectoral policies? n=7

Overall, stakeholders gave similar ratings for the results achieved in both focus countries, showing in general satisfactory performance for most of the expected results. Hence Figure 6 presents the combined data for both countries based on up to 12 respondents.

Ratings only differ significantly for expected result A1b on the support to the formulation of policies to address employment challenges, and reasons are explained in the relevant subsection.

For expected result A 1 a difference shows between the extent to which global tools supported the **assessment of the employment impact** of sectoral policies and projects (A 1a, 80% results rating) and their support in the **formulation of effective and complementary policies** (A1b: 65% results rating).

Expected result A 1a

Evaluation question: To what extent have global knowledge and methodological tools supported the efforts of policymakers and social partners to assess the employment impact of sectoral policies and projects?

For the **assessment of the employment impact** of sectoral policies and projects, stakeholders confirmed the provision of tools like SAM and capacity building.

The use of SAM was an eye-opener for us. We were able to get the effect on some policies I think for cocoa (and) infrastructure - building of community toilets - and we were able to know which sector generates more jobs. (...) We were able to estimate the number of jobs and create policies around that in every sector. We were able to open our minds to global knowledge.

Source: project stakeholder, Ghana

While many stakeholders were enthusiastic about the use of the tools and the subsequent results, some problems emerged. Particularly in Ghana, the technical and mathematical skills of selected stakeholders to fully understand the methodologies were not always given. The same limitation emerged from interviews.

In Cote d'Ivoire, given the heavy delays in project implementation and the resulting reduced project implementation time, national actors have not yet put in place the project's tools, but the expectation is that they should be utile given the positive experience in the project's workshops.

The Directorate-General for Employment in Cote d'Ivoire reported that it is in the process of setting up an effective database system to assess specific employment policies, made possible by the STRENGTHEN project. Those achievements would be retained despite the end of the project.

One critical voice pointed towards the weaker linkages between ministerial staff and researchers challenge the full trust in the appropriate use of STRENGTHEN's research tools.

A3: To what extent have policymakers, social partners, and other relevant actors the **knowledge and capacity to assess the employment impact** of pre-selected sectoral policies and programmes? n=11

A 4: To what extent are Policymakers, social partners, EC development cooperation practitioners, and other relevant actors are **guided in the design, adjustment, monitoring, and evaluation** of sectoral policies, investments, and programmes for improving analysis of the employment perspective in EU development programmes? n=7

Expected result A 1b

Evaluation question: To what extent have global knowledge and methodological tools supported the efforts of policymakers and the social partners to formulate effective and complementary policies to address employment challenges in their operations and promote decent employment?

For the formulation of effective and complementary policies to address employment challenges in their operations and promote decent employment, stakeholder ratings were significantly lower in Ghana than Cote d'Ivoire.

"After the session of the project, we have not actually used the tools; it is not done in the project, but now that COVID has hit, we are going to implement what we have learned from STRENGTHEN. We are going to develop policies; we are going to look at how many jobs were lost during the lockdown so we will be able to move on from there so we can use strengthen knowledge to formulate effective and complementary policies."

"There are pockets of application for some of these tools, but it is not very extensive scale."

Sources: project stakeholders, Ghana

Some stakeholders in Ghana noted a lack of constituents' involvement and the use of consultant's outputs instead. Other stakeholders were somewhat more optimistic, as shown in the box above.

Expected result A 2

Evaluation question: To what extent have **employment impact assessments EmplIA been conducted** with the help of an analytical tool developed for selected countries and tailor-made to selected sectoral policies?

For the **conduct of employment impact assessments EmplIA** with the help of an analytical tool developed for selected countries and tailor-made to selected sectoral policies, satisfactory ratings show Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, reaching in total a results achievement rated at 74%.

Stakeholders in Ghana, for example, stressed the extensive work undertaken in that area and a good level of understating, for example, by the construction sector. The box below provides some insights into the views of stakeholders.

"We had policies before we learned about EmplIA now we are rewriting policies and projects using what we have learned".

The number of studies using these analytical tools is quite enormous. However, most of these findings are gathering dust on the shelves. We are not implementing them the way we should.

Sources: project stakeholders, Ghana

"There have been consultants who have developed models and workshops to build the capacity of technicians, so this was satisfactory. However, better ownership is needed to assess the impact on long-term employment better".

Source: project stakeholder, Cote d'Ivoire

Expected result A 3

Evaluation question: To what extent have policymakers, social partners, and other relevant actors the knowledge and capacity to assess the employment impact of pre-selected sectoral policies and programmes?

The results rating for policymakers, social partners, and other relevant actors gaining the knowledge and capacity to assess the employment impact of pre-selected sectoral policies and programmes reaches 73%.

Most comments were positive. The box below captures some stakeholder observations.

"The actors targeted by this project had good knowledge of the employment sector and businesses. They are at the heart of the job creation process. For example, the director of statistics."

Source: project stakeholder, Cote d'Ivoire

"The project gave us an opportunity to analyze the employment effect of our policies critically, but I think it should have been wider in terms of adding more social partners to it."

Source: project stakeholder, Ghana

Expected result A 4

Evaluation question: To what extent are Policymakers, social partners, EC development cooperation practitioners, and other relevant actors guided in the design, adjustment, monitoring, and evaluation of sectoral policies, investments, and programmes for improving analysis of the employment perspective in EU development programmes?

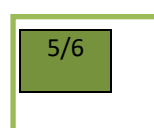
The project got 74% results ratings from stakeholders in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana for guiding relevant actors in the design, adjustment, monitoring, and evaluation of sectoral policies, investments, and programmes for improving analysis of the employment perspective in development programmes.

One example of guiding the relevant government actors is shown in the box below.

"There is one EU project here with us in the northern part of Ghana. When they designed it, they did not include what we learned from the STRENGTHEN project. We went for a meeting in the EU building, trying to assess the impact of the project and how this project has linked to other sectors in terms of the policies that are being channelled by the government and how it affects the employment levels."

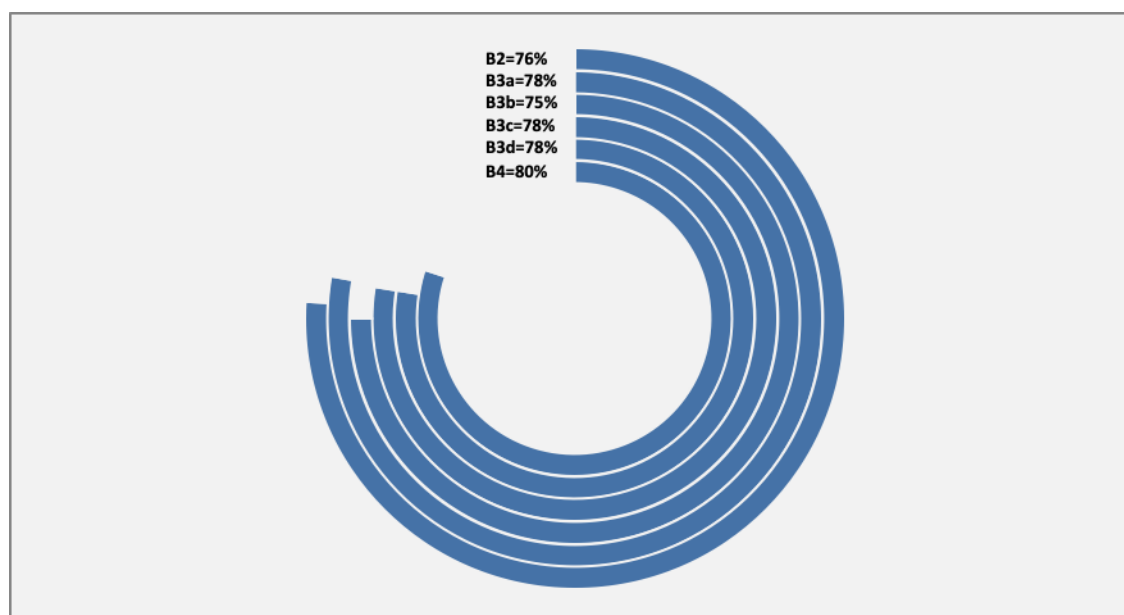
Source: project stakeholder, Ghana

3.1.4 Achievement of expected project results: component B



This section analyses the country-level results of component B in the focus countries Ghana and Morocco with satisfactory results. Expected results B 3 are broken down by four sub-criteria given its comprehensiveness. The global level results, B1, is captured in section 3.1.1, with a result of 86 % for the use of knowledge generation.

Figure 7: Stakeholder perception of performance in achieving expected country-level results: component B (Ghana and Morocco)



Source: evaluation interviews 2020. Key: see footnote⁴¹

Overall, the evaluation finds that the level of achievement of the expected results for component B was satisfactory, ranging from 75% to 80% based on stakeholder perceptions, as presented in Figure 7.

Expected result B2

3.1 To what extent are methods improved to handle developing-country circumstances for assessing the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on productive and decent employment?

The achievement of this expected result was satisfactory (76%), with some specific changes in practice reported both in Ghana and Morocco.

⁴¹ B2: To what extent are methods improved to handle developing-country circumstances for assessing the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on productive and decent employment?

B3a: To what extent were policymakers and the social partners trained on concepts and techniques for assessing the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on employment?

B3b: To what extent were trainees enabled to conduct assessments themselves on the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on employment?

B3c: To what extent have Policymakers, and the social partners received technical advisory services on an ongoing basis for the assessment of the employment impact of trade and trade policies?

B3d: To what extent is Tripartite social dialogue and policy design enhanced on the impact of trade and trade policies on employment?

B4: To what extent was Practical guidance transmitted to maximise the productive-employment effects of trade and trade policies is transmitted (e.g., ILO's STED (Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification) tool)?

"In our study, we got some of the stakeholders taking on board the findings. The Ministry of Agriculture was very enthused by our study, and they personally requested us to give them a copy of the document that we developed from the project, and they started implementing aspects of it, to that extent yes, it had some kind of impact".

"Previously, the government would enter into any trade agreement, but now such policymakers that enter into certain trade agreements should be reviewed. For example, an agreement for an assembly plant to help in the production of gas, (...) should look to increase employment, not just employment but decent employment and (...) economic growth".

Sources: project stakeholders, Ghana

"The approach to employment as a development factor has been taken seriously. Initiatives, still in the development stage, should be encouraged".

"The work carried out during this project was based on other existing ILO work in Morocco in the automotive sector, and the excellent methods allowed an improvement. However, I insist, it will be in the medium and long term that we will see the real results of such a project".

Sources: project stakeholders, Morocco

Expected result B 3a

Evaluation question: To what extent were policymakers and the social partners trained on concepts and techniques for assessing the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on employment?

The accomplishment in the first part of this expected result is satisfactory (78%). The only shortcomings reported concern the insufficient length of the training for some stakeholders and the turnover of staff sent by the constituents, the latter being beyond the control of the project.

"(Following the STRENGTHEN training) work has been carried out and is currently being updated and improved by the national labor market observatory and other ministerial departments based on empirical analyzes of the effects of trade on employment using a social accounting matrix (MCS) and the analysis of the multiplier effect".

Source: project stakeholder, Morocco

Expected result B 3b

Evaluation question: To what extent were trainees enabled to conduct assessments themselves on the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on employment?

The performance for the second aspect for this expected result was also satisfactory (75%). The boxes below provide some insights into the results achieved.

“We had a session on conducting assessments on our own, which was satisfactory. Some could carry out assessments, but others struggled”.

“We had over five series of training to use SAM and how you can use it to calculate the employment level. (...) Some people were not able to grasp it. They were not able to conduct the research on their own because of them not being there all the time (attending the entire series of training)”.

“They were not able to undertake their own assessments as training was not very participatory.”

Sources: project stakeholders, Ghana

“The trainees present did a good job, always supervised by their internship supervisor.”

Source: project stakeholder, Morocco

Expected result B 3c

Evaluation question: To what extent have policymakers and the social partners received technical advisory services on an ongoing basis for the assessment of the employment impact of trade and trade policies?

The evaluation finds that for this aspect of the expected result 3, the performance was also satisfactory (78% stakeholder perception rating). In Ghana, the project team was successful in engaging with the Office of the President. In Morocco, the project brought stakeholders together around the delivery of technical advisory services.

“Thanks to the support of the programs, political decision-makers and partners strive to create a climate of confidence (...) (to) meeting expectations and this through consultations”.

Source: project stakeholder, Morocco

Expected result B 3d

Evaluation question: To what extent is tripartite social dialogue and policy design enhanced on the impact of trade and trade policies on employment?

“The project implementation was built around the tripartite social dialogue that was the policy working group. It has representatives of workers, government, and employers, so inputs were more representative in nature, and also inputs were more holistic and (better) received. Social partners were invited to share their experiences. Also, the impact assessment was built around the same tripartite nature, so that kind of representation has an impact (...)”.

Sources: project stakeholders, Ghana

The social dialogue, which had been in place for ten years, was biased and was interrupted by (political changes). It is only very recently that we noted glimpses of hope (consultations and decision-making). The re-installment of social dialogue is progressing (...).

Source: project stakeholder, Morocco

For the above aspect of expected result 3, the accomplishment reached 78% based on stakeholder perception. The appreciation of the tripartite social dialogue was generally high.

Expected result B 4

Evaluation question: To what extent was practical guidance transmitted to maximise the productive-employment effects of trade and trade policies is transmitted [17] e.g., ILO's STED (Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification) tool?

The above-expected result got the highest ratings from stakeholders (80%), with satisfactory results both in Ghana and Morocco. Again, stakeholders noted the high turn over of trainees in Ghana.

"STED – it helps us identify the gaps and (...) identify the skills set that is needed to fill the gaps".

"The practical guidance STED tool that the consultants shared with us was very helpful and how we can take advantage of it."

Sources: project stakeholders, Ghana

"(The tripartite constituents) agreed with the need to implement all of the orientations (7 in number) from the STED study during the presentation of the final study report. These results and these orientations were confirmed by the participants at the final seminar to share the results of the project".

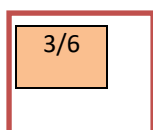
Source: project stakeholder, Morocco

4. Efficiency: were resources used appropriately to achieve project results?

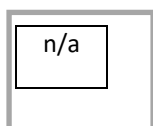
Key findings:

- The project team was cost-aware when planning project activities, for example by focusing TRAVERA and STED studies on the same sectors in the respective project countries
- Investments in a national coordinator and administrative support for component B was better value for money compared to the less coherent management arrangements across component A countries operating with consultants. . Synergies between component A and B showed particularly in Guatemala where both components were implemented.
- The project management arrangements between headquarters in Geneva with two CTAs, various models of country support reaching from project teams to consultants and the at times insufficient involvement of ILO country offices was moderately unsatisfactory
- The budget was sufficient for the project and its two components, however with an imbalance in favour of component B and comprising too many countries for a leave a deeper project footprint.
- In the context of a supply-driven nature of the project as well as the ambitious project design, the project experienced heavy delays in implementation in at least five of the project countries.
- The project team and NPC leveraged resources where opportunities appeared
- By 9 June 2020, the project's implementation rate was 98,5%
- Following the mid-term evaluation, the project team prepared a management response to also track the implementation of all seven recommendations. However, some of the recommendations implemented only partly used.

The efficiency of the project is moderately unsatisfactory (3/6) with two out of eighth sub-criteria showing highly satisfactory or satisfactory performance, while the other rated sub-criteria are less satisfactory⁴². The project is strongest on budget expenditure and weakest in the allocation of human and financial resources and realism of project timeline and timeliness of delivery.



4.1 Cost-efficiency of activities



STRENGTHEN produced three fully-fledged narrative reports and three flash reports. The narrative reports are very detailed and activity based. Cost-efficiency of activities are difficult to assess in the absence of field visits to undertake this evaluation. As a result, the evaluator did not rate this sub-criterion.

However, a concrete measure taken by the project team showing awareness of cost-efficiency was the decision taken to focus TRAVERA and STED studies on the same sectors in the respective project countries. Subsequently, resources were shared for example for the dissemination of results or technical workshops.

⁴² Section 4.1 = n/a, section 4.2 = 2/6, section 4.3 = 3/6, section 4.4 = 3/6, section 4.5 = 3/6, section 4.6 = 3/6, section 4.7 = 6/6, section 4.8 = 4/6.

In Benin for example, one technical sub-committee reviewed the ToR and proposals for both, the TRAVERA and STED study in the cashew nut value chain.

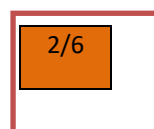
The results of the TRAVERA and STED studies in Ghana were disseminated at a joint final knowledge-sharing event in September 2019.

In Morocco, the project disseminated the TRAVERA and STED studies on the automobile sector in a joint validation workshop in July 2019.

Also, the evaluation finds that the implementation of both project components in one country created significant synergies, as shown in Guatemala. Engaging many stakeholders for both components deepened the project footprint in the country.

Section 4.7 contains general information about budget expenditure.

4.2 Allocation of human and financial resources



The project used management arrangements that differed according to the project countries. Overall, the evaluation finds that the allocation of human and financial resources was unsatisfactory. This finding is in line with the mid-term evaluation (2017) and the ROM report (2017).

Allocation of human resources:

Component A: In Rwanda the activities were managed with the support of consultants, in Cote d'Ivoire with the support of a local administrative support staff, and in Honduras the National Coordinators for Guatemala also coordinated the Honduras activities.

Component B: A national coordinator and administrative support were hired in each partner country by the ILO to manage the country level activities.

In Ghana and Guatemala, the national coordinator managed both components A and B.

The donor's 2017 Results-oriented monitoring (ROM) report critically commented on the initial allocation of human resources that "in Component A, the initial choice to have a government officer in charge of steering in-country implementation without adequate project support on-site was in line with the allocation of resources, but has not proved efficient, and has generated risks of stagnation in the project progress. Project management was flexible enough to reconsider and propose the appointment of national project coordinators in the second half of 2016"⁴³.

Overall, it seems that the investments in a national coordinator and administrative support for component B was a worthwhile investment compared to the less coherent management arrangements across component A countries operating with consultants with a very "thin" project presence on the ground in countries like Honduras and Rwanda where the project's footprint seems less deep.

Particularly for policy level engagement, the project struggled in countries like Honduras where the absence of a ILO country office further weakened the ILO's leverage to engage in policy processes.

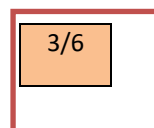
⁴³ EC, 2017 : ROM - Strengthening the impact on employment of sector and trade policies, page 4.

The final evaluation agrees with the finding at mid-term that in the countries implementing both components, Ghana and Guatemala, implementation arrangements worked best. Those arrangements allowed “joint management of activities and facilitates the organization and monitoring of country activities. Joint activities and meetings are organized and studies are conducted in smooth synergy between both components”⁴⁴

Allocation of financial resources:

The evaluation finds that the project would have benefited from better specification and assessment of needs and costs in determining the project’s resource allocation. Concerning the allocation of financial resources, the unequal budget allocation for the components (26% component A, 41% for component B) was a result of underestimating the costs for component A during project design and a limitation of the overall project budget available.

4.3 Project management arrangements



STRENGTHEN with its two components was operated with two CTAs based in Geneva. For the work in Cote d’Ivoire, a technical team member took over the management of the country component towards the end of the project to accelerate the delayed implementation.

Overall, the evaluation finds that the project management arrangements between headquarters in Geneva with two CTAs, various models of country support reaching from project teams to consultants and the at times limited involvement of ILO country offices was moderately unsatisfactory.

The mid-term evaluation already identified the challenge of underfunded country engagement for component A. Under that component, the management of two neighbouring countries by one National Project Coordinator, as in the case of Guatemala and Honduras appeared the most satisfactory management arrangement. As previously stated, the project team repurposed funds to component A where opportunities emerged following the mid-term evaluation.

However, the evaluation finds for both components the involvement of ILO country offices showed room for improvement⁴⁵. In Myanmar for example, senior staff of the country office was unaware of STRENGTHEN, as a new junior staff member in the office dealt with the CTA in Geneva. As such, the country office was unable to strategically provide the required policy support for the project and STRENGTHEN operated as a stand-alone intervention outside the DWCP portfolio, according to the senior staff in the country office. The evaluation learned a similar experience from Guatemala during an interview with senior staff from the responsible San José country office, despite the excellent cooperation with the CTA in Guatemala.

Besides, operating from countries without an ILO field presence, even large project offices such as in Ghana or Morocco face the limitation of access to the ILO systems (Integrated Resource Information System, IRIS).

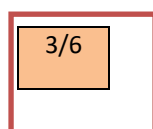
⁴⁴ ILO, 2017: Independent mid-term evaluation. STRENGTHEN, page 19

⁴⁵ The project team commented that the coordination required with the Decent Work Teams (DWT) caused coordination issues, as DWTs do not fully align with the CO structures.

The centralization of STRENGTHEN resulted in additional bottlenecks compared to if the project was managed, for example, by the country office in Algiers for the Morocco component.

Those processes resulted in delays for project implementation.

4.4 Budget structure and financial planning process



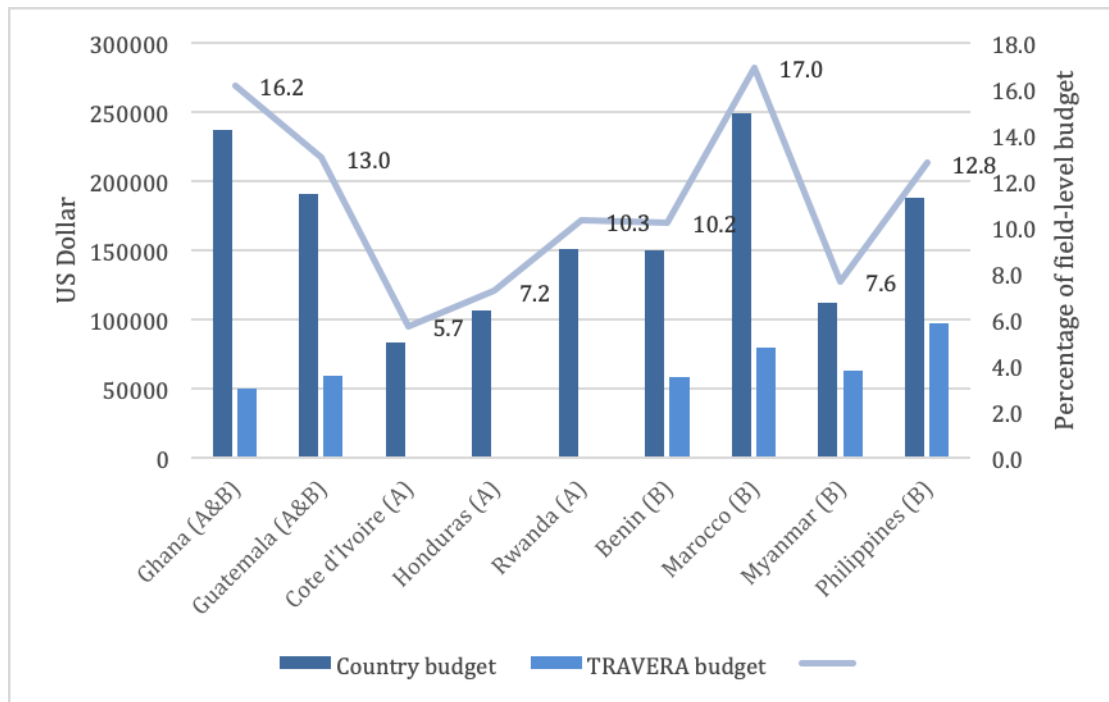
The evaluation finds that the budget structure and financial planning process was moderately unsatisfactory due to two project extensions and a sub-optimal budget distribution, as stated in the mid-term evaluation and the ROM report. Project delivery seemed to follow to a lesser degree the project planning, including financial planning, affecting the project timeline and timeliness of delivery.

The total project budget was EURO 7,600,000, EURO 6,500,000 from a EC contribution and EURO 1,100,000 contributed by ILO. The project duration was originally 48 months, extended twice, first by 12 months and then by another 6 months to accommodate additional donor requests for activities, for the use of the contingency budget and to gain additional time after a slow project start. Other reasons are listed in detail the following section on the realism of the project timeline and timeliness of delivery.

Besides, financial data shared with the evaluator in July 2020 shows that 80.7% of the project budget was spent centrally and only 19.3% (USD 1.467.180,52) in the project countries.

Figure 8 shows the breakdown of field-level budget by project countries. As expected, a peak shows for the project countries where both components were implemented, Ghana (16.2% of field level budget) and Guatemala (13% of field level budget). The peaks for the country-level budgets in Morocco (17%) and the Philippines (12.8%) can be partly explained by higher project implementation costs, as shown in the example of TRAVERA studies, which were nearly twice as high in the Philippines compared to Ghana. Also, country assessments were significantly higher in Morocco (USD 33,969) and the Philippines (USD 18.794), compared to Ghana (USD 5,016). The same applies for the costs for STED studies, which costed USD 31,574 in Morocco, compared to USD 23,896 in the Philippines and USD 7,326 for the STED study in Ghana.

Figure 8: Breakdown of field-level budget by project country



Source: Financial data for project team, 07/2020, analysis, A. Engelhardt

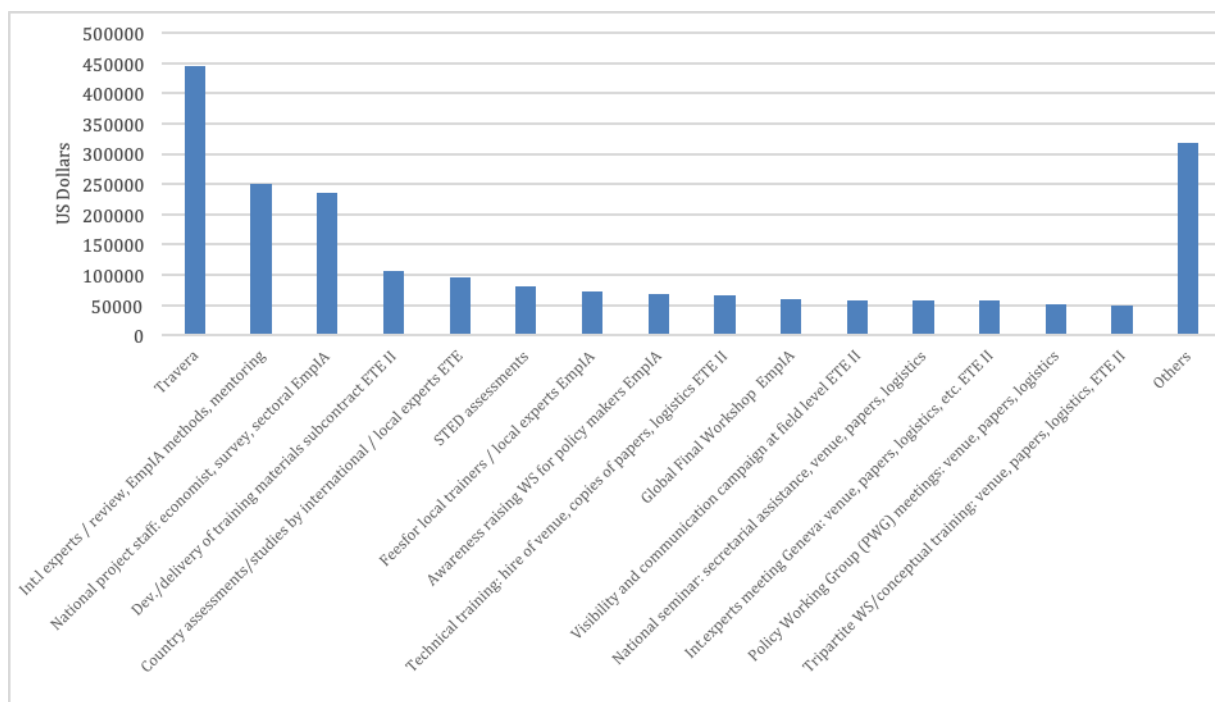
The evaluation finds that the budget was sufficient for the project and its two components, however with an imbalance in favour of component B, as shown in Figure 8. Besides, the number of countries selected for the project was too large. Favouring breadth of the project rather than depth results in a rather thin spread of the otherwise comfortable budget. Particularly in component A countries where the project underwent one phase, the evaluation finds that to some extent to project created expectations among stakeholders for a longer-term engagement, compared to the second phase of the component B countries of the project titled “Assessing and Addressing the Effects of Trade on Employment” (ETE II).

Also, the project left a deeper footprint in countries where project activities of both components were combined and more comprehensive project management structures were in place, such as Guatemala, Ghana, Morocco or the Philippines.

In Cote d’Ivoire, the project experienced serious implementation delays, requiring the project to adjust project management capacities to ensure the delivery of activities. The latter are other examples that the project was spread too thinly, affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the project.

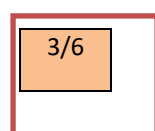
Based on the project by outputs, which the project team shared with the evaluator in July 2020, the following distribution of the budget shows (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Project budget by outputs above USD 50,000



Travera studies under component B are the output with by far the highest budget for operational expenses, logistics or monitoring costs (USD 445,243). International experts for **employment impact assessments**, including review, methodology and mentoring amounted to USD 251,144. The third major budget line for outputs concerns **national project staff** with USD 236,515, followed by the development and delivery of training materials under component B (USD 106,756). Figure 9 presents the other budget lines by project outputs above USD 50,000.

4.5 Realism of timeline and timelines of delivery



The project started in October 2014 and STRENGTHEN recruited National project Coordinators in the course of 2016⁴⁶, nearly 2 years into the 4-year project in the case of Benin, Ghana and Guatemala. Those implementation delays seem significant, resulting in a moderately unsatisfactory rating.

The reasons for the severe delays in the project implementation are manifold, often beyond the control of the project⁴⁷:

- **Country selection and establishing protocols:** At the time of signing the agreement, the ten partner countries were not agreed upon yet between the ILO and EU. These were agreed upon only afterwards, which took longer than expected. The development of a protocol with the EC on how to inform the partner countries of the project took one year. This protocol involved colleagues from ILO HQ in Geneva, DEVCO in Brussels, the ILO Country Offices and the EU Delegations. Only after establishing the protocol scoping missions to the partner countries were possible.

⁴⁶ Morocco (Jan 2016), Philippines (April 2016), Ghana (June 2016), Guatemala (July 2016) and Benin (August 2016).

⁴⁷ Data sources for the findings are project interviews, the online survey and the document review (ILO, 2018 : Rider/Amendment to contract. Strengthening the impact on employment of sector and trade policies.)

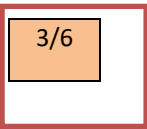
- **Recruitment of the project team:** due to the time required to establish the protocol and delays in scoping missions, the project’s national staff were recruited 14 to 28 months after the project began. In partner countries without ILO offices, it took a while due to administrative reasons for local project offices to be set up and start functioning.
- In several countries, the time required to establish the **Policy Working Groups or Local Project Teams** also took longer than expected. The process of briefing the stakeholders, agreeing on the membership, inviting the relevant members and establishing these bodies has proven to be time consuming but is an important element of building support for the project. In some countries this process has taken 6 to 8 months, significantly longer than was foreseen in the project schedule.
- **Country-specific issues:**
 - In Myanmar, a new government was elected in the project’s first year and at the same time the ILO’s Myanmar Liaison Officer (Country Director) retired. It was not until June 2016 that the new Liaison Officer (Rory Mungoven) took over.
 - In Morocco, the project (as well as all EC-funded initiatives) was suspended in the second year because of political tensions between the EU and Morocco concerning Western Sahara. These issues were documented in the project’s Narrative Reports to the EC. The eventual project extensions were granted by the EC with these early issues in mind.

Besides, the mid-term evaluation identified the supply-driven nature of the project as well as the ambitious project design involving originally 10 countries as reasons for those heavy delays. The final evaluation confirms this finding.

In the case of Cote d’Ivoire, the heavy delays in the implementation of project activities was one of the main limiting factors identified in telephone interviews with project stakeholders.

Based on the above findings, the evaluation finds that realism of timeline and timeliness of delivery were both moderately unsatisfactory.

4.6 Leveraging of resources

 The evaluation ToR include a question on the leveraging of additional resources. The evaluation was unable to quantify the leveraging of resources in monetary terms. Given that results in leveraging resources were not documented and evidence rather uneven, the evaluation finds that the leveraging of resources was moderately unsatisfactory.

While the project reporting did not specifically document the leveraging of resources, the evaluation found some cases, as explained below. STRENGTHEN used the 18th ILO Regional Seminar for Labour Based Practitioners in Tunisia (September 2019) as a platform to host a special session on the Employment Impact Assessment of Infrastructure Investments, reaching approximately 350 infrastructure specialist and practitioners.

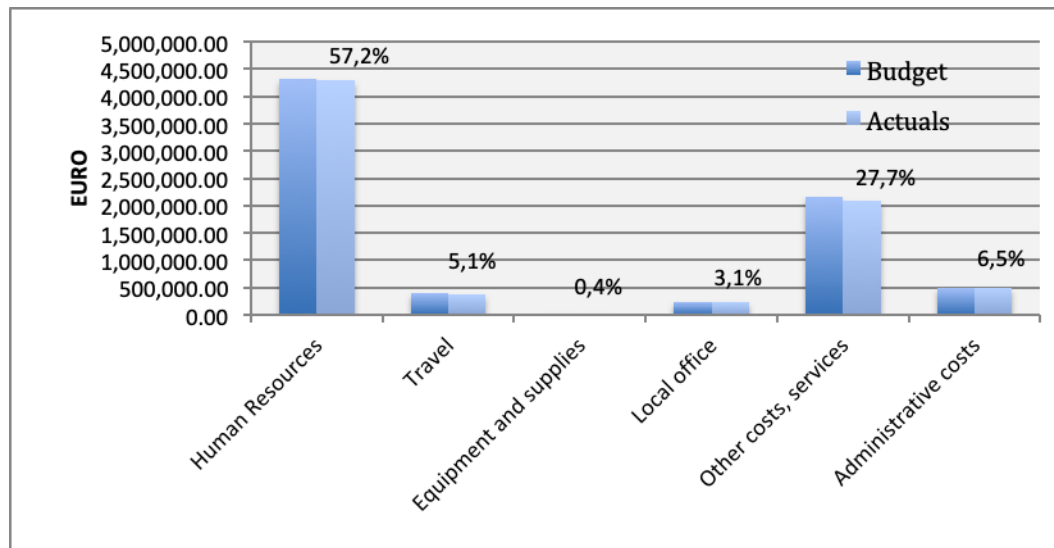
Besides, section 2.2 stated that in the Philippines, STRENGTHEN engaged with the EC-funded Generalized Scheme of Preference (GSP+) project on Freedom of association for joint activities. In Honduras, STRENGTHEN cooperated with another EU funded project, EUROsociAL+, in the area of social dialogue.

4.7 Budget expenditure

6/6

By 9 June 2020, the project's implementation rate had reached 98,5%⁴⁸. As a result, the evaluation finds that the budget expenditure is highly satisfactory. Figure 10 summarizes the STRENGTHEN budget and actuals corresponding to donor funding as of 9 June 2020.

Figure 10: STRENGTHEN – Donor budget and actuals, 9 June 2020



Source: Project team

57,2% of the donor-funding (EU) was spent on human resources, 5,1% on travel and 0,4% on equipment and supplies. Costs for local offices corresponded to 3,1% of the donor funding, 6,5% to administrative costs and 27,7% to other costs and services.

4.8 Implementation of mid-term evaluation recommendations

4/6

Following the mid-term evaluation, the project team prepared a management response to also track the implementation of recommendations dated December 2017. The rating for this sub-criterion is moderately satisfactory, given that the tracking of the implementation of recommendations was discontinued and some of the recommendations implemented only partly used.

The analysis of the management response sheet shows that the project team considered all seven recommendations. The project team identified actions required to act upon the recommendations, including the responsible ILO unit, resource implications and progress made.

After December 2017, no more tracking appears of the evaluation recommendations. The evaluation found evidence about the subsequent partial implementation of recommendations, which is explained in two examples below.

⁴⁸ The source for this data is an excel file provided by the project team titled: "STRENGTHEN Financial Report".

Based on the example of the recommended development of a Theory of Change, the project team contracted a consultant reconstructing such a Theory at a good quality.

Concerning the revision of logframe indicators, the evaluation finds that two new impact indicators and one outcome indicator was identified after the mid-term evaluation.

However, the mainly activity-based indicators for outputs and intermediate outcomes were not revised. The final evaluation finds that the project missed the opportunity to make the project monitoring more results-oriented.

5. Impact: are results having a long-term effect?

This section analyses the impact of the project. As for the section on effectiveness, the findings of this section are primarily based on interviews with key project stakeholders in ILO HQ and the three focus countries Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Morocco. The online survey with a wider group of project stakeholders such as Policy Working Group members in all project countries complements the data from interviews. The triangulation of data is completed by the document review using the project's technical publications and other publicly available documentation from sources such as the EC, other development projects and national governments.

Principal data sources used in this section are evaluation interviews and the online survey.

Key findings: Up to nine months after the end of the project in most project countries, it is too early to assess STRENGTHEN's impact

- While the COVID 10 pandemic is likely to affect the project's long-term results due to changes in policy priorities across the globe, even in "normal" circumstances, an assessment would require a time-leg of 5 to 10 years after the end of the project to evaluate any impact on objectives like job creation.
- Project stakeholders provide high satisfaction ratings about the changes in their capabilities.
- Interviews showed that it seems too early to tell whether changes in policy and programming will materialize, which would be one factor influencing the achievement of higher-level project objectives such as enhanced employment or attracting international trade.
- As a result, the high ratings given for the project's contribution to enhanced employment and improvements in attracting international trade need to be interpreted with caution, with an average of 59% of respondents not answering the question

n/a The evaluation finds that it is too early to assess the likelihood of impact, given the recent end of the project implementation. While the COVID 10 pandemic is likely to affect the project's long-term results due to changes in policy priorities across the globe, even in "normal" circumstances, an assessment would require a time-leg of 5 to 10 years after the end of the project to evaluate any impact on objectives like job creation.

5.1 Long-term changes

n/a Figure 11 summarises the project contribution to changes in capacities and practices based on the perception of stakeholders captures in the online survey and telephone interviews.

A slight difference emerges between the changes in capabilities and the changes in practices leading to enhanced employment or attracting international trade, as shown in the variation between highly satisfactory and satisfactory ratings. In this context, only 41% of respondents rated those criteria in the online survey, many with the comment that it is too early to tell longer-term changes.

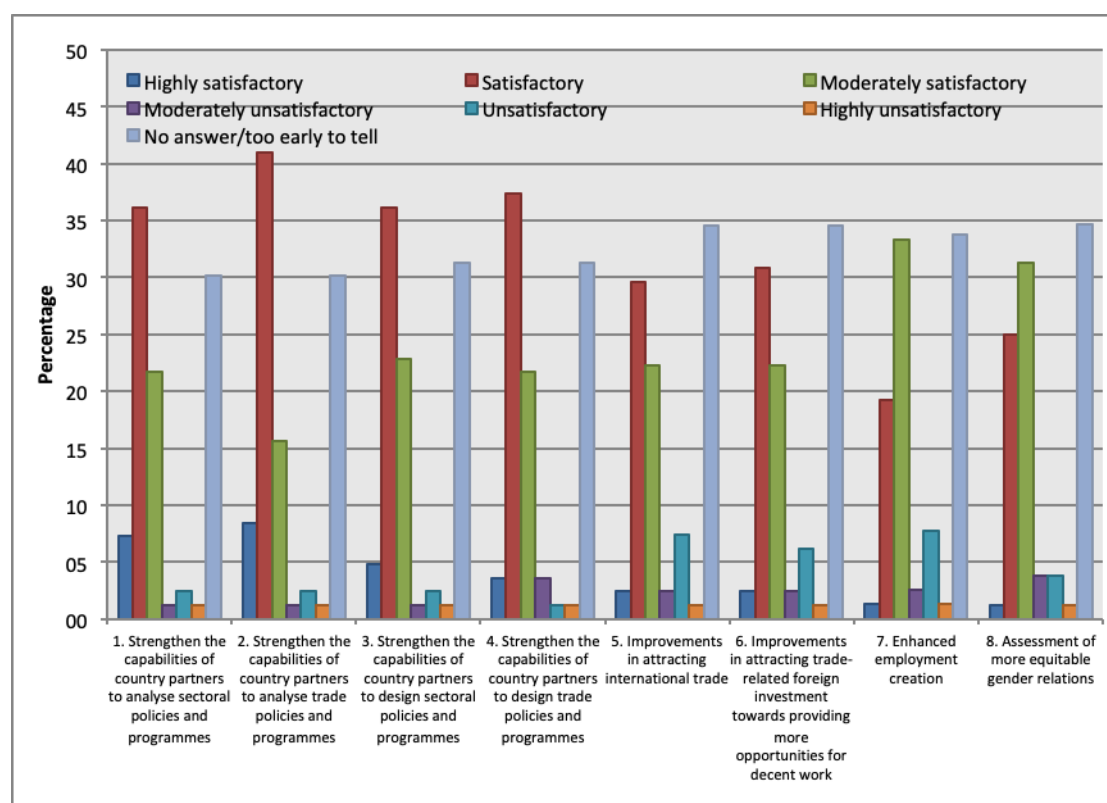
"It is still too early to see visible results in improving job creation.

"What has really changed is the collaboration between different employment structures which has been improved. Hence, the actors work together and share data and information more fluidly. International workshops also helped to share experiences".

Source: project stakeholder, Cote d'Ivoire

Also, the interviews showed that it seems too early to tell whether changes in policy and programming will materialize, which would be one factor influencing the achievement of higher-level project objectives such as enhanced employment or attracting international trade. As a result, the evaluation treats the survey results about changes beyond improved capabilities rather cautiously⁴⁹.

Figure 11: Contribution of STRENGTHEN to changes perceived by project stakeholders



Source: evaluation survey, n= 78 (Criterion 1), n=83 (criteria 2,3,4 and 5), n=81 (criteria 5 and 7); n=80 (criteria 8)

In the case of Ghana, the number of direct project beneficiaries seems to range between 30 and 60, particularly among the key stakeholders comprising the research community, government, private sector, ministry of labour, ministry of agriculture, and ministry of housing. In other countries, stakeholders were more hesitant to state the number of direct project beneficiaries.

Concerning stakeholder capabilities, the likelihood of project impact seems highest in Guatemala, Ghana and Morocco. This assessment considers high level political buy in

⁴⁹ At the time of the final evaluation, no specific policy developments were detected, which could have a long-term impact based on the countries development experience and on the development plans.

(Ghana), the project implementation in a cluster of complementary projects with a stable group of stakeholders (Guatemala) and the strong alignment to government economic policies (Morocco). Progress in Benin and Cote d'Ivoire is promising. However, institutional arrangements are highly complex in Cote d'Ivoire with two ministries of youth with competing and overlapping competences. In Benin, access to stakeholders was challenging during the project implementation.

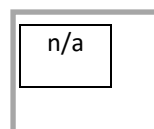
"This project has come at just the right time in Benin because it will improve a lot within the (cashew) value chain, especially with regard to investors".

"Overall, the project made it possible to strengthen the development cycle of policies and programs related to international trade, which help to promote job creation in both qualitative and quantitative terms. It will contribute to provide more decent work opportunities and to increase the number of workers in productive employment through international trade".

"The involvement of (the local academic research partner), which specializes in statistical matters, was a precious asset. The figures noted after the surveys gave the necessary overview and identified the support needs".

Source: project stakeholder from Francophone countries in Africa

5.2 Long-term effects on gender equality



As stated in previous sections, the gender lens of the project mainly depended on the selection of sectors for the research studies. Depending on the national context and the priorities of tripartite constituents, the project embarked on the studies such as STED and TRAVERA for the selected sector with a varying focus on a gender perspective.

If governments decide to prioritise sectors for the implementation of employment policies in employment-intensive value chains such as manioc transformation (Cote d'Ivoire), artisanal textile (Guatemala), or cashew transformation (Benin), then the impact on women would be disproportionately high. In this uncertain context, the evaluator did not rate the sub-criterion.

Manioc value chain – Cote d'Ivoire

In Cote d'Ivoire, the manioc value chain comprises an estimated 425.000 fully time jobs⁵⁰, 4,7% of the national employment with a minimum of 340.000 jobs held by women⁵¹.

Figure 12: Manioc commercialization, Cote d'Ivoire



⁵⁰ Value chain analysis for development VCA4D/EC, 2018: La chaîne de valeur manioc en Cote d'Ivoire

⁵¹ Based on a minimum participation of 80 percent, based on project results: women are 80% of producers, 100% of actors in the transformation of manioc and 90% in its commercialization.

Source: Victoria Bancal, Value chain analysis for development VCA4D/EC, 2018 : La chaîne de valeur manioc en Cote d'Ivoire, page 2

Social impact

The manioc value chain is socially sustainable, but with significant room for improvement. The main positive is the contribution of cassava in its various forms to food and nutrition security.

The involvement of women in the value chain gives them leadership power and financial autonomy. The living conditions of the populations, in terms of access to infrastructure, housing, and drinking water, are gradually improving in the areas where cassava-related activities are developing. Cassava also provides employment in rural areas.

However, great precariousness and insecurity of access to land for producers threaten these positive impacts, also risks to the social sustainability of the value chain.

Source: Value chain analysis for development VCA4D/EC, 2018 : La chaîne de valeur manioc en Cote d'Ivoire, page 4

Artisanal textile value chain – Guatemala

The project's TRAVERA study in the artisanal textile sector in Guatemala⁵² shows the importance of the sector for women, particularly in rural areas with importance for indigenous populations.

The TRAVERA study showed that 82% of workers in the export of artisanal textiles are women, as are 63% of artisanal producers and 56% of providers of raw material. For 68% of artisanal producers, salaries paid in the sector are above the average.

44% of workers in artisanal textile production and 62% of workers in export have either no or an incomplete primary education, offering employment also for workers with less formal education. Besides, 74% of exporters are between 15 and 29 years of age, adding a significant youth employment potential. Unfortunately, there are no statistics on the employment numbers in artisanal textile in Guatemala⁵³. The evaluation only found the total number of exporting artisans, beyond the textile sector amounting to 25.000 for 2016⁵⁴. Even at the conservative estimate that only 50% of artisanal producers are engaged in the textile sector, up to 20.500 women could benefit from the government's prioritization of the sector for the implementation of employment policies in this employment-intensive value chain.



Source: ILO, 2019: Informe de consultoría: Comercio y cadenas de valor intensivas en el empleo (TRAVERA). El caso de la artesanía textil en Guatemala- Photo: Creaciones Miriane

⁵² ILO, 2019: Informe de consultoría: Comercio y cadenas de valor intensivas en el empleo (TRAVERA). El caso de la artesanía textil en Guatemala

⁵³ ILO 2020 : Documento de trabajo No. 18. Estudio sobre el comercio y cadenas de valor intensivas en el empleo (TRAVERA). El caso de la artesanía textil en Guatemala

⁵⁴ Gobierno de la Republic de Guatemala. Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales: Proyecto: PAISAJES PRODUCTIVOS RESILIENTES AL CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO Y REDES SOCIOECONÓMICAS FORTALECIDAS EN GUATEMALA. Anexo 4: DIAGNOSTICO DE LA CADENA DE ARTESANIAS

Cashew value chain – Benin

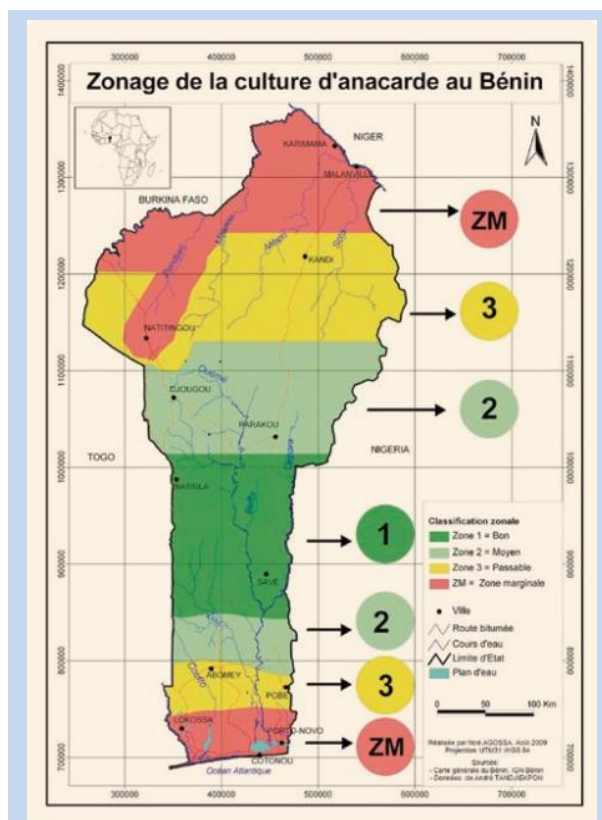
In Benin, an estimated 14.226 workers were engaged in the cashew transformation in 2008⁵⁵. Based on export figures for 2014⁵⁶ which are similar to the 2008 data, the number would be similar for 2014.

With up to 90% of women engaged in this part of the value chain, up to about 12.800 women could benefit from the government's prioritization of the sector for the implementation of employment policies.

Despite the slightly outdated export figures, the above data can indicate the project's potential gender impact.



Source: African Cashew initiative, 2010: Analysis of the Benin cashew sector value chain, page 28.



Source: African Cashew initiative, 2010: Analysis of the Benin cashew sector value chain, page 23.

Gender is a major issue in the cashew value chain, with socio-cultural factors varying from one region to another. Access to land is a major constraint for women and non-natives. (...) Inheritance laws are more favourable towards men, depriving women of the land and consequently of the possibility to start a plantation. Ninety-five percent of plantations belong to men (...) Men do the work of planting and maintenance, as it requires a great deal of physical effort. Women are more involved in harvesting, sorting, drying and transporting the produce home. Both men and women market the raw nuts, but the women are better at primary nut procurement. In processing, women are more often owners of small-scale processing units, because investment costs are lower, and more workers in the semi-industrial and industrial units are women. Overall, marketing and distribution of processed products is the work of women, who have market and consumer expertise.

Source: African Cashew initiative, 2010: Analysis of the Benin cashew sector value chain, page 25

⁵⁵ African Cashew initiative, 2010: Analysis of the Benin cashew sector value chain. http://www.africancashewinitiative.org/files/files/downloads/aci_benin_gb_150.pdf

⁵⁶ <https://benin.opendataforafrica.org/emcqbqg/statistiques-agricoles-benin>

The project study on the cocoa processing in Ghana made a recommendation about the employment of youth and women in all job categories. The study recommends that providing child care facilities or allowance by the companies could also increase the interest of women to work in technical jobs even if work takes place in shifts⁵⁷.

Concerning the public housing sector in Ghana, with an involvement of less than 1% women, the project study recommends the employment of women in administrative jobs, as well as engineers and project managers.⁵⁸

The two studies addressed employment effects disaggregated by gender, age, locality, informality and skills.

The background study on the agriculture and agro-processing sector in Ghana⁵⁹, however, omits gender in its recommendations, as does the important section about the review of the agro-processing sector.

⁵⁷ ILO/STRENGTHEN, 2019 : Assessing the Employment Effects of Processing Cocoa in Ghana.

⁵⁸ ILO/STRENGTHEN, 2019 : Assessing the Employment Effects of Investment in Housing in Ghana

⁵⁹ ILO/STRENGTHEN, 2017: Background study on Employment in the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Sectors in Ghana

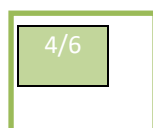
6. Sustainability: are results lasting?

The findings of this section are primarily based on interviews with key project stakeholders in ILO HQ, the three focus countries Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Morocco and senior staff in ILO country office relevant for the project countries⁶⁰ (Algeria, Costa Rica, Myanmar, Nigeria Philippines and Tanzania).

The online survey with a wider group of project stakeholders such as Policy Working Group members in all project countries complements the data from interviews.

Key findings: the likelihood of sustainability depends on making financial resources available to replicate the research tool in other sectors and to systematically upscale their use through embedding project tools and processes in national systems.

- Stakeholders perceive the likelihood of durable project results as satisfactory but depending on the decision-makers who have received the benefits of the project
- The key strengths positively affecting the likelihood of project results sustainability are the multi-stakeholder approach even beyond ILO's traditional tripartite approach, including academia and line ministries complementing the Ministry of Labour
- The key weakness negatively affecting STRENGTHEN's sustainability is the limited sector scope per country given the large number of project countries and the room for even enhancing the comprehensiveness of the multi-stakeholder approach by systematically including civil society organizations
- Opportunities emerge from applying research tools such as STEED or TRAVERA in other sectors with the potential of trained academic partners rolling out training in their countries
- The more STRENGTHEN was embedded in a DWCP or a programmatic approach, the higher the likelihood that the ILO can provide some kind of follow-up of the project
- External risks to the project's sustainability are the mobility of trained stakeholders and political instability
- COVID 19 pandemic and constituents' response to the health crisis could change constituents' priorities in the project countries
- That most significant advancement of gender-related needs is due to the selection of sectors for the research studies, reaching potentially over 350.000 women in countries like Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guatemala.



The evaluation finds that the likely sustainability of project results is moderately satisfactory (4/6)⁶¹. The likelihood of replicating good practices is highest, while internal project risks most affect the sustainability of the project results.

6.1 Durability of results, likelihood of upscaling

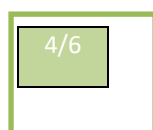


Figure 13 shows the project stakeholders' perception of the sustainability of project results. The general durability of project results got a satisfactory

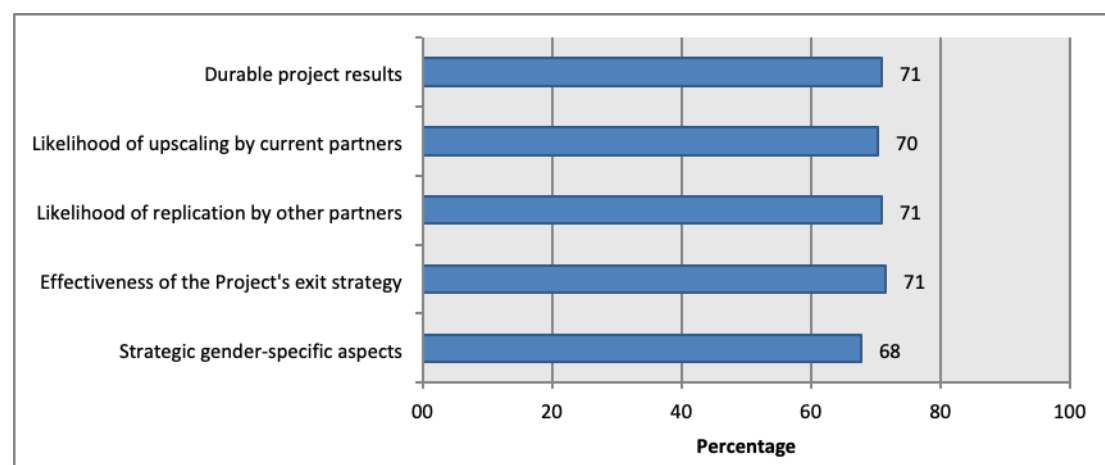
⁶⁰ The ones responding to the invitation for a telephone interview.

⁶¹ Section 6.1 = 4/6, section 6.2 = 5/6, section 6.3 = 3/6, section 6.4 = 5/6

rating of 71%⁶², as do the likelihood of replication of other partners⁶³ and the effectiveness of the project's exit strategy⁶⁴.

The likelihood of up-scaling project results by current partners achieves a rating of 70% and the sustainability of gender-specific aspects 68%.

Figure 13: Aspects of the sustainability of project results



Source: project survey and interviews

Overall, the evaluation interviews indicate that the sustainability of results will depend on the decision-makers who have received the benefits of the project.

In Cote d'Ivoire, academia involved in the project implementation could play a role in replicating and up-scaling research activities, depending on the availability of government funding. However, the length of the project was insufficient for the government to take financial ownership.

Currently, the academic project partner in Guatemala is adapting and adopting the project's research tools for roll out across Central America.

The following paragraphs outline the strengths and weaknesses of the project that influence its sustainability in the evaluation's focus countries Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Morocco (see Figure 14 and Figure 15).

Concerning the strengths of the project, in all three focus countries, the multi-stakeholder approach beyond the ILO's traditional tripartite structure seems to influence the sustainability of project results positively. The approach of engaging academia and line ministries beyond the Ministry of Labour such as the ministries of Youth in Cote d'Ivoire is noteworthy.

In Cote d'Ivoire, the project achieved institutions to join forces equipped with a common approach in a highly complex institutional context. Stakeholder judge that the partnerships created and capacities built are additional sustainable aspects of the project, apart from the tools and studies.

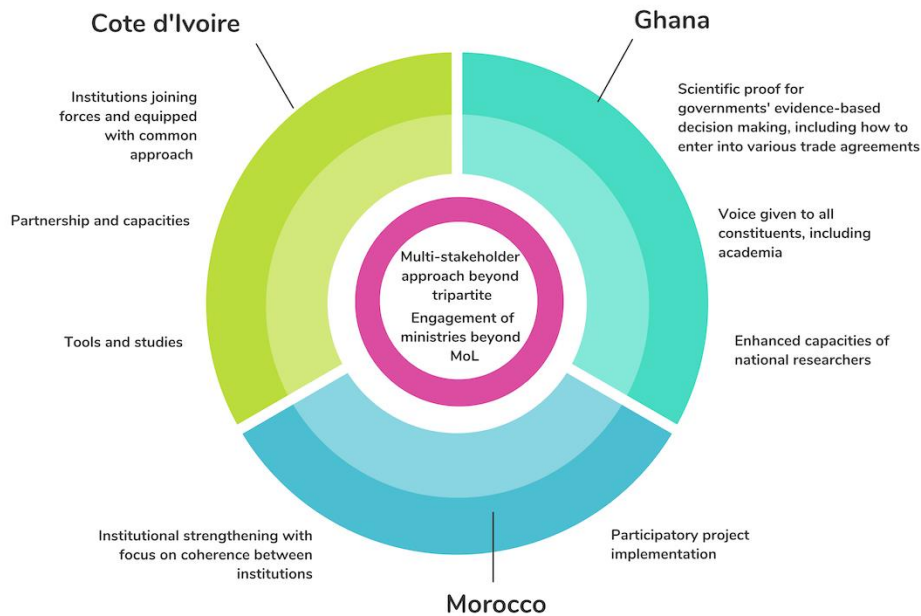
⁶² n=70,

⁶³ n=72

⁶⁴ n=68

Stakeholders in Ghana mentioned the importance of having scientific proof that facilitates government decision-making, for example, about how to enter into trade agreements. In this context, the capacity built for national researchers seems another lasting element of the project. Stakeholders also appreciated the empowerment of constituents, as the project offered them a platform and a voice for active engagement.

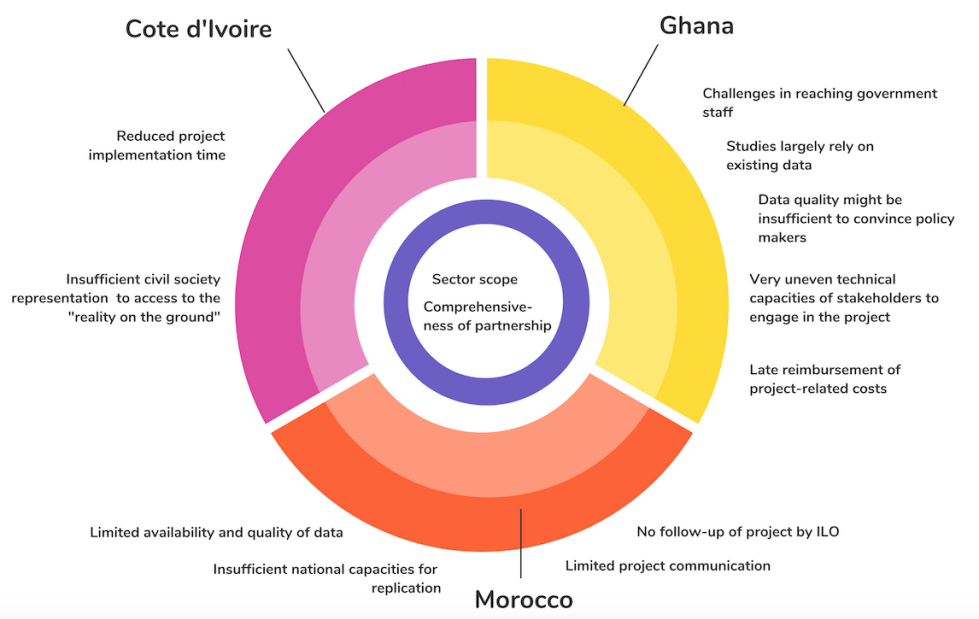
Figure 14: Strengths of the project influencing its sustainability



Source: evaluation interviews and survey 2020

In Morocco, stakeholders also stressed the importance of institutional strengthening with a focus on creating coherence. Besides, the participatory project implementation had an empowering effect on stakeholders.

Figure 15: Weaknesses of the project influencing its sustainability



Source: evaluation interviews and survey 2020

Concerning the weaknesses of the project, stakeholders in all three countries would have welcomed a greater depth of the project in their countries with a scope comprising more sectors. More sectors per country could have been covered if less project country had been targeted.

Besides, the multi-stakeholder approach could have been even broader, involving also civil society organizations.

Stakeholders in Cote d'Ivoire regretted the reduced project implementation time of 18 months for this 66-month project in the country. Also, some stakeholders noted a limitation in the access to the realities outside the capital Abidjan, as civil society organizations were less involved in the project's multi-stakeholder approach.

The evaluation finds that in Ghana, the project struggled to reach relevant government staff due to the staff's competing priorities. The availability of data and its quality can also influence the validity of project studies and weight to influence lasting policy change. Interviews showed the uneven technical capacities of stakeholders to benefit from the project fully. While some stakeholders would have desired a more hands-on engagement in the application of research tools, others admitted that they did struggle to understand the basic concepts behind the research tools. A similar situation showed in other countries like Guatemala.

Some stakeholders commented on the limited visibility of the project while other stressed challenges in reimbursing project-related costs, both aspects less related to the sustainability of results.

"It is a shame that we did not have the opportunity to work more on the research ourselves. I would have appreciated the opportunity"

"I did not know my own role in the project when I went to meetings. I didn't get the employment assessment part of the project."

Source: Project stakeholders in a focus country

In Morocco, the limited data availability and shortcomings in its quality emerged, as in the case of Ghana. Besides, stakeholders noted that project communication was limited. The sustainability of project results is in question, as national capacities seem insufficient for the replication of studies, and the ILO is no longer engaging with the stakeholders through other cooperation channels. The latter is, in fact, happening in Guatemala, where the ILO continues engaging with STRENGTHEN stakeholders through other related ILO projects.

6.2 Potential to replicate good practices

5/6

Stakeholders interviewed in the three focus countries were enthusiastic about the opportunities STRENGTHEN created to replicate the use of research tools.

In all three countries, opportunities emerge from applying research tools such as STEED or TRAVERA in other sectors with relevance for significant employment creation.

Stakeholders suggested that trained project participants such as academic partners could roll out training in their countries to advance with STRENGTHEN-related capacity building.

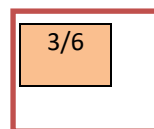
However, such a training of trainers approach was not systematically included in the project design.

Opportunities, opportunities! There are so many opportunities for replication!

Source: Project stakeholder in focus country

For any follow-up project of the donor or the ILO, multiple opportunities emerge to deepen the engagement with the project countries and the partnerships established during STRENGTHEN.

6.3 Risks affecting sustainability



The evaluation finds that risks affecting the sustainability of STRNGTHEN's results are both external and internal. The rating provided for this criterion refers to internal risks only, given that the external risks are beyond the control of the project. The ratings for managing those internal risks is moderately unsatisfactory, as shown below.

Internal risks

The more STRENGTHEN was embedded in a DWCP or a programmatic approach, the higher the likelihood that the ILO can provide some kind of follow-up of the project. In countries like Myanmar or Rwanda, where the project operated rather on a “stand-alone” basis, this is unlikely to happen⁶⁵.

Partnerships with other donor-funded projects like in Honduras enhance the likelihood that at least some components of the project might be sustained. In Guatemala, it was the engagement of the NPC, rather than the systematic inclusion of the project into the DWCP portfolio, that enabled a programmatic approach around employment creation and trade.

External risks

The evaluation finds that in the focus countries, staff mobility and political instability are a threat to the sustainability of project results. In Cote d'Ivoire, for example, elections are upcoming in 2020.

At the end of the project, following capacity building and delivery of sector studies, the sustainability of results is in the hand of political decision-makers. Ultimately, governments need to allocate funding to the application of the research tools.

Despite the projects' successful multi-stakeholder approach in some countries, the level of institutional change, staff rotation, and the competition between ministries threatened the partnerships established. In Cote d'Ivoire, for example, the competition between two ministries of youth was and remains a bottleneck for any attempt of institutional coherence for youth employment.

⁶⁵ However, the project team observed a shift in Rwanda, where the project did indeed start on a bit of a stand-alone basis. Though, this situation changed, with the CO getting more and more involved and, in the end, STRENGTHEN aligning more closely with the employment mainstreaming activities of the CO.

Besides those critical risks, the COVID 19 pandemic and constituents' response to the health crisis could change priorities in the project countries at the expense of engaging in project tools and processes.

6.4 Exit strategy

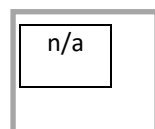


As presented in Figure 13, ratings for the project's exit strategy are satisfactory, reaching 71%.

For the exit strategy, stakeholders, for example, in Cote d'Ivoire, praised the projects' final strategy workshop for outlining how the project would end. The project team also organized final workshops in the other project countries, [guiding constituents towards sustainability of the achieved results](#).

The evaluation finds that the project's approach for communicating and practically leading its closure through final workshops, summarizing STRENGTHEN results in project countries and providing an outlook about the future use of the research tools was an appropriate exit strategy.

6.5 Advancement of gender-related needs



Stakeholders provided satisfactory ratings for the advancement of gender-related needs (68%). However, the evaluation finds that many stakeholders did not perceive any specific gender component of the project for example in its capacity building events. Often, stakeholders referred to the participation of women in the project's capacity building events and workshops, which only partially addresses gender issues in beneficiary countries in a broader sense⁶⁶. Hence the evaluator does not rate this criterion.

The evaluation finds that the most significant advancement of gender-related needs is due to the selection of sectors for the research studies, as mentioned in other sections. Now it is up to the governments and its development partners to implement priority employment policies in those sectors, with a high potential for over 350.000 women in countries like Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guatemala.

⁶⁶ One stakeholder commented that providing capacity development for an equal amount of female participants as part of ILO Project activities is important to strengthen female participation in decision making, which is expected to improve gender focused implementation of the activities.

Section III: Conclusions and recommendations

7. Conclusions

Based on the main findings summarized in the boxes at the beginning of the findings sections for each evaluation criterion, the following conclusions emerge. The report transparently presents the logic between the main evaluation findings and conclusions Figure 15.

Relevance: The relevance of STRENGTHEN is largely given.

Global alignment

Contributions showed to SDG8, output 3.1 of the 2020-2021 P&B, and work areas of ILO's Employment Policy Department's Development and Investment branch DEVINVEST.

Alignment at country level

The project contributed to CPOs in all project countries.

Embedding the project in the DWCPs of ILO COs and linking it to other development partners' projects highly depended on the project team's engagement with ILO COs in project countries. In some countries, the project seemed to operate in isolation.

Mid-term evaluation

Project planning was strengthened following the mid-term evaluation while monitoring could have further enhanced as a result of the mid-term evaluation.

Efficiency: The efficiency of the project was mixed.

Project design

The supply-led project design was overambitious and spread resources too thinly across too many countries.

Management arrangements

The project's governance structure proved rather complex and limited the project's efficiency.

Project implementation

During project implementation, the project team and its NPC's were cost-aware and opportunity-driven.

Mid-term evaluation

The mid-term evaluation added value to address shortcomings in the project design and initial implementation of STRENGTHEN but recommendations on results-oriented monitoring were insufficiently implemented.

Effectiveness: The evaluation is inconclusive about the project's effectiveness due to missing data to triangulate project results. Based on stakeholder perceptions, STRENGTHEN was effective in achieving its expected results and broader objectives.

Impact: It is too early to assess the impact of STRENGTHEN.

While stakeholders in project countries improved their capabilities in applying STRENGTHEN's research tools, it is too early to assess changes in programming, policy, and, ultimately, the impact of STRENGTHEN on employment and attracting international trade.

Sustainability: The sustainability of project results is largely beyond the control of the ILO.

Either governments need to budget for the systematic integration of project tools into national systems or additional donors support is required to ensure the sustainability of project results.

The project's multi-stakeholder approach beyond the traditional tripartite engagement was a key success factor with room even systematically to reach out to civil society organizations.

A reduced country coverage allowing for more sectors to be researched per country would have been beneficial.

The project created a basis for academic partners and consultants to replicate the training in the project research tools in project countries and beyond.

Based on the project's theoretical reach, the benefits for women are significant in some project countries mainly due to the selection of sectors and value chains relevant to women.

8. Recommendations

Following the main findings and the conclusions, the evaluator makes eight recommendations. Again, the logic between main evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations is transparently presented in Figure 16. The recommendations are valid more generally for the regular work of DEVINVEST.

Relevance

Recommendation 1: DEVINVEST: Country-level projects should be consulted with the Director or Deputy Director of the respective ILO Country Office for discussions in the Country Office's programming team to ensure a close alignment to the DWCP.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: medium, particularly requiring additional coordination time

Recommendation 2: DEVINVEST: The project design of any new project should include a Theory of Change to strengthen project planning. Logframe indicators should be results rather than activity oriented, as a means to enable results-based management and to facilitate evaluation.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: medium

Efficiency

Recommendation 3: DEVINVEST: In case policy level engagement is required in a project, investments in a national project coordinator and administrative support are required to ensure appropriate country-level implementation. For technical engagement, the use of consultants might be sufficient.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: high if national project coordinator and administrative support are required for policy outreach, low in case of national consultants for technical engagement

Recommendation 4: DEVINVEST: When planning for a new project, the number of project countries should be established with realism to allow for efficient project management. The depth of engagement at the country level should be prioritised over the geographic breadth of the news phase. For STRENGTHEN, five to six project countries rather than the initial ten countries would have been more appropriate to allow for efficient project management and leaving a significant foot print in all project countries.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: neutral

Recommendation 5: DEVINVEST: For the selection of countries for any future phase of the project or a follow-up project, priority should be given to the countries engaged in STRENGTHEN. Any other countries should be selected based on a country needs assessment, an assessment of the project's relevance to the

respective countries' development plans in the donor's priority region and following consultations with ILO country offices' senior staff and engagements with the concerned country stakeholders to gauge demand for the project.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: neutral

Effectiveness and sustainability:

Recommendation 6: DEVINVEST: When planning a project, a multi-stakeholder approach should be considered beyond the tripartite constituents, including line ministries complementing the Ministry of Labour in selected sectors, academia and civil society organizations.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: medium, particularly requiring additional coordination time

Recommendation 7: DEVINVEST could consider including a training of trainers' module for each capacity development tool implemented in a project to systematically enable the replication of trainings after the end of the project.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: medium

Recommendation 8: DEVINVEST is encouraged find a balance when selecting sectors for any future phase of the project or a follow-up project which are relevant for women and men, as in STRENGTHEN but also to promote gender equality and inclusion in sectors who have traditionally been dominated by a specific gender.

Priority: very high. At project design.

Resource implications: neutral

Figure 16: Summary of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations

	Key findings of the STRENGTHEN project	Conclusions	Recommendations
Relevance	The project contributes to SDG 8, indicators 8.2, 8.3, and 8.5.	The relevance of the project is largely given.	<i>No recommendation.</i>
	The relevance of the project to the national context of project countries is given, reaching 81% for project countries' employment policies and development frameworks		
	A contribution shows to the 2020-2021 Programme and Budget, output 3.1 and one CPO in each of the nine project countries		
	The project is also aligned to three out of the four areas of work of the ILO Employment Policy Department's Development and Investment branch DEVINVEST.		
Relevance	The approach to linking the project to other initiatives seems less systematic and uneven success, depending also to the extent country offices were involved in the project implementation	Embedding the project in the DWCPs of ILO COs and linking it to other development partners' projects highly depended on the project team's engagement with ILO COs in project countries. In some countries, the project seemed to operate in isolation.	<p>R 1: DEVINVEST: Country-level projects should be consulted with the Director or Deputy Director of the respective ILO Country Office for discussions in the Country Office's programming team to ensure a close alignment to the DWCP.</p> <p>Priority: very high. At project design.</p>
	Following the mid-term evaluation, STRENGTHEN designed a comprehensive Theory of Change with a logical results chain. However, at least two out of the five key assumptions show a high risk of not materializing. The activity-driven and largely qualitative logframe indicators remained unchanged at the intermediate outcome and outputs level.	Project planning was strengthened following the mid-term evaluation while monitoring could have further enhanced as a result of the mid-term evaluation.	<p>R 2: DEVINVEST: The project design of any new phase of the project should include a Theory of Change to strengthen project planning. Logframe indicators should be results rather than activity oriented, as a means to enable results-based management and to facilitate evaluation.</p> <p>Priority: very high. At project design.</p>
Efficiency	Investments in a national coordinator and administrative support for component B was better value for money compared to the less coherent management arrangements across component A countries operating with consultants. Synergies between components A and B showed, particularly in Guatemala, where both components were implemented.	The project's governance structure proved rather complex and limited the project's efficiency.	<p>R 3: DEVINVEST: In case policy level engagement is required in a project, investments in a national project coordinator and administrative support are required to ensure appropriate country-level implementation. For technical engagement, the use of consultants might be sufficient.</p>
	The project management arrangements between headquarters in Geneva with two CTAs, various models of country support reaching from project teams to consultants, and the at times		

<p>insufficient involvement of ILO country offices was moderately unsatisfactory.</p> <p>The budget was sufficient for the project and its two components, however with an imbalance in favour of component and comprising too many countries for a leave a deeper project footprint.</p>	<p>The supply-led project design was overambitious and spread resources too thinly across too many countries</p>	<p>Priority: very high. At project design.</p> <p>R 4: DEVINVEST: When planning for a new project, the number of project countries should be established with realism to allow for efficient project management. The depth of engagement at the country level should be prioritised over the geographic breadth of the news phase. For STRENGTHEN, five to six project countries rather than the initial ten countries would have been more appropriate to allow for efficient project management and leaving a significant foot print in all project countries.</p> <p>Priority: very high. At project design.</p>
<p>In the context of a supply-driven nature of the project as well as the ambitious project design, the project experienced substantial delays in implementation in at least five of the project countries.</p> <p>By 9 June 2020, the project’s implementation rate was 98,5%, following two project extensions to also accommodate addition donor demands</p>		<p>R 5: DEVINVEST: For the selection of countries for the new project, priority should be given to the countries engaged in STRENGTHEN. Any other countries should be selected based on a country needs assessment, an assessment of the project’s relevance to the respective countries development plans in the donor’s priority region and following consultations with ILO country offices’ senior staff and engagements with the concerned country stakeholders to gauge demand for the project.</p> <p>Priority: very high. At project design.</p>
<p>The project team was cost-aware when planning project activities, for example, by focusing TRAVERA and STED studies on the same sectors in the respective project countries.</p> <p>The project team and NPC leveraged resources where opportunities appeared</p>	<p>During project implementation, the project team and its NPC's were cost-aware and opportunity-driven.</p>	<p><i>No recommendation.</i></p>

	<p>Following the mid-term evaluation, the project team prepared a management response also to track the implementation of all seven recommendations. However, some of the recommendations implemented only partly used.</p>	<p>The mid-term evaluation added value to address shortcomings in the project design and initial implementation of STRENGTHEN but recommendations on results-oriented monitoring were insufficiently implemented.</p>	<p><i>No recommendation.</i></p>
Effectiveness	<p>Broader project objectives: The highest results show for the use of information exchange (88%), the use of capacity building (87%), and the use of knowledge generation (86%) of STRENGTHEN. Ratings are slightly lower for the use of results by national policymakers to optimize the employment effects of the selected sectoral and trade policies (69%), the creation of national ownership (73%), and the effectiveness in promoting and advancing national policy coherence (73%).</p>	<p>The evaluation is inconclusive about the project's effectiveness due to missing data to triangulate project results. Based on stakeholder perceptions, STRENGTHEN was effective in achieving its expected results and broader objectives.</p>	<p><i>No recommendation.</i></p>
	<p>Overall, the expected results component A showed satisfactory achievements, with stakeholder perception ratings ranging from 65% (<i>global tools supporting in the formulation of effective and complementary policies</i>) to 80% for <i>global tools supporting the assessment of the employment impact of sectoral policies and projects</i>. For component B, the level of achievements for expected results was also satisfactory, ranging from 76% stakeholder perception ratings for the <i>improvement of methods to handle developing-country circumstances for assessing the effects of trade and trade policies as well as trade-related foreign investment on productive and decent employment</i> to 86% for the <i>use of knowledge generation</i> by STRENGTHEN.</p>		
Impact	<p>While the COVID 10 pandemic is likely to affect the project's long-term results due to changes in policy priorities across the globe, even in "normal" circumstances, an assessment would require a time-leg of 5 to 10 years after the end of the project to evaluate any impact on objectives like job creation.</p>	<p>It is too early to assess the impact of STRENGTHEN. While stakeholders in project countries improved their capabilities in applying STRENGTHEN's research tools, it is too early to assess changes in programming, policy and ultimately the impact of STRENGTHEN on employment and attracting international trade</p>	<p><i>No recommendation.</i></p>
	<p>Project stakeholders provide high satisfaction ratings about the changes in their capabilities.</p>		
	<p>Interviews showed that it seems too early to tell whether changes in policy and programming will materialize, which would be one factor influencing the achievement of higher-level project objectives such as enhanced employment or attracting international trade.</p>		
	<p>As a result, the high ratings given for the project's contribution to enhanced employment and improvements in attracting international trade need to be interpreted with caution, with an average of 59% of respondents not answering the question.</p>		
Sust	<p>Stakeholders perceive the likelihood of durable project results as satisfactory but depending on the decision-makers who have received the benefits of the project</p>	<p>Either governments need to budget for the systematic integration of project tools into</p>	<p><i>No recommendation.</i></p>

		national systems or additional donors support is required to ensure the sustainability of project results.	
The key strengths positively affecting the likelihood of project results sustainability are the multi-stakeholder approach even beyond ILO's traditional tripartite approach, including academia and line ministries complementing the Ministry of Labour		The project's multi-stakeholder approach beyond the traditional tripartite engagement was a key success factor with room even systematically to reach out to civil society organizations.	<p>R 6: DEVINVEST: When planning a project, a multi-stakeholder approach should be considered beyond the tripartite constituents, including line ministries complementing the Ministry of Labour in selected sectors, academia and civil society organizations.</p> <p>Priority: very high. At project design.</p> <p>For the country coverage, see recommendation 4</p>
The key weakness negatively affecting STRNGTHEN's sustainability is the limited sector scope per country given the large number of project countries and the room for even enhancing the comprehensiveness of the multi-stakeholder approach by systematically including civil society organizations		A reduced country coverage allowing for more sectors to be researched per country would have been beneficial.	
Opportunities emerge from applying research tools such as STEED or TRAVERA in other sectors with the potential of trained academic partners rolling out training in their countries		The project created a basis for academic partners and consultants to replicate the training in the project research tools in project countries and beyond.	<p>R 7: DEVINVEST could consider including a training of trainers module for each capacity development tool implemented in its next project to systematically enable the replication of trainings after the end of the project.</p> <p>Priority: very high. At project design.</p>
The more STRENGTHEN was embedded in a DWCP or a programmatic approach, the higher the likelihood that the ILO can provide some kind of follow-up of the project		See conclusion leading to recommendation 1	See recommendation 1
External risks to the project's sustainability are the mobility of trained stakeholders and political instability		The sustainability of project results is largely beyond the control of the ILO.	<i>No recommendation.</i>
COVID 19 pandemic and constituents' response to the health crisis could change constituents' priorities in the project countries			
That most significant advancement of gender-related needs is due to the selection of sectors for the research studies, reaching theoretically over 350.000 women in countries like Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guatemala.		Based on the project's theoretical reach, the benefits for women are significant in some project countries mainly due to the selection of sectors and value chains relevant to women.	<p>R 8: DEVINVEST is encouraged find a balance when selecting sectors in the next project phase which are relevant for women and men, as in STRENGTHEN but also to promote gender equality and inclusion in sectors who have traditionally been dominated by a specific gender.</p>

			Priority: very high. At project design.
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9. Lessons learned and good practices

This mid-term evaluation identifies one main lesson learned based on a set of criteria used as good practices in other international organizations⁶⁷. As such, the lesson learned below includes i) context; ii) challenges; iii) causal factors; iv) target users; v) success; and, vi) the fact that a lesson is not a recommendation or a conclusion.

Lessons

The role of ILO country offices in development cooperation projects

The appropriate involvement of ILO country offices is essential for the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of development cooperation projects. Particularly work on policy influencing benefits from the engagement of national level staff and international staff based at a country level.

Innovation in ILO projects

If a project aims to promote and implement innovative solutions, it might not be necessarily demand-driven. In this context additional time for project implementation needs to be factored in at the project design. Engaging stakeholders and getting their ownership would take much longer than in a demand-driven project.

Evaluation design

Increasing the number of evaluation questions and evaluation scope in project evaluations leads to more breadth of the exercise at the expense of the evaluation's depth. Answering the "why" question suffers under such circumstances.

Also, interview partners are overwhelmed by too many evaluation questions and interviews remain at the surface, despite extended interview times of up to 90 minutes.

Good practices

Follow-up projects or additional project phases

This evaluation shows that as in the examples of the project countries Benin and Guatemala, partners involved in a previous phase of the project can be swiftly brought back into a project despite some changes among national tripartite partners. Re-establishing a political working group can be much quicker in this context compared to undertaking the same process in new project countries.

⁶⁷ The International Labor Organization and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Final Independent Evaluation “Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies” (STRENGHTEN)

Project Code :	GLO/14/37/EEC
ILO’s Policy Outcome:	Outcome 1: More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects Indicator 1.4: Number of member States in which constituents have strengthened capacities on pro-employment macroeconomic policies, or have developed and implemented sectoral, industrial, trade, infrastructure investment or environmental policies for structural transformation and for promoting more and better jobs and tackling inequalities
CPOs:	BEN102 MAR176 MMR125 PHL100 CIV105 GHA105 GTM127 RWA101 HND135
Contribution to SDGs:	SDG 8
Department :	EMPLOYMENT
Administrative Unit:	DEVINVEST
Technical Unit / Backstopping Unit:	DEVINVEST
Type of Evaluation:	Independent
Timing of Evaluation:	Final
Evaluation Manager:	Angelica Viridiana Munoz Marmolejo (EMP/SKILLS)

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- To what extent has the STRENGTHEN project’s strategy been effective in the use of research, knowledge generation and exchange, and capacity building? 81
- Are the conceptual and methodological tools developed and the country-level activities perceived as useful in achieving the STRENGTHEN project’s specific objectives by (i) ILO constituents (Government and social partners); (ii) ILO operational staff and managers in the field; and (iii) ILO operational staff and managers at ILO Headquarters?..... 81
- Where applicable, have the outcomes and results of the Project been used by national policymakers to optimize the employment effects of the selected sectoral and trade policies? 81
- To what extent has the STRENGTHEN project’s strategy been effective in promoting and advancing national policy coherence?..... 81

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I. Introduction and Rational for Evaluation

The STRENGTHEN project (the Project) is a joint initiative of the European Commission (EC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) that aims to strengthen the capabilities of country partners to analyse and design sector and trade policies and programmes that would enhance employment creation for more and better jobs. It consists of two components:

Component A focuses on Sector Policies and supports and builds capacity among partner countries and development practitioners to enhance the positive impact of sector policies and programmes on employment and is sometimes referred to as the Employment Impact Assessments (EMPIA) component.

Component B focuses on Trade Policies and assists developing countries in harnessing international trade and trade-related foreign investment to provide more opportunities for decent work and increase the number of productively employed workers. Component B, is a continuation of the Effects of Trade on Employment (ETE) project which preceded STRENGTHEN and is sometimes also referred to as the ETE Component.

The current phase of Project implementation began in October 2014 and is expected to conclude in March 2020, counting with a total budget of EUR 7,600,000 (EUR 6,500,000 EC funding; EUR 1,100,000 ILO funding). In line with the ILO's Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation, all projects with a duration of over 30 months and funding of over 5 million USD must undergo both a mid- and a final independent evaluations. Following these guidelines, a mid-term independent evaluation of STRENGTHEN was finalized in October 2017.

The present TOR aims to guide the undertaking of the Project's final independent evaluation, which will review the project's performance and aims to enhance learning within the ILO and among key Project stakeholders. The Evaluation is expected to be carried over a period of three months.

The final evaluation will be managed by an independent ILO official (Evaluation Manager) and overseen by the ILO's evaluation office. The Evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluator with no previous links to the project. The Evaluator will be selected in consultation with the Project team.

II. Background and description of the Project

The Project, funded by the European Union, aims to strengthen the capabilities of country partners to analyse and design sectoral and trade policies and programmes that would enhance employment creation in terms of quantity and quality.

The project's main objectives are the following:

- > To develop global knowledge on how to strengthen the positive impact on employment of sectoral and trade policies, including in the areas of agriculture and rural development, infrastructure and energy with a focus on private sector development in these sectors as well as on existing and relevant

methods for the employment impact assessment of those policies in selected sectors.

- › To strengthen country-level knowledge on the impact of sectoral and trade policies on productive and decent employment and on measures to optimize the employment effects of selected sectoral and trade policies and related issues such as structural transformation, labour standards, and skills development.
- › To build the capabilities of governments, social partners, development practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders in partner countries to identify, measure and assess the employment effects of sectoral and trade policies.
- › To provide guidance to development cooperation practitioners in partner countries as well as the European Union on how to address the employment opportunities and challenges resulting from sectoral and trade policies including through public policies, trade and investment programmes and operations in key sectors in developing countries.

The project started in October 2014 and was originally planned as a 48 month project to run until September 2018. It was extended twice, first a 12 month extension until September 2019 and then a subsequent 6 month extension till March 2020 was granted. The extensions also included an increase in the scope of the activities, and these were financed through the contingency budget available in the project. It is implemented by the Development and Investment Branch (DEVINVEST) of the ILO's Employment Policy Department in close collaboration with other relevant ILO units and the ILO regional and country offices responsible for the partner countries. As explained above, the project has two components. Component A focuses on assessing the impact of sectoral policies on employment and is also referred to as the component conducting Employment Impact Assessments (EMPIA). Component B, is a continuation of the Effects of Trade on Employment (ETE) project which preceded STRENGTHEN. Each component had its own partner countries but in Ghana and Guatemala both components were implemented. The list of partner countries is presented below.

Component A

- Cote d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Rwanda

Component B

- Benin
- Guatemala
- Morocco
- Myanmar
- Philippines

- Ghana

The final partner countries were identified after the project document was signed and that initially Ethiopia was also a partner country for component A. However due to a lack of interest and difficulty mobilizing the local authorities, the work in Ethiopia was discontinued. (This is covered in Mid-Term evaluation).

The project is managed centrally from the ILO Headquarters in Geneva. The head of the DEVINVEST Branch is responsible for the project. It has two project managers, one for each of the main project components. The project has a joint ILO-EC Steering Committee as its supervisory mechanism, which meets annually.

At the country level, the management arrangements differed for the two components. For component B (ETE), a national coordinator and administrative support were hired in each partner country by the ILO to manage the country level activities. In Ghana and Guatemala, the national coordinator managed both components A and B. For the remaining Component A countries the management arrangements differed by country. In Rwanda the activities were managed with the support of consultants, in Cote d'Ivoire with the support of a local administrative support staff, and in Honduras the National Coordinators for Guatemala also coordinated the Honduras activities.

In each country Policy Working Groups or similar structures were established consisting of national partners. The main partners of the Project include governments', employers' and worker's representatives, as well as labour market institutions, statistical offices, research institutions in the target countries. There were supported by a number of national and international consultants and local experts in the countries, recruited as required. One Ministry in each country has the responsibility of country level activity coordination as well as liaison with the ILO but in general several ministries were included. Generally activities include the establishment of project related committees and structures, the hiring of coordinators, identification of key focus areas or sectors, commissioning of local studies, capacity building and conducting impact assessments of different policy of investment scenarios.

Note that, a follow up to the project is currently being developed together with the EC. While the follow up project will built on the work of the first project, it will include an important shift, in that it will primarily focus on the EC's investments activities in Sub Saharan Africa. As a result, the project will work more closely with the EC (DEVCO) in both Brussels as well as EU Delegations in Africa, and were required support DEVCO and the delegations with assessing the employment impact of EU supported investments.

III. Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The Evaluation serves the following main purposes:

- › Provides an independent assessment of progress on the achievement of the Project's development objective, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis the strategies and implementation modalities chosen and project management arrangements
- › Provides strategic recommendations, highlights good practices and lessons learnt.

Moreover it:

- › Improves project performance and contribute towards organizational learning
- › Helps those responsible for managing the resources and activities o to enhance development results from the short term to a sustainable long term
- › Assesses the effectiveness of planning and management for future impacts
- › Supports accountability by incorporating lessons learned in the decision-making process of project stakeholders, including donors and national partners.

Scope:

The evaluation will cover (three months), the geographic coverage of the evaluation will be Africa, specific countries are yet to be decided. The evaluation will cover all components of the project and will investigate the coherence and linkages among these vis-à-vis the Project's development objective. The evaluation will integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting concern through its methodology and all deliverables, including the final report.

IV. Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation will follow the UN Evaluation Standards and Norms, the Glossary of key terms in evaluation and Results-Based Management and utilise the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) evaluation criteria as outlined below:

- › **Relevance and strategic fit** – the extent to which the objectives are in keeping with Sub-Regional, national and local priorities and needs, Constituents' priorities and needs, and the donor's priorities for the Project countries;
- › **Validity of design** – the extent to which the project design, logic, strategy and elements are/ remain valid vis-à-vis problems and needs;
- › **Effectiveness** - the extent to which the project can be said to have contributed to the development objectives and the immediate objectives and more concretely whether the stated outputs have been produced satisfactorily; in addition to building synergies with national initiatives and with other donor-supported projects and project visibility;
- › **Efficiency** - the productivity of the project implementation process taken as a measure of the extent to which the outputs achieved are derived from an efficient use of financial, material and human resources;
- › **Effectiveness of management arrangements**
- › **Impact** - positive and negative changes and effects caused by the Project at the Sub-Regional and National levels, i.e. the impact with Social Partners and various implementing partner organisations;

- › **Sustainability** – the extent to which adequate capacity building of Project stakeholders has taken place to ensure mechanisms are in place to sustain activities and whether the existing results are likely to be maintained beyond project completion.

The evaluation will consider gender as a cross cutting issue, as follows:

- › **Relevance:** How the intervention’s design and implementation contributed (or not) toward the ILO goal of gender equality, international and regional gender equality conventions, and national gender policies and strategies
- › **Effectiveness:** Extent to which intervention results were defined, monitored and achieved (or not), and their contribution (or not) toward gender equality
- › **Efficiency:** Analysis of the intervention’s benefits and related costs of integrating gender equality (or not)
- › **Sustainability:** Extent to which intervention has advanced strategic gender-related needs
- › **Impact:** Intervention’s long-term effects on more equitable gender relations or reinforcement/exacerbation of existing inequalities

List of main evaluation questions:

Relevance and strategic fit:

- To what extent are the overall and specific objectives of STRENGTHEN still valid?
- Are the activities and outputs of STRENGTHEN consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- To what extent has STRENGTHEN been aligned to national and local priorities and needs as well as to specific constituents’ priorities and needs?
- Is the STRENGTHEN project’s strategy aligned with the global/national decent work situation and priorities (national development plans, UNDAFs, DWCPs) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda?
- How does STRENGTHEN complement and link to activities of other UN and donors in the target countries?
- Does the design of the STRENGTHEN project reflect adequate background knowledge on the kind of analytical frameworks that currently exist pertaining to the promotion of job-rich growth through sectoral and trade policies?
- How does STRENGTHEN support the countries’ employment policies and development frameworks?
- To what extent is STRENGTHEN aligned with the donor’s priorities for the Project countries?
- How the intervention’s design and implementation methods contributed (or not) towards achieving ILO goal of gender equality, international and regional gender equality conventions, and national gender policies and strategies

Validity of design:

- To what extent the Project's design is appropriate vis-à-vis national and local priorities, as well as specific constituents' priorities and needs?
- To what extent are the project design (objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities) and its underlining theory of change logical and coherent?
- How appropriate and useful are the indicators used to assess the progress and verify the achievements of the project?
- To what extent the Project's design is appropriate vis-à-vis the donor's priorities for the Project countries?
- To which extent risk assumptions and mitigation measures matched, and how realistically were risks and assumptions conceived?

Effectiveness:

- Has STRENGTHEN achieved its objectives?
- What were the major factors influencing the success or not of achieving the Project objectives?
- To what extent has the STRENGTHEN project's strategy been effective in the use of research, knowledge generation and exchange, and capacity building?
- Are the conceptual and methodological tools developed and the country-level activities perceived as useful in achieving the STRENGTHEN project's specific objectives by (i) ILO constituents (Government and social partners); (ii) ILO operational staff and managers in the field; and (iii) ILO operational staff and managers at ILO Headquarters?
- Where applicable, have the outcomes and results of the Project been used by national policymakers to optimize the employment effects of the selected sectoral and trade policies?
- To what extent has the STRENGTHEN project's strategy been effective in promoting and advancing national policy coherence?
- How suitable are training, capacity building and other material developed under the project for the target groups?
- How have stakeholders been involved in the implementation? How effective has been in term of establishing national ownership? Is the management and implementation participatory and is the participation contributing towards achievement of the objectives?
- To what extent has gender mainstreaming been addressed in the design and implementation of the project?
- To which extent M&E tools were used to monitored (or not), gender equality?
- To which extent STRENGTHEN established country specific measures to attain its objectives?

Efficiency:

- Where Project activities cost-efficient? To what extent did the Project offered value for money?
- How well were resources (human and monetary resources) allocated to use achieve the expected results?
- To what extent were the objectives of the Project achieved? And where those achieved according to the established timeline?
- To what extent did the Project look to combine resources with other activities from ILO or partner organizations who may be working on the same issue towards achieving its objectives?
- Was the budget spent according to the proposed budget lines?
- Was the rate of spending acceptable and according to plan?
- What was the value of this project? (% of budget that actually reached the beneficiaries)

Effectiveness of management arrangements:

- To which extent were the Project management arrangements both regarding ILO Project team and at Project governance level effective and how these contributed to the achievement of the Project objectives?

Impact:

- What changed as a result of the programme or project?
- How many people were directly and indirectly benefited by the Project?
- Have the intervention's long-term effects on more equitable gender relations being assessed?

Sustainability:

- To what extent are the planned results of the project likely to be durable and can maintained or even scaled up and replicated by other partners after major assistance has been completed?
- To what extent can good practices of the Project be replicated in the respective beneficiary countries independently by country stakeholders?
- What is the preliminary impact of the Project and which target groups were benefited?
- To what extent have ILO Constituents been involved in the implementation of the project? And what is the overall perspective of country stakeholders on the Project?
- What risk factors may hinder the sustainability of Project objectives?
- To which extent interventions helped to advanced strategic gender-related needs?

V. Methodology

The evaluation will use a qualitative research method, to be submitted by the evaluation consultant(s) and approved by the Evaluation Manager.

Envisaged steps include:

- › Desk review: review of Project documentation (quantitative and qualitative) as provided by the Project team
- › Data collection from stakeholders: surveys, meetings, focus group discussions, interviews or other methods that involve direct contact with the respondents
- › Report writing
- › Consultation, discussion and incorporation of comments

Sources of information:

- Project related documentation (progress reports, publications, workshop reports etc.)

Proposed stakeholders to be consulted:

- Project stakeholders in the partner countries (Ministries, Social partners, research institutions, researchers)

VI. Management arrangements of the Independent Evaluation

Evaluation Manager

- › Works with Project Management to draft TORs
- › Approves TORs
- › Searches, manages and approves payment to consultants
- › Guides the evaluator during the evaluation process
- › Works with Project staff to ensure that the consultant is provided with the necessary information
- › Ensures proper stakeholder involvement
- › Assist during the evaluation workshop
- › Responsible for the preparation and approval of final report

Project Team

- › Supports the implementation of the evaluation (information collection)
- › Provides practical and administrative supports
- › Provides inputs to the ToRs

- > Ensures the evaluator has adequate documentation/information
- > Assist in logistical support
- > Arranges meetings and coordinates exchanges between the evaluation team and partners
- > Participates in evaluation workshops and provides comments to evaluation manager on draft report
- > Co-ordinate follow-up plans

VII. Main Deliverables

Deliverable 1. Inception report with details of the proposed Evaluation methodology

Deliverable 2. Draft evaluation report

Deliverable 3. Presentation of the report

Deliverable 4. Final evaluation report with executive summary

VIII. Work plan and timeframe

Schedule	Deliverable	Responsible	Duration (Work Days)
By April 3, 2020	Deliverable 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review and information gathering from Project team • Drafting of draft inception report, including suggested methodology • Incorporation of comments to draft inception report • Final Inception report 	Evaluator	4
By May 15, 2020	Deliverable 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake field missions or Skype interviews • Interview with constituents and main Project partners • Data processing • Draft evaluation report 	Evaluator	20
By May 28, 2020	Deliverable 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the report • Incorporation of comments to the draft report 	Evaluator	3

By June 10, 2020	Deliverable 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final evaluation report with executive summary 	Evaluator	3
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- **The above deliverables will be submitted by the Evaluator directly to the evaluation Manager. All deliverables are to be submitted in English.**
- The quality of the report will be assessed against the EVAL Checklists 4, 5 & 6.
- The Evaluation Manager will contact Project Staff and Project stakeholders to collect comments, which will be processed and transmitted to the Evaluator
- The Evaluation Manager will forward the report to EVAL for approval
- The Evaluation Manager will share the report with Project staff, Project stakeholders and PARDEV
- PARDEV will submit a copy of the report to the Development Partner

IX. Legal and ethical matters

- The evaluation consultant shall have no links to the project management, or any other conflict of interests that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.
- The evaluation shall comply with UN Norms and Standards.
- The TOR is accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out evaluations.
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed.

X. Especial arrangements related to the COVID-19 pandemic

The current COVID-19 pandemic severely restricts the mobility of staff and consultants. Under the current conditions the International Consultant should adapt its methods to the current travel and meeting restrictions mandated by the ILO and the respective Governments in the countries of assignment.

For the above mentioned reason, the International Consultant is encouraged to the highest extent possible to use on-line methods to conduct interviews, surveys and other data collection methods. The following are examples of tools that can be used to facilitate on-line communication with stakeholders at country level: Skype, S4Biz or ZOOM, Survey Monkey, Google Forms.

The Project team is requested to provide the Evaluator Manager and the International Consultant with the required assistance and appropriate stakeholder information (including on-line communication contacts).

XI. Annexes

- EVAL Checklist 5: Preparing the evaluation report
- EVAL Guidance Note 4: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation of projects
- UNEG documents
- Code of conduct for carrying out evaluations

Annex 2: Documentation reviewed

African Cashew initiative, 2010: Analysis of the Benin cashew sector value chain

EC, 2017 : ROM - Strengthening the impact on employment of sector and trade policies

Engelhardt, A./ILO 2018: Independent Midterm Evaluation. ILO Projects. 1) Improving Indigenous peoples' access to justice and development through community-based monitoring (GLO/16/24/EUR), and 2) Promoting indigenous peoples' human development and social inclusion in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (GLO/16/23/EUR).

Gobierno de la Republic de Guatemala. Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales: Proyecto: PAISAJES PRODUCTIVOS RESILIENTES AL CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO Y REDES SOCIOECONÓMICAS FORTALECIDAS EN GUATEMALA. Anexo 4: DIAGNOSTICO DE LA CADENA DE ARTESANIAS

Gouvernement du Benin, 2005: Appui à la mis en oeuvre du Nouveau partenariat pour le développement d'Afrique – Programme détaillé pour le développement de l'Agriculture africaine

ILO 2019: GB.337/PFA/1/1. Programme and Budget for 2020 -21. Programme of work and results framework

ILO, 2018 : Rider/Amendment to contract. Strengthening the impact on employment of sector and trade policies

ILO, 2014 : Project document. "Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies"

ILO, 2013: The Director General's Programme and Budget Proposal for 2014-15
<https://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/bureau/program/download/pdf/14-15/pbfinalweb.pdf>

ILO/ STRENGTHEN, 2020: STRENGTHEN financial report (internal document)

ILO/STRENGTHEN, 2020 : Documento de trabajo No. 18. Estudio sobre el comercio y cadenas de valor intensivas en el empleo (TRAVERA). El caso de la artesanía textil en Guatemala

ILO/STRENGTHEN , 2019 : Etude sur l'emploi dans les activités de transformation du manioc en Côte d'Ivoire.

ILO/ STRENGTHEN, 2019 : Renforcer l'Impact du Commerce International sur l'Emploi au Maroc. Etude sue le commerce et les chaines de valeur dans les activités porteuses d'emploi (TRAVERA) : Cas der secteur automobile au Maroc

ILO/ STRENGTHEN, 2019: Informe de consultoria: Comercio y cadenas de valor intensivas en el empleo (TRAVERA). El caso de la artesanía textil en Guatemala

ILO/STRENGTHEN, 2019 : Assessing the Employment Effects of Processing Cocoa in Ghana

ILO/STRENGTHEN, 2019 : Assessing the Employment Effects of Investment in Housing in Ghana

ILO/STRENGTHEN, 2017: Background study on Employment in the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Sectors in Ghana

ILO/ Zarranga, M and Hilfiker, C: (2017): ILO mid-term evaluation - Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies.

UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards (2016):
<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

UN Evaluation Group code of conduct (2008):
<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

VCA4D/EC, 2018 : La chaîne de valeur manioc en Côte d'Ivoire

Internet sources:

Gouvernement du Benin

<https://benin.opendataforafrica.org/emcqbqg/statistiques-agricoles-benin>

Government of the Philippines. Philippine Export Development Plan (PEDP) 2018-2022.

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2019/06jun/20190626-MC-62-The-Philippine-Export-Development-Plan-2018-2022-RRD.pdf>

EUROsociAL+

https://www.fiiapp.org/en/proyectos_fiiapp/eurosocial-programa-para-la-cohesion-social-en-america-latina/

ILO Philippines/ Generalized Scheme of Preference (GSP+)

https://www.ilo.org/manila/projects/WCMS_562934/lang--en/index.htm

Rwanda UNDAF 2013-2018

https://rwanda.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/United%20Nations%20in%20Rwanda%20Development%20Assistance%20Plan%202018-2023%20%28UNDAP%20II%29_0_0.pdf

University of Wisconsin

www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html

Annex 3: List of people interviewed

Full name	Role	Organisation	Email
ILO HQ and ILO Brussels			
Ms Audrey Le Guével	Programme and Operations Officer	ILO Brussels	leguevel@ilo.org
Mr David Cheong	CTA	ILO	Cheong@ilo.org
Ms Mito Tsukamoto	Director	ILO	tsukamoto@ilo.org
Mr Maikel Lieuw-Kie-Song	CTA	ILO	lieuw-kie-song@ilo.org
Mr Matthieu Charpe	Technical Specialist	ILO	charpe@ilo.org
EC Brussels			
Mr Jean-Paul HEERSCHAP	Donor	EC, Brussels	Jean-Paul.HEERSCHAP@ec.europa.eu
Focus countries			
Cote d'Ivoire			
Ms KOUAKOU Akoua Brou Cecile	National Coordinator, Cote d'Ivoire	ILO	cecilebrou35@gmail.com

Ms ADJEI Dédé Geneviève	Conseiller Technique en charge des questions d'Emploi et Sociales, Cote d'Ivoire	Directeur Général de l'Economie	dedegeneviev@gmail.com
Ms ADOU Vanessa	Associée vers la fin du projet pour une étude, doctorante d'une thèse en économie	Centre de recherche de l'université d'Abidjan	vanesadou@hotmail.com
Mr KOUAKOU Azan Joel	Directeur de Stratégie et Programme d'emploi	Ministère de l'emploi et de la Protection Sociale	Azanjoel10@yahoo.fr
Mr N'Guessan José Coffie	Directeur Adjoint chargé de la recherche	Centre Ivoirien de Recherches Economiques et sociales (CIRES)	coffiejose@yahoo.fr
Mme KONE Penatien Emile	Directeur des Etudes, des Statistiques et du Suivi-Evaluation	Ministère de la Promotion de la Jeunesse et de l'Emploi des Jeunes	kopene2017@gmail.com
ZALO Elodie	Ex-Sous-Directrice des Etudes et des Statistiques	Agence Emploi Jeunes	elodie.zalo@gmail.com
Ghana			
Ms Akua Ofori-Asumadu	National Coordinator, Ghana	ILO	asumadu@ilo.org
Mr Andrew Agyei-Holmes	Researcher	ISA	
Mr Emmanuel Doni-Kwame	Secretary General	International Chamber of Commerce	info@iccghana.org
Mr Ferdinand Ahiakpor	Technical advisor	National Development Planning Commission	fahiakpor@gmail.com
Mr. Godfred Antwi	Agricultural economist	Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Kwamejnr2@gmail.com
Mr Kwabena Darfor	Director	Labour Research and Policy Institute of TUC	kdarfor@ucc.edu.gh

Ms. Mary Karimu	Deputy director	Labour research and policy institute of TUC	
Mr Theodore Mawuli Amezah	Planning officer	Ministry of employment and labour relations	amezahtheodore@gmail.com
Mr Willam Insaidoo	Senior lecturer	University of Cape Coast	
Morocco			
Ms. Fatima Idahmad	National Coordinator, Morocco	ILO	idahmad@ilo.org
Mr BOUSFIHA Abdeljalil		Ministère du Travail et de l'Insertion professionnelle	abdel.bousfiha@gmail.com;
Mr HANSALI Lahsen	Representative	UGTM (Union)	hansali1@hotmail.com;
Mr Ali SERHANI	Representative	CGEM (Employers Organization)	ali.serhani@gesperservices.com;
Mr TBATOU El Hassane	Researcher	Self-employed	h.tbatou@gmail.com;
Other countries			
Algeria			
Mr Hamzaoui, Halim	Country Director, covering also Morocco	ILO	hamzaoui@ilo.org
Costa Rica			
Ms Carmen Moreno	Country Director, covering also Guatemala and Honduras	ILO	morenoc@ilo.org

Guatemala

Mr Linares Carlos National Coordinator, Guatemala ILO linaresc@ilo.org

Philippines

Khalid Hassan Country Director ILO khalid@ilo.org

Myanmar

Ms. Pichaiwongse, Piyamal Deputy Country Director ILO piyamal@ilo.org

Nigeria

Mr Denis Zulu Country Director, covering also Ghana ILO zulu@ilo.org

Tanzania

Mr. Wellington Chibebe Country Director, covering also Rwanda ILO Chibebe, Wellington
chibebe@ilo.org

82 stakeholders participated anonymously in online survey

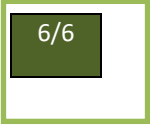
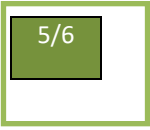
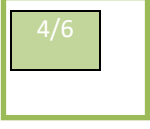
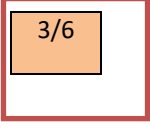
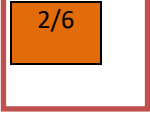

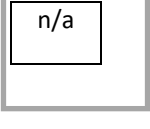
Annex 4: Evaluation matrix

	Evaluation questions/issues	Proposed evaluation tools	Data source
1. Relevance and strategic fit: Is the Project doing the right thing?	1.1 Is the STRENGTHEN project's strategy aligned with the global/national decent work situation and priorities (national development plans, UNDAFs, DWCPs) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda?	Document review	Project documentation; project stakeholders.
	1.2 How does STRENGTHEN complement and link to activities of other UN and donors in the target countries?	Interviews with ILO project staff	
	1.3 How does STRENGTHEN support the countries' employment policies and development frameworks?	Online survey and telephone interviews (for question 1.3)	
	1.4 How the intervention's design and implementation methods contributed (or not) towards achieving the ILO goal of gender equality, international and regional gender equality conventions, and national gender policies and strategies?		
	1.5 How does STRENGTHEN contribute to ILO policies, results framework (e.g. P&B and SDGs), departmental strategies and approaches of the Employment policy department?		
2. The validity of project design: is the theory of change holding?	2.1 To what extent the Project's design is appropriate vis-à-vis national and local priorities, as well as specific constituents' priorities and needs?	Document review	Project documentation; project stakeholders.
	2.2 To what extent are the project design (objectives, outcomes, outputs, and activities) and its underlining theory of change logical and coherent?	Interviews with ILO project staff and implementation partners	
	2.3 To what extent are the overall and specific objectives of STRENGTHEN still valid?	Theory of change validation meeting	
	2.4 How appropriate and useful are the indicators used to assess the progress and verify the achievements of the Project?	Online survey: question 2.1, 2.5	
	2.5 To what extent the Project's design is appropriate vis-à-vis the donor's priorities for the Project countries?		
	2.6 To which extent risk assumptions and mitigation measures matched, and how realistically were risks and assumptions conceived?		
	2.7 Does the design of the STRENGTHEN project reflect adequate background knowledge on the kind of analytical frameworks that currently exist pertaining to the promotion of job-rich growth through sectoral and trade policies?		
	2.8 Is the STRENGTHEN project's strategy aligned with the global/national decent work situation and priorities (national development plans, UNDAFs, DWCPs) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda?		

3. Effectiveness: were project results achieved, and how?	3.1 To what extent has STRENGTHEN achieved its objective? ^[L] _[SEP] In which area did the Project have the most significant achievements and the least achievements? ^[L] _[SEP]	Document review Interviews with ILO project staff, implementation partners and beneficiaries Online-survey, question 3,1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7	Project documentation; project stakeholders.
	3.2 What were the major factors influencing the success or not of achieving Project objectives?		
	3.3 To what extent has the STRENGTHEN project's strategy been effective in the use of research, knowledge generation and exchange, and capacity building? How suitable are training, capacity building, and other material developed under the Project for the target groups?		
	3.4 Are the conceptual and methodological tools developed and the country-level activities perceived as useful in achieving the STRENGTHEN project's specific objectives by (i) ILO constituents (Government and social partners); (ii) ILO operational staff and managers in the field; and (iii) ILO operational staff and managers at ILO Headquarters?		
	3.5 Where applicable, have the outcomes and results of the Project been used by national policymakers to optimize the employment effects of the selected sectoral and trade policies?		
	3.6 To what extent has the STRENGTHEN project's strategy been effective in promoting and advancing national policy coherence?		
	3.7 How have stakeholders been involved in the implementation? How effective has been in term of establishing national ownership? Are the management and implementation participatory, and is the participation contributing towards the achievement of the objectives?		
4. Efficiency: Were resources used appropriately to achieve project results?	4.1 Where Project activities cost-efficient? To what extent did the Project offer value for money?	Document review Project budget Interviews with ILO project staff	Project documentation; project stakeholders.
	4.2 How well were resources (human and financial) allocated to achieve the expected results?		
	4.3 Has the Project's budget structure, and financial planning process ever represented an obstacle to use, allocate, and re-allocate financial resources efficiently?		
	4.4 Were project objectives achieved according to the established timeline? Was the timeline realistic?		
	4.5 To what extent did the Project look to combine resources with other activities from ILO or partner organizations who may be working on the same issue towards achieving its objectives?		
	4.6 Was the budget spent according to the proposed budget lines? Was the rate of spending acceptable and according to plan?		

	4.7 To what extent were recommendations from the mid-term evaluation acted upon?		
5. Effectiveness of management arrangements			
	5.1 <input type="checkbox"/> To which extent were the Project management arrangements both regarding the ILO Project team and at Project governance level adequate and how these contributed to the achievement of the Project objectives?	Document review Interviews with ILO project staff & implementation partners Online survey	Project documentation; project stakeholders
6. Impact: is policy change happening?			
	6.1 What changed as a result of STRENGTHEN?	Document review Interviews with ILO project staff and stakeholders Online-survey	Project documentation; project stakeholders;
7. Sustainability of results: are results likely to last? ^[L] _[SEP]			
	7.1 To what extent are the planned results of the Project likely to be durable and can be maintained or even scaled up and replicated by other partners after major assistance has been completed? How could this be further catalysed?	Document review Interviews with ILO staff Online-survey	Project documentation; project stakeholders;
	7.2 To what extent can good practices of the Project be replicated in the respective beneficiary countries independently by country stakeholders?	Telephone interviews with stakeholders	
	7.3 What risk factors may hinder the sustainability of Project objectives?		
	7.4 To what extent has the Project prepared an exit strategy? How effective and realistic is the exit strategy of the Project? ^[L] _[SEP]		
	7.5 To what extent interventions helped to advanced strategic gender-related needs?		

Annex 5: Legend for colour coding used for results assessment

Colour coding	Description
 A dark green square with the text '6/6' inside, surrounded by a light green border.	Highly satisfactory
 A medium green square with the text '5/6' inside, surrounded by a light green border.	Satisfactory
 A light green square with the text '4/6' inside, surrounded by a light green border.	Moderately satisfactory
 A light orange square with the text '3/6' inside, surrounded by a red border.	Moderately unsatisfactory
 A dark orange square with the text '2/6' inside, surrounded by a red border.	Unsatisfactory
 A dark brown square with the text '1/6' inside, surrounded by a red border.	Highly unsatisfactory
 A white square with the text 'n/a' inside, surrounded by a grey border.	No assessment possible

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies (STRENGTHEN)

Project TC/SYMBOL: GLO/14/37/EEC

Name of Evaluator: Achim Engelhardt

Date: July 2020

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<p>The role of ILO country offices in development cooperation projects</p> <p>The appropriate involvement of ILO country offices is essential for the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of development cooperation projects. Particularly work on policy influencing benefits from the engagement of national level staff and international staff based at a country level.</p>
Context and any related preconditions	<p>The project management arrangements between headquarters in Geneva with two CTAs, various models of country support reaching from project teams to consultants and the at times insufficient involvement of ILO country offices was moderately unsatisfactory</p>
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	<p>ILO HQ, ILO-COs</p>
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	<p>The evaluation finds for both components the involvement of ILO country offices showed room for improvement⁶⁸. In Myanmar for example, senior staff of the country office was unaware of STENGTHEN, as a new junior staff member in the office dealt with the CTA in Geneva. As such, the country office was unable to strategically provide the required policy support for the project and STRENGTHEN operated as a stand-alone intervention outside the DWCP portfolio, according to the senior staff in the country office. The evaluation learned a similar experience from Guatemala during an interview with senior staff from the responsible San José country office, despite the excellent cooperation with the CTA in Guatemala.</p>

⁶⁸ The project team commented that the coordination required with the Decent Work Teams (DWT) caused coordination issues, as DWTs do not fully align with the CO structures.

Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	<p>The National Project Coordinators (NPCs) and to some extent other ILO staff in the field searched for linkages to other on-going initiatives for complementary action in the area of trade and employment with varying success. The creation of linkages also depended to the extent country offices were involved in the project implementation.</p>
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	<p>Some of the countries where the Project was implemented do not have a Country Office.</p>

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies (STRENGTHEN)

Project TC/SYMBOL: GLO/14/37/EEC

Name of Evaluator: Achim Engelhardt

Date: July 2020

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<p>Innovation in ILO projects</p> <p>If a project aims to promote and implement innovative solutions, it might not be necessarily demand-driven. In this context additional time for project implementation needs to be factored in at the project design. Engaging stakeholders and getting their ownership would take much longer than in a demand-driven project.</p>
Context and any related preconditions	<p>The project started in October 2014 and was originally planned as a 48 month project to run until September 2018. It was extended twice, first a 12 month extension until September 2019 and then a subsequent 6 month extension till March 2020 was granted. The extensions also included an increase in the scope of the activities, and these were financed through the contingency budget available in the project.</p>
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	<p>DEVINVEST</p>
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	<p>Extension requests and update of activities.</p>

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies (STRENGTHEN)

Project TC/SYMBOL: GLO/14/37/EEC

Name of Evaluator: Achim Engelhardt

Date: July 2020

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<p>Evaluation design</p> <p>Increasing the number of evaluation questions and evaluation scope in project evaluations leads to more breadth of the exercise at the expense of the evaluation's depth. Answering the "why" question suffers under such circumstances.</p> <p>Also, interview partners are overwhelmed by too many evaluation questions and interviews remain at the surface, despite extended interview times of up to 90 minutes.</p>
Context and any related preconditions	<p>The evaluator undertook interviews with 15 stakeholders in ILO headquarters (HQ), ILO country offices and National Project Coordinators, including 3 staff of the project team. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of the final evaluation, the evaluator undertook the final evaluation remotely, without field visits or meetings ILO stakeholders in Geneva.</p> <p>In the focus countries for this evaluation, eighth beneficiaries were reached in Ghana, seven beneficiaries in Cote d'Ivoire and four in Morocco.</p>
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO HQ, ILO-COs
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Long interviews.

Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Implications at the Evaluation Design stage.