



## **“Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises for Women and Youth in the Agricultural Sector” Project**

ILO DC/SYMBOL: PSE/22/03/JPN

Type of Evaluation: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Evaluation nature: Internal

Project countries: Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)

P&B Outcome(s): 3: Full & productive employment for just transition; 4: Sustainable enterprises for inclusive growth and decent work

SDG(s): SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 12

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 17 July 2024

Date when evaluation was approved by EVAL: 05 August 2024

ILO Administrative Office: RO- Arab States

ILO Technical Office(s): DWT- Beirut

Joint evaluation agencies: N/A

Project duration: March 2023- June 2024

Donor and budget: Government of Japan, USD 740,740

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Evaluation Office oversight: ILO EVAL

Evaluation budget: USD 12,800

*Key Words: Inclusive Market Systems, Capacity Building, Gender Equality, Sustainable Agriculture, Value Chain Development*

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## List of Acronyms

<b>ACAD</b>	Arab Center for Agricultural Development
<b>AIMS</b>	Approach to Inclusive Market Systems
<b>CWA</b>	Cooperative Work Agency
<b>DCED</b>	Donor Committee for Enterprise Development
<b>DWCP</b>	Decent Work Country Programme
<b>EQs</b>	Evaluation Questions
<b>FPCCIA</b>	Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GYB</b>	Generate Your Business
<b>HQBPC</b>	Honeybee Queens Production Centre
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>IYB</b>	Improve Your Business
<b>JAIP</b>	Jericho Agro-Industrial Park
<b>LRC</b>	Land Research Center
<b>M4P</b>	Making Markets Work for the Poor
<b>MoA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>MoL</b>	Ministry of Labour
<b>MSD</b>	Market Systems Development
<b>NES</b>	National Employment Strategy
<b>OPT</b>	Occupied Palestinian Territories
<b>P&amp;B</b>	ILO Programme and Budget
<b>PARC</b>	Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees
<b>PFU</b>	Palestinian Farmers Union
<b>PGFTU</b>	Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
<b>PMU</b>	Project Implementation Unit
<b>PSC</b>	Project Steering Committee

<b>ROAS</b>	Regional Office for Arab States
<b>RoJ</b>	Representative Office of Japan
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SIYB</b>	Start and Improve Your Business
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
<b>SYB</b>	Start Your Business
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>UAWC</b>	Union of Agricultural Work Committees
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>VCAs</b>	Value Chain Analyses
<b>VCD</b>	Value Chain Development

## Summary

### **Project Background**

The "Promotion of an Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises and Decent Jobs for Women and Youth in the Agricultural Sector" project aimed to address systemic market failures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The project, implemented within a notably short timeframe of 18 months due to the constraints of being financed by the Supplementary Budget of the Government of Japan, aimed to address systemic market failures in the OPT. The project targeted the dairy and honey value chains, focusing on enhancing the capacities of marginalized groups, particularly women and youth, through the ILO's Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS). Project interventions were executed by five Palestinian NGOs with extensive expertise in agriculture and rural development, namely, LRC, UAWC, PFU, PARC and ACAD.

### **Evaluation Background**

The evaluation aimed to assess the project's performance based on OECD criteria, including relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation covered the entire project duration, targeting the Jordan Valley and Jericho. The primary beneficiaries were small-scale farmers, women, and youth involved in the dairy and honey sectors. Key stakeholders included the ILO, Government of Japan, local NGOs, and cooperative members.

### **Methodology**

The evaluation utilized a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. Methods included documentation review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and field visits. Data triangulation ensured the credibility and validity of the findings, while a detailed evaluation matrix guided the systematic assessment of the project's performance.

### **Evaluation Findings**

**Relevance** As designed, the project was highly relevant to the socio-economic context of the OPT, addressing critical market system barriers and building local capacities. The AIMS approach was well-suited to the context, targeting root causes of market failures and promoting long-term sustainable solutions. The project effectively included marginalized groups such as women and youth, with a clear focus on enhancing equitable access to market opportunities. However, the extent to which project results addressed the identified problems of these groups and the institutional capacities of their cooperatives was somewhat limited. The short project duration and other factors discussed under effectiveness posed limitations on the project's overall responsiveness, with consequences for its effectiveness.

**Coherence** The project aligned well with national and international development strategies, including the National Agriculture Sector Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It demonstrated coherence with past ILO interventions and adhered to key International Labour Standards promoting decent work, gender equality, and occupational safety. The continuation of the certification process for trainers in Start Your Business (SYB), Grow Your Business (GYB), and the rolling out of a certification process of Improve Your Business (IYB) trainers was particularly notable. However, practical limitations in cooperative capacity building affected overall coherence.

**Effectiveness** The project's effectiveness in achieving its objectives was mixed, with notable successes and some limitations. While the project aimed to balance immediate and long-term development needs in

the dairy and honey value chains, addressing short-term relief while promoting sustainable development, its implementation the focus was skewed more to responding to immediate needs. While this was very well received by beneficiaries (and appropriate for the very difficult socio-economic and political context in the Jordan Valley) it was not fully in-line with the AIMS approach. Through the AIMS approach, the project facilitated direct input delivery and targeted training, significantly improving the skills and productivity of local farmers and cooperatives. This dual focus helped mitigate the immediate impacts of conflict and economic instability.

Despite a well-structured logical framework, the absence of specific outcome indicators and the ambiguity of some existing output indicators posed challenges for comprehensive progress tracking. As a result, it was difficult for the evaluation to fully ascertain the project's effectiveness. The project delivered its outputs and achieved its output targets, but the degree to which it achieved its outcomes cannot be objectively answered by this evaluation, despite evidence that progress has been achieved in this regard through a series of well-coordinated interventions.

One of the significant achievements of the project was fostering cooperative and enterprise development through wide-ranging training and advocacy efforts. The project leveraged findings from the Value Chain Analysis (VCA) and ILO tools and methodologies to enhance productivity, quality, and market access for honey and dairy products. Key interventions included strengthening the understanding of cooperative values among 444 women and young farmers through workshops organized by the ILO, PARC, and the CWA. Additionally, a media campaign was launched to raise awareness of the benefits of cooperatives, reaching the general public and local communities.

The project also initiated the formation of two new cooperatives in the honey and dairy subsectors in Jericho and the Jordan Valley, areas with high demand but no existing cooperatives. Local experts coordinated the selection of producers and proposed business models for these new cooperatives, which were in the process of completing their registration requirements at the time of the evaluation. Furthermore, a needs assessment of the eight target cooperatives led to a 6-day business management skills training course for 42 dairy and honey producers, equipping them with essential knowledge and skills to enhance their cooperative and personal business operations.

The localization of the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) toolkit to the Palestinian context was another critical achievement. This initiative involved re-certifying local trainers and beginning the certification process for new trainers. These trainers then cascaded the training to 108 women and men from the project target areas, directly addressing the lack of business skills and support among small-scale producers.

In the honey value chain, the project addressed significant challenges faced by the Palestinian beekeeping sector, particularly among Bedouin communities in Jericho and the Jordan Valley. Key activities included establishing a specialized center for high-quality queen bee production, providing essential beekeeping materials, and supporting the establishment of a Queen Honeybee Production Center (QHBPC) in Tubas/Bardala Cooperative. Training sessions on beekeeping best practices and specialized topics such as artificial insemination and hive management were organized, benefiting 54 trainees. The project also introduced advanced insulated hives and provided essential equipment to improve beekeeping practices and honey production quality.

Moreover, the project focused on developing products and market access in the honey sector. Capacity-building workshops enhanced product quality, packaging standards, and food safety compliance. Practical methods for extracting and processing hive outputs were introduced, and the targeted cooperatives received equipment to improve product packaging and marketability.

In the dairy value chain, the project aimed to enhance production efficiency and support the economic resilience of local communities. One primary intervention was establishing an alternative fodder production unit, significantly reducing fodder costs for livestock herders. The introduction of a community-based para-vet model involved training livestock farmers in essential veterinary practices, improving livestock health and productivity. A comprehensive vaccination campaign was conducted, resulting in significant health improvements and estimated production loss savings.

Support for dairy production included supplying equipment to livestock cooperatives, improving production efficiency, reducing work burden on women, and enhancing the quality and safety of cheese products. Capacity-building workshops and practical training sessions further enhanced the skills of farmers and dairy producers, promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

Additionally, the project conducted a study on women's livelihoods in the Jordan Valley, providing insights into the gendered dynamics of agricultural work and proposing strategies to enhance cooperative awareness and support small farmers. A promotional day and closing ceremony increased consumer awareness and appreciation for dairy and honey products, resulting in positive feedback and increased sales for the cooperatives.

While the project delivered several immediate benefits and outputs, broader market impacts and systemic changes were not strongly evident at the time of evaluation. The para-vet model's functionality and changes in farmer behavior regarding disease prevention were limited. The operationalization of the HQBPC was delayed, and the alternative feed machines lacked management and maintenance plans. Equipment and tools provided to cooperatives did not significantly improve market access or prices for farmers' products, and did not change existing dynamics between the cooperatives and the members (essential for transforming cooperative business models). Additionally, training on GYB and SIYB did not result in new businesses or tangible business growth due to the absence of financing. Changes in cooperative governance were also not yet evident.

Several factors, many beyond the control of the ILO and its implementing partners, significantly impacted the delivery of project results. The ambitious timelines were a primary challenge, with the project initially planned for one year and later extended to 18 months, leaving less than six months for the implementation of most interventions, which was insufficient for achieving system-level changes. Israeli-enforced movement restrictions, closures, and the economic decline in the West Bank further constrained project activities, despite adaptive strategies and high commitment from implementing partners. The attempt to implement multiple pilot interventions within a short period proved overly ambitious, as initiatives like the HQBPC, alternative feed machines, and new beehive models required more time to demonstrate effectiveness and scalability. The narrow focus on pre-selected cooperatives, despite being logical and in line with ILO's normative work, limited flexibility and engagement with other market actors who could drive systemic changes. Moreover, the project predominantly focused on supply-side interventions with limited attention to demand-side dynamics, restricting comprehensive market system changes. The lack of performance metrics for key pilot interventions hindered proof of concept and scalability, essential for MSD projects. Challenges in GYB, SYB, and IYB training programs arose from the limited population and educational levels in the small geographic area targeted, coupled with movement restrictions and lack of financing for project ideas, which affected training quality and participant engagement.

**Efficiency** Resource utilization was generally efficient, with funds appropriately allocated to key activities such as capacity building and sector-specific investments. The project's management structure and collaboration with local NGOs optimized resource use. However, ambitious timelines, external



constraints, and pre-defined support targets, impacted overall efficiency as they did not give the project team the needed space to explore alternative ways to deliver results and intervention designs .

**Impact** The project improved the productivity and market access of small-scale farmers, particularly women, through the introduction of sustainable practices and enhancement of cooperative management. The project's emphasis on gender equality and support for women-led cooperatives had a positive socio-economic impact, enhancing women's participation in the agricultural sector. Despite these positive socio-economic impacts, broader market system changes were limited.

**Sustainability** The project laid a good foundation for sustainability through various measures, including capacity building and engagement with local NGOs. However, continued support and comprehensive performance metrics to track and validate higher-level results are crucial to ensure lasting impacts. The project's reliance on local NGOs and emphasis on building local capacities are positive steps towards sustainability. However, the lack of comprehensive performance metrics and the need for a longer-term commitment to embed systemic changes highlight the risk of achieving lasting impact.

## **Conclusions**

The project, implemented within a notably short timeframe of 18 months due to the constraints of being financed by the Supplementary Budget of the Government of Japan, aimed to address systemic market failures in the OPT. The project targeted the dairy and honey value chains, focusing on enhancing the capacities of marginalized groups, particularly women and youth, through the ILO's Approach to Inclusive Market Systems AIMS. The project was ambitious in its scope and objectives, given the limited duration and the complexity of the issues it sought to address.

The project demonstrated high relevance to the socio-economic context of the OPT, effectively addressing critical market system barriers and building local capacities. It aligned well with national and international development strategies, including the National Agriculture Sector Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project also adhered to key International Labour Standards promoting decent work, gender equality, and occupational safety. However, the inherent limitations of the short project duration impacted the project's ability to fully realize the potential of the AIMS methodology. Given this constraint, a traditional development approach of direct delivery, incorporating elements of AIMS, might have been more appropriate.

The effectiveness of the project was mixed, with notable successes in capacity building and some limitations in achieving systemic change. While the project facilitated direct input delivery and targeted training, significantly improving the skills and productivity of local farmers and cooperatives, it skewed more towards responding to immediate needs rather than balancing immediate and long-term development goals as per the AIMS approach. The absence of specific outcome indicators and the ambiguity of some existing output indicators posed challenges for comprehensive progress tracking, making it difficult to fully ascertain the project's effectiveness. Nonetheless, the project achieved significant outputs and met all of its quantitative output targets, including fostering cooperative and enterprise development, enhancing productivity in the targeted value chains, and supporting the formation of new cooperatives and business development.

The project utilized resources efficiently, with funds appropriately allocated to key activities such as capacity building and sector-specific investments. The management structure and collaboration with local NGOs optimized resource use. However, the ambitious timelines, external constraints such as Israeli-enforced movement restrictions and economic decline, and pre-defined support targets impacted overall

efficiency. These factors limited the project's ability to explore alternative ways to deliver results and implement intervention designs.

The project had positive impacts on the productivity and market access of small-scale farmers, particularly women. It introduced sustainable practices and enhanced cooperative management, leading to improved socio-economic outcomes. However, broader market system changes were limited. While the project delivered immediate benefits and outputs, systemic changes, such as the operationalization of the HQBPC and improvements in market access and prices, were not strongly evident at the time of evaluation.

The project laid a foundation for sustainability through capacity building and engagement with local NGOs. However, continued support and comprehensive performance metrics to track and validate higher-level results are crucial to ensure lasting impacts. The reliance on local NGOs and the emphasis on building local capacities are positive steps towards sustainability. Yet, the lack of comprehensive performance metrics and the need for a longer-term commitment to embed systemic changes highlight the risk of achieving lasting impact.

### **Good Practices**

The implementation of the project highlighted several good practices that can be replicated in similar initiatives to foster sustainable development and economic growth in challenging environments. Notably, two practices stood out: the adaptation and localization of GYB and SIYB training programs and the establishment of strategic partnerships with local NGOs and government entities. The localization effort enhanced the capacity of local trainers and participants, equipping them with essential skills to develop and strengthen their small businesses, demonstrating the effectiveness of tailoring global tools to local contexts. Additionally, the project formed strategic partnerships with local NGOs and government entities, involving a consortium of local agricultural NGOs—PARC, UAWC, LRC, PFU, and ACAD—and aligning activities with national development plans and policies through the involvement of the MoA and CWA. These partnerships ensured the integration of successful project components into broader government and NGO programs, enhancing the potential for sustainability. This model of leveraging local partnerships can be beneficial in other contexts to ensure alignment with local priorities and enhance project sustainability.

### **Lessons Learned**

Several valuable lessons emerged from this evaluation, offering critical insights for sustainable development in similar contexts. First, comprehensive capacity building is essential, but it must be integrated with financial support mechanisms to translate training into tangible business growth. Second, longer project durations are necessary to achieve systemic and sustainable impacts, as short timelines constrain the full development and assessment of interventions. Third, a balanced approach that includes both supply-side and demand-side interventions is crucial for driving comprehensive market system changes. Fourth, flexibility and adaptability in project implementation enhance responsiveness to changing contexts and emerging needs. Finally, a holistic approach to gender and inclusivity, with detailed strategies and specific indicators, ensures that interventions effectively address the needs of all marginalized groups, including women and individuals with disabilities.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the evaluation findings and lessons learned, several recommendations have been proposed to guide immediate actions, follow-up programming, and future similar projects.

## **Recommendations for Immediate Action**

1. **Follow-Up and Strengthen Facilities Established by the Project to Bolster their Sustainability:** Engage with the targeted cooperatives to finalize agreements on the utilization and sustainability of project-established facilities and tools. Provide mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance to ensure these facilities operate on a commercially viable basis.
2. **Support GYB and SIYB Trainees in Accessing Finance:** Ensure GYB and SIYB trainees are ready to seek financing for their business ideas and development needs, facilitating their access to financial resources.

## **Recommendations for Follow-Up and Similar Future Projects**

1. **Enhance Private Sector Engagement:** Increase collaboration with private sector actors to drive broader market changes and ensure scalability. This engagement is crucial for creating sustainable market linkages and driving innovation.
2. **Give a more balanced focus on Demand-Side Interventions:** Balance supply-side initiatives with demand-side strategies, including market linkages and policy advocacy, to enhance market access and develop more comprehensive value chains.
3. **Foster Synergies with Existing Projects:** Building on already good practices, leverage synergies with ongoing and future projects to maximize resource utilization and impact. Coordination with other ILO and external projects can create complementary actions and enhance overall outcomes.
4. **Promote Inclusive Practices:** Continue emphasizing gender equality, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability in all project activities. Ensuring inclusivity will maximize benefits for marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
5. **Address Policy and Regulatory Barriers:** Advocate for policy and regulatory changes to facilitate market access and improve the operating environment for cooperatives and SMEs. Addressing systemic barriers is essential for creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises.
6. **Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** Develop robust M&E frameworks with clear and measurable indicators at all project result levels. Future programs should focus on systemic changes, guided by best practices, and include detailed plans to track progress, demonstrate impact, and facilitate data-driven decision-making.

# 1. Project Background

## 1.1. Context

The Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), comprising the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, have been profoundly shaped by decades of conflict and political instability, significantly impacting the daily lives and human rights of their citizens. These territories remain under Israeli occupation, each facing unique challenges due to the prolonged conflict. This occupation has resulted in severe restrictions on movement, access to resources, and economic activity, deeply influencing all sectors of the economy.

Agriculture in the OPT is predominantly characterized by small-scale farmers and fragmented agricultural holdings. This fragmentation limits productivity and returns, compelling many Palestinians to seek employment in Israel and Israeli settlements, where wages are higher. Consequently, agricultural activity has decreased, with women often bearing the burden of unpaid labor on family farms or taking up agricultural jobs without necessary experience or access to skills and information. Many women-owned SMEs operate informally, selling products locally and rarely marketing beyond their immediate areas, leading to sub-optimal operations.

Traditionally, agriculture has been central to Palestinian national identity, symbolizing resilience and steadfastness. However, in the 1990s, many farmers shifted to higher-wage jobs in the Israeli labor market, leading to a decline in agricultural investment and activity. The sector now faces significant challenges due to ongoing conflict and restrictive policies. Incentives for agricultural investment are lower compared to non-agricultural sectors due to high risks, limited access to water and resources, movement restrictions, and occupation policies that undermine the sector. Consequently, the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors experienced negative growth in 2021, with the share of agriculture in GDP declining from about 10.4% between 1997 and 2000 to 7% in 2021.

The majority of agriculture in the OPT is based on small, family-owned farms, and for most farmers, agriculture has become a supplementary economic activity. This limits their ability to engage in competitive markets, locking them into poverty. Gaps in skills and capital, coupled with a lack of incentives to modernize farming practices and low-scale production, are key constraints blocking the development of agriculture. Many small farmers lack the skills and inputs to produce the variety, quality, and volume of products demanded by consumers and agribusinesses. Consequently, over 80% of food in the OPT is imported, and small farmers miss opportunities to sell to domestic and international markets.

The Jordan Valley, a fertile strip of land in the West Bank, holds significant agricultural potential due to its unique climatic and geographical conditions. Known as the breadbasket of the West Bank, the Jordan Valley's warm climate and abundant water resources, primarily from the Jordan River and underground aquifers, make it ideal for cultivating a wide range of crops, including vegetables, citrus fruits, and dates. The region's agricultural capacity is crucial for food security and economic stability in the Palestinian territories.

Despite its potential, the agricultural sector in the Jordan Valley faces substantial development challenges. Israeli occupation policies severely restrict Palestinian access to land and water resources, which are critical for farming. Large areas of fertile land are designated as military zones or allocated for Israeli settlements, limiting the land available for Palestinian farmers. These restrictions stifle agricultural productivity and innovation, trapping many farmers in a cycle of poverty and subsistence farming.

Although the Jordan Valley is rich in water resources, Palestinian farmers face stringent restrictions on water usage. Israeli authorities control the majority of water resources, allocating disproportionate

amounts to Israeli settlements while leaving Palestinian farmers with insufficient supplies. This water inequity hinders the ability to cultivate high-yield crops and undermines the economic viability of farming in the region.

The economic isolation of the Jordan Valley further exacerbates these challenges. Movement restrictions, including roadblocks and checkpoints, impede the transportation of goods to markets, increasing costs and reducing competitiveness. These barriers disrupt the supply chain and discourage investment in the agricultural sector, limiting opportunities for growth and development.

Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley often lack access to modern agricultural technologies and training. This technological gap results in lower crop yields and reduced efficiency compared to their counterparts in Israeli settlements, who benefit from advanced farming techniques and infrastructure. The lack of technical support and investment perpetuates outdated farming practices, further diminishing agricultural productivity and income.

The socio-political environment also poses significant hurdles. Frequent demolitions of Palestinian agricultural infrastructure, such as water cisterns and greenhouses, by Israeli authorities create an atmosphere of uncertainty and instability. These actions cause immediate economic losses and deter long-term planning and investment in the agricultural sector.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza and the resultant economic decline have exacerbated existing challenges. The ripple effects of the conflict, including additional movement restrictions, denied access to the Israeli labor market, and reduced clearance revenues, have further strained the OPT economy. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the economy contracted by 5.5% in 2023, resulting in a loss of USD1.8 billion. The Gaza economy bore most of this decline, shrinking by 22.6%, while the West Bank economy contracted by 1.9%. The fourth quarter of 2023 saw an 18.8% contraction in the West Bank, particularly affecting the manufacturing and construction sectors. In the first months of 2024, the Palestinian economy is projected to contract further, with estimates ranging from 6.5% to 9.4%. The cumulative cost of damages from the conflict is estimated at over USD18 billion, with the Gaza economy expected to worsen significantly.

The Palestinian labor market has been severely affected, with unemployment surging to 75% in Gaza and 32% in the West Bank by the end of 2023. The loss of income for Palestinian workers, particularly those who previously worked in Israel, has had a severe impact on demand in the West Bank. The ongoing fiscal crisis, compounded by the decline in clearance revenues and domestic revenue mobilization, has further strained the Palestinian Authority's ability to provide services and pay salaries, raising the risk of systemic collapse.

While Gaza is undergoing a humanitarian catastrophe since Israel declared a state of war in October 2023, the West Bank is also reeling from the impact. There has been an increase in restrictions on movement, preventing workers from accessing their workplaces and limiting access to inputs and utilities for businesses. Incursions by Israeli security forces have increased, as have attacks by settlers. This increase in hostilities comes against a continued, violent occupation and expansion of settlements. The consequences for lives and livelihoods are devastating. Between October 2023 and March 2024, more than half a million jobs have been lost in the OPT, with at least 306,000 of them being in the West Bank, representing one-third of total employment, and the remaining 201,000 in Gaza, representing two-thirds of its total employment. As a result, the unemployment rate has surged to a staggering 50.8% (Gaza 79.1% and the West Bank 32%). Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has contracted by more than 80% in the Gaza Strip and by 22% in the West Bank. When combined with reduced incomes of workers in the

private sector and the partial payment of wages to civil servants, this translates into losses of USD 25.5 million per day to the Palestinian economy.

The situation has been particularly severe for the private sector, with small and medium enterprises being particularly badly impacted. ILO research shows that 98.8% of employers surveyed in the West Bank, including enterprises of all sizes and across all sectors, report facing some adverse impact of the war, impacting their operations, production capacity, and ability to maintain their workforce. A large number of enterprises reported halting their pre-war plans to diversify and expand production and introduce production lines improvements which would have had the potential to create jobs.

This has had an impact on workers and their households. Faced with job losses, and reduced working hours and wages, ILO research shows that Palestinian households adopted a range of coping mechanisms, including reducing their expenditure, drawing on personal savings, and exploring alternative sources of income such as self-employment and subsistence farming. 87.2% of households surveyed in the West Bank reported experiencing a decrease in income with a majority facing more than a 60% decrease, and an increasing risk of falling into poverty. The gendered impact of these shifts is profound, with men more likely to lose jobs or shift to part-time work, while women increasingly turn to small-scale home businesses to compensate for lost household income.

## **1.2. The Project Under Evaluation**

The project titled "Promotion of an Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises and Decent Jobs for Women and Youth in the Agricultural Sector," funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by the International Labor Organization (ILO), is an ambitious 18-month initiative that started in January 2023 and was concluded in June 2024, with a total budget of USD 740,740. It aimed to improve the lives and livelihoods of women and youth in Jericho and the Jordan Valley through a strategic focus on the honey and dairy sub-sectors. The project built on the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" Initiative, Japan's flagship project since 2006, and integrates innovation, productivity, and environmental sustainability to create decent jobs in the agricultural sector as key strategy elements.

More specifically, the overarching objective of the project was to promote inclusive markets and value chains to increase productivity and sustainable decent job opportunities for low-income women and youth in the Jordan Valley and Jericho. The project aimed to enable social and solidarity economic institutions, particularly cooperatives and SMEs, to become more competitive and sustainable, thereby enhancing cooperative members' income and community development, as a means of achieving job-rich growth.

The project was designed to achieve two outcomes are designed to create a more inclusive and sustainable agricultural sector in the OPT, enhancing productivity, market access, and economic opportunities for women and youth. These outcomes were organized under two main areas: inclusive value-chain development and business linkages as follows:

- **Outcome 1: Inclusive Value-Chain Analysis and Development** focused on fostering the growth of cooperatives and SMEs through a comprehensive Market Systems Development (MSD) approach. This included selection of value chains showing high potential for inclusive growth, undertaking Value Chain Analyses (VCA) of selected agricultural products to identify root causes and constraints, ensuring that interventions are targeted and effective; developing a gender-sensitive Value Chain Development (VCD) plan, which outlines specific criteria and interventions for small producers, ensuring inclusivity and addressing the unique challenges faced by women and youth. Additionally, the project supported producers and processors in the targeted

value chains adhering to quality and safety standards, using ILO's capacity-building tools to improve competitiveness and productivity.

- **Outcome 2: Business Linkages and Partnerships** focused on enhancing the integration of small farmers and producers in the targeted value chains into the broader market system. This involved introducing innovations to enhance production and productivity in the targeted value chains, as well as supporting product development and access to market, promoting long-term sustainability and resilience. The project provided cooperative management and entrepreneurship training to rural producers, equipping them with the skills needed to engage in new market opportunities effectively. Furthermore, it facilitated linkages between buyers and cooperatives to enable small producers to scale their operations and reach larger, and more profitable markets.

The project adopted the 'Approach to Inclusive Market Systems' (AIMS) by the ILO, which prioritizes market-based and sustainable solutions. AIMS focuses on understanding systemic barriers that hinder economic opportunities for marginalized groups and developing long-term strategies for their integration into functional market systems. Having selected the honey and small-ruminants dairy value chains as targets for development, the entry point for project interventions were 8 beekeepers' and livestock cooperatives in Jericho and the northern Jordan Valley, with a total membership of 269 farmers, of whom 117 (43.8%) are women producers. Project funds were used to pilot interventions that addressed gaps and opened growth opportunities along the targeted value chains, but mainly focusing on supply-side development as we discuss later in the report.

The project aimed to establish synergies and build on other existing ILO projects at the output and activity levels, particularly through the ILO's 3-year Cooperative Support Programme (CSP), which supports the Palestinian cooperative sector by consolidating the core principles of social entrepreneurship culture alongside different agricultural interventions. The CSP, ending in 2024, provided strong synergies with the proposed project.

The project interventions were executed by a consortium of five local agricultural NGOs: Palestinian Development Association (PARC), Union of Agricultural Relief Committees (UAWC), Land Research Center (LRC), Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU), and Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD). This collaborative approach leveraged the specialized expertise and local knowledge of these organizations, fostering a comprehensive and effective strategy to address the challenges faced by the target communities. PARC focused on strengthening cooperative management and entrepreneurship, and was allocated USD 49,950 of project funds for this purpose. UAWC was responsible for interventions in the livestock sector and was allocated a budget of USD 74,985 for this purpose. LRC's interventions aimed at supporting beekeeping and livestock development, with a total budget of USD 80,230. They provided essential beekeeping materials, established a honeybee laboratory, and organized training sessions on high-quality honey production. PFU focused on improving market access and product diversification for the project-targeted cooperatives. PFU's budget was USD 75,000. ACAD supported the project by enhancing management and financial capacities in the dairy and honey sectors. They facilitated training using ILO's SIYB tools, focusing on financial management, bookkeeping, and business planning. ACAD also played a vital role in coordinating project activities implemented by the five NGOs. ACAD's budget was USD 50,915

The project management structure was designed to ensure effective oversight, coordination, and implementation of project activities. The key components of the planned management structure were as follows:

The project was envisaged to have a robust management structure to ensure effective oversight, coordination, and implementation of activities. However, the actual implementation deviated from the initial plan in several key areas.

**Project Steering Committee (PSC):** It was planned that a Project Steering Committee (PSC) would be established at the beginning of the project implementation and meet twice during the implementation period to monitor progress, guide implementation, and support the project in achieving its listed results and objectives. The PSC was to include representatives from the ILO, the Government of Japan (RoJ), JICA, and the Ministries of Labour and Agriculture, with implementing partners included in meetings if necessary. The Project Manager was to participate as a non-voting member and compile summary reports of each meeting's discussions, recommendations, and conclusions. In practice, the PSC met only once during the project's lifetime. Instead, a technical committee comprising technical staff from the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Labour (MoL), ILO, and project implementing partners acted as the PSC.

**Project Implementation Unit (PMU):** A Project Implementation Unit (PMU) was initially planned to carry out the day-to-day management of the project under the overall guidance of the PSC. While the PMU was instituted within ILO Jerusalem Office with staff responsible for various tasks, including administration, management, and technical assistance directly related to the implementation of the project, it operated under the overall guidance of the ILO Jerusalem Office management, not the PSC for reasons explained in the previous paragraph.

**Project Manager:** The Project Manager was responsible for coordinating the technical work related to the prioritization of development projects, their pre-screening, and overall project management. Responsibilities included ensuring the realization of project outputs, providing direction to the project team and implementing partners, acting as an intermediary between the PSC and the implementation activities, overseeing project monitoring and administration, and identifying and obtaining necessary support or advice. The Project Manager also ensured complementarity with other ongoing projects, seeking and engaging relevant partners and partnerships.

**Programme Analyst:** The Programme Analyst, based at ILO-Jerusalem, provided additional support to project management activities, including donor relations, quality assurance, and reporting of project activities.

**ILO Technical Departments and Units – Geneva:** The ILO COOP Unit in Geneva provided guidance and additional support when necessary, including facilitating south-south cooperation, sharing lessons learned, and ensuring quality assurance. In addition to the Cooperative Unit, ILO's Enterprise Department in Geneva also provided backstopping support to the project.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Officer from ILO's Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS):** The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer supported monitoring and evaluation activities, providing an overview of the project implementation and reporting processes.

This structured approach aimed to leverage the specialized expertise and local knowledge of various stakeholders, fostering a comprehensive and effective strategy to address the challenges faced by the target communities. The ILO was responsible for maintaining oversight of the overall budget and procurement processes, ensuring the project adhered to UN procedures, rules, and regulations.



## 2. Evaluation Framework

This section brings out the framework for the evaluation study including the purpose, scope and clients, a description of the tasks and deliverables, evaluation criteria and the evaluation instrument used (consisting of the questions to guide the process). It also provides an overview of the organizations consulted/interviewed, as well as the overall qualitative approach used in gathering information and data.

### 2.1. Evaluation Scope, Objectives, and Stakeholders

The main objective of the evaluation of the "Promotion of an Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises and Decent Jobs for Women and Youth in the Agricultural Sector" Project, as stated in the Evaluation Terms of Reference (Annex A), is to provide a thorough analysis of the project's performance, contributing to the ILO's ongoing efforts to support sustainable development and decent work in the OPT. In accordance with these ToRs, the evaluation assesses and provides analysis of the project performance according to OECD criteria, examining project relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, potential impact, and sustainability according to a set of 15 evaluation questions (EQs), agreed with ILO during the evaluation's inception phase. The ToR also expects the evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy, and implementation as well as lessons learned, good practices, and recommendations. Hence, the insights gained from the evaluation will be integrated into the M&E framework of future ILO projects or programs and inform their implementation strategies.

The **scope** of the final evaluation is the project in its entirety, including its environment, project organization, results and challenges. The main **clients** are the Government of Japan and ILO (ILO Jerusalem staff, project staff, and the technical departments and regional office of ILO Jerusalem). The **users** of the evaluation findings and recommendations will include the ILO Project Team, ILO Jerusalem Office, ILO ROAS, the Government of Japan, the Ministries of Agriculture and National Economy, CWA, agricultural NGOs, and ILO's social partners, the Ministry of Labor (MoL), the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), and the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (FPCCIA). The evaluation is also intended to serve other stakeholders: the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), donors, NGOs and beneficiaries.

### 2.2. Evaluation Questions

Adhering to ILO's established evaluation principles, the evaluation was attentive to the need for a balanced, thorough examination of the six evaluation criteria through answering all the EQs stipulated in the evaluation's TOR, but with some reorganization and modifications of these questions. The revised list of evaluation questions ensured that all key aspects of the original questions are addressed while eliminating redundancy and overlap. This approach grouped related questions under broader themes, allowing for a more concise and focused evaluation. By doing so, it maintained the integrity of the original questions, ensured comprehensive coverage of the project's performance, and facilitated a clear and structured evaluation process. This streamlined approach was designed to provide a thorough analysis of the project's relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability in a more organized and manageable format.

The following table presents the revised EQs, and shows how the original questions are captured by them.

**Table 1: Streamlined Evaluation Questions**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Revised Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Original Questions Captured</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	1. How well did the project’s approach fit in the context of the ongoing challenges in OPT?	EQ1, EQ2, EQ5
	2. Were the project’s objectives aligned with national strategies, ILO frameworks, and the SDGs?	EQ3
	3. What is the extent of logical correlations between the objectives, outcomes, and outputs? Are the indicators logical and can data be gender-disaggregated?	EQ4, EQ5
	4. To what extent did the project design and implementation address the specific needs of women, youth, and marginalized groups, including considerations for disabilities and environmental sustainability?	EQ2, EQ5, EQ7
	5. To what extent have project results addressed the identified problems and institutional capacity needs?	EQ6, EQ7
<b>Coherence</b>	6. How does the intervention ensure internal and external coherence, including synergy with other interventions, adherence to international norms, and coordination with other actors?	EQ8, EQ9
<b>Efficiency</b>	7. Have resources been utilized efficiently to reach the project’s objectives, and how effective has the coordination with national implementing partners been?	EQ10, EQ11, EQ12
	8. To what extent did the project leverage resources to promote gender equality and non-discrimination?	EQ13
<b>Effectiveness</b>	9. Have all set targets, outputs, and outcomes been achieved according to plan, and is there a suitable M&E framework to monitor these?	EQ14, EQ15
	10. Is the project effective in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, and what are the visible results?	EQ16, EQ18
	11. How effectively were stakeholders involved in the project’s implementation, and how did communication and support from ILO units contribute to this?	EQ17, EQ19, EQ20
<b>Impact</b>	12. What is the potential impact of the project on the cooperative sector, women and youth farmers, and the general economy?	EQ21, EQ22
	13. Is there any unintended impact that the project has generated?	EQ23
<b>Sustainability</b>	14. Are the results achieved by the project likely to be sustainable, and how will they be institutionalized and used by government institutions?	EQ24, EQ25

Criterion	Revised Evaluation Questions	Original Questions Captured
	15. Will the implementing partners retain and build upon the work after the project ends? What are their incentives and capacities?	EQ26

A detailed evaluation matrix (Annex B) was developed to structure the evaluation process systematically. This matrix outlines the revised evaluation questions (aligned under the relevant evaluation criteria as identified in the ToR) against a set of sub-questions, around which data collection was focused. For each question, data sources and collection methods were specified, measures/indicators that will be used to render judgment in answering the questions were identified, and a brief explanation of how the data will be analysed was provided. The matrix also includes the stakeholders and/or informants to be consulted in answering the question. This matrix served as a foundational tool, ensuring that the evaluation addresses all critical aspects of the project comprehensively and systematically.

### 2.3. Data Collection Methods and Tools

In order to look for any trends or evidence of achievement and/or performance and determine their relative contribution to the project’s stated objectives, data was collected through several means from many different sources, i.e. through a mix of methods to gather both qualitative and quantitative data and information (quantitative data was drawn from secondary sources). These methods were documentation review; in-depth semi-structured interviews; and informal discussions and focus group discussions.

The evaluation team applied methodological triangulation regarding responses and information received which served the purpose of ensuring credibility and validity of the results and crosschecking information to minimize any bias. It also deepened the evaluators’ understanding of the project and the circumstances that impacted on the performance and results. Qualitative content analysis was also used to analyze the gathered information and their various explanations by different stakeholders.

The data collection process was participatory in the sense that all key actors were encouraged to share information, experiences and knowledge. The evaluators have adhered to relevant ethical standards in the analysis of the gathered data and paid attention not to let conclusions be influenced by statements or views given by any particular party.

This evaluation benefited from strong support from ILO and implementing partners’ project staff, who not only provided a wealth of professional experience, feedback on evaluation questions through interviews and group discussions, but also made major efforts to facilitate the evaluation team’s field visits to 4 of the 7 targeted farming communities where interviews with targeted cooperatives and their members were conducted. Over 50 people connected with the project were interviewed during the main evaluation fieldwork, and these included representatives of relevant ministries and governmental agencies, the Government of Japan, ILO Technical Departments and Units at Headquarters, Project Staff, expert trainers who delivered capacity building training sessions, and beneficiary cooperatives and their members. Annex C lists those consulted and formally interviewed during the inception and main evaluation phases. This list does not include names of some 20 cooperative members and farmers with whom the evaluation interacted and from who only informal feedback was sought.

A Stakeholders Validation Workshop was held on 17 July 2024 where the evaluation’s preliminary findings were presented followed by a question and answer session, and discussion (see list of participants in Annex D).

## 3. Evaluation Findings

### 3.1. Relevance

Relevance is here understood as the extent to which the Project's is consistent with national priorities, development partner/donor policies and strategies, and the beneficiaries' requirements.

#### 3.1.1. Fitness of Project Approach to Context

The AIMS approach is highly relevant and well-suited to the context of the OPT, addressing critical market system barriers and building local capacities. However, the project's short duration and fragmented implementation limited its effectiveness in fully realizing the potential of the AIMS methodology. A longer project duration, strategic design with clear measurable results, comprehensive private sector engagement, and performance-based approaches were needed to enhance the fitness for purpose, and strengthening effectiveness and sustainability of the AIMS approach in the OPT. While the project followed several principles of the AIMS approach, it needed a more comprehensive and strategic implementation to fully leverage the approach's potential in fostering sustainable and systemic change in the OPT.

As noted earlier, the project adopted the ILO's AIMS approach to deliver its results. This approach is designed to foster systemic change that promotes sustainable and inclusive economic development. Its key advantages include focusing on systemic change by addressing the root causes of market failures in value chains and considering the entire market system of these chains to identify multiple barriers simultaneously. The approach emphasizes inclusivity by targeting marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and small-scale farmers, ensuring equitable access to market opportunities. Sustainability is a core component, with a focus on building local capacity to sustain market interventions and promoting resilience to economic and environmental shocks. Additionally, AIMS solutions are scalable and replicable, leveraging market forces to drive widespread change.

The AIMS approach is inherently designed to address the complex dynamics of fragile and conflict-affected settings such as the OPT. Stakeholders highlighted the relevance of AIMS elements despite not fully understanding the approach. They emphasized the need for capacity building, systemic market interventions, and sustainable local actor engagement—all central to the AIMS methodology. This feedback underscores the potential of the AIMS approach to address the complex needs in the OPT if fully and strategically implemented. Its relevance to the OPT context can be understood through several key aspects that deepen its fitness for purpose in the OPT.

Firstly, the AIMS approach targets the root causes of market failures and systemic constraints, promoting long-term, sustainable solutions. This is essential in the OPT, where systemic challenges such as restricted mobility, limited access to resources, and economic fragmentation are prevalent. By considering the entire market system, including supply and demand dynamics, supporting functions, and rules and regulations, AIMS can identify and address multiple barriers simultaneously, leading to comprehensive and integrated solutions. Stakeholders consulted in the evaluation have stressed the need for such an approach.

Secondly, the approach explicitly aims to include marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and small-scale farmers, ensuring that economic benefits are widely shared. This is particularly relevant in the OPT, where social and economic disparities, including between women and men, are significant. By working to create equitable access to market opportunities, the approach improves livelihoods and reduces disparities.

Thirdly, AIMS emphasizes building the capacity of local actors, such as cooperatives and NGOs, to sustain market interventions beyond the project's lifespan. This capacity building is crucial in the OPT, where institutional weaknesses and limited technical know-how hinder development efforts. By enhancing market systems and improving access to resources, AIMS helps communities become more resilient to economic and environmental shocks.

Lastly, solutions developed through AIMS can often be scaled and replicated across different regions and sectors, amplifying the impact. By aligning with market incentives and leveraging private sector engagement, AIMS can mobilize additional resources and drive widespread change.

**Box 1: Summary of the AIMS Approach Elements Incorporated in Project Implementation:**

The project included several elements that collectively aimed to create a more inclusive and resilient economic environment in the agricultural sector of OPT. These were:

- **Push-Pull Strategy:** Combining interventions to develop sectors with potential for creating job opportunities ("pull") with efforts to enhance the capacities of marginalized groups to engage with the market ("push").
- **Value Chain Analysis (VCA):** Conducting thorough analyses to identify constraints and opportunities within key sectors, specifically dairy and honey.
- **Consortium of Local NGOs:** Establishing a consortium of expert NGOs to refine and implement market-based, sustainable interventions.
- **Capacity Building:** Training cooperative members on business management, governance, and market access, using adapted ILO tools like SIYB, Think.COOP, Start.COOP, and My.COOP.
- **Sustainability and Resilience:** Emphasizing sustainable practices, such as environmentally sustainable solutions and cooperative development to ensure long-term impact.
- **Market Linkages:** Facilitating market linkages through exhibitions and connecting cooperative members with suppliers and new markets.

Despite incorporating several principles and best practices of the AIMS approach, the project's implementation fell short of fully realizing its potential. This partial implementation has implications for the relevance and effectiveness of the project's interventions.

The brief 18-month duration of the project significantly constrained its ability to implement the AIMS approach effectively. The complexities of fostering systemic change, building sustainable market systems, and ensuring deep stakeholder engagement necessitate a longer-term commitment. Unfortunately, funding from the Government of Japan could not be extended beyond the 18 months. Additionally, extending the project with a cost-extension was not possible, and the available budget was insufficient to extend further than what was possible with a no-cost extension. Without sufficient time, the project struggled to achieve the profound and lasting impacts typically associated with the AIMS approach.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza and the resultant economic decline significantly impacted project implementation. Increased movement restrictions and closures made it difficult to carry out project activities as planned, leading to unforeseen delays. These restrictions prevented workers from accessing their workplaces, limited access to inputs and utilities for businesses, and disrupted supply chains. The intensified movement restrictions and closures essentially made it impossible to implement the project as intended. Additionally, the economic decline worsened market conditions, making it more challenging to engage with the private sector and implement market-driven interventions effectively.

Several challenges further hindered the project's implementation. Capacity constraints of local cooperatives and implementing partners limited the full realization of the AIMS approach. Many

cooperatives lacked the governance and operational efficiency needed to effectively engage with market opportunities, and the project addressed these but to a limited extent. Several challenges further hindered the project's implementation. Capacity constraints of local cooperatives and implementing partners limited the full realization of the AIMS approach. Many cooperatives lacked the governance and operational efficiency needed to effectively engage with market opportunities, and while the project did work to address these issues, it did so in an unintegrated manner with a relatively weak capacity-building strategy. Moreover, the project did not sufficiently address the root causes of institutional capacity constraints. Although the selection of value chains and the initial Value Chain Analyses (VCAs) were well-executed, the intervention strategies for all components were not fully developed. This was due to a combination of capacity issues, time constraints, and the challenging operating environment.

The interventions also lacked a strategic design with clear and measurable results. Effective AIMS projects necessitate a detailed articulation of interventions, including defined outcomes and impact measures. In this project, the absence of a cohesive strategy and clear indicators hindered the ability to track progress and demonstrate the impact of interventions effectively.

Beyond the cooperative sector, there was minimal engagement with the private sector. Successful AIMS projects involve substantial private sector participation to drive market changes and ensure sustainability. The limited private sector involvement in this project reduced the potential for creating broader market linkages and scaling successful interventions.

The interventions were primarily direct delivery rather than performance or results-based. There was little consideration for incentivizing behavior change among market actors, a cornerstone of the AIMS approach. Interventions did not leverage market incentives to drive sustainable changes in behavior, which is critical for achieving long-term impacts.

Additionally, interventions were designed and implemented without a strategic, detailed plan aligning with AIMS principles. The various interventions were not articulated on paper in detail, lacking the strategic coherence and integration expected in AIMS projects. This fragmented approach limited the potential for achieving systemic changes.

The ILO's AIMS approach offers significant advantages for promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development by addressing systemic barriers and fostering market-based solutions. However, its successful implementation requires comprehensive market analysis, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, adaptive management, long-term commitment, robust monitoring and evaluation, and supportive policy and regulatory environments. By adhering to these principles, projects can effectively leverage the strengths of the AIMS approach to achieve meaningful and lasting impacts in the context of the Occupied Palestinian Territories and beyond.

### 3.1.2. Alignment with and Contribution to National Priorities and Development Cooperation Objectives

The project aligns well with Palestine's national strategies and contributes significantly to national priorities in agriculture, labor, economic development, cooperatives, and gender equality. It also supports ILO frameworks, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and several Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, the project contributes to the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative by enhancing agricultural value chains, introducing sustainable practices, and improving market access. Overall, the project effectively addresses local needs and promotes inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development in Palestine.

## Alignment with National Strategies and Objectives

The project outcomes align significantly with several national strategies and objectives in Palestine, covering agriculture, labor, economic development, the cooperative sector, and gender equality. Here's a detailed analysis of how the project contributes to these national plans:

- **Agriculture Strategy:** The National Agriculture Sector Strategy (NASS) 2021-2023 focuses on enhancing agricultural productivity, sustainability, and resilience. The project's Outcome 1, which involves inclusive value chain analysis and development, aligns well with NASS's objective of improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector. By conducting value chain analyses and developing gender-sensitive plans, the project addresses the root causes and constraints to inclusive growth, directly contributing to NASS goals. Activities such as training farmers on sustainable practices (Activity 2.1.1) and supporting food safety standards (Output 1.3) further align with the strategy's focus on sustainable agricultural practices and food security.
- **Labor Strategy:** The National Employment Strategy (NES) 2021-2025 aims to enhance employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth, and to support sustainable economic development. The project contributes to this by fostering business linkages and partnerships (Outcome 2), which enhance access to business services and markets for small producers. This supports NES's objectives of promoting decent work and increasing employment in the agricultural sector. The project's emphasis on capacity building (Activity 2.2.1) and promoting self-employment through cooperatives (Activity 2.2.3) aligns with NES's goals of entrepreneurship and job creation.
- **Economic Development Strategy:** Palestine's Economic Development Strategy emphasizes sustainable economic growth and the reduction of regional disparities. The project's activities in the Jordan Valley, a region identified for development, support these objectives by improving market access and fostering economic opportunities. The introduction of innovative agricultural practices (Activity 2.1.1) and the promotion of new business models (Activity 2.3.3) contribute to economic diversification and resilience, addressing key priorities in the economic development strategy.
- **Cooperative Sector Strategy:** The National Strategy for the Cooperative Sector (2021-2023) focuses on strengthening cooperative governance and enhancing productivity. The project supports these objectives by building the capacity of cooperatives (Output 2.2) and enhancing their management and operational efficiency. The activities aimed at supporting cooperatives in the dairy and honey sectors (Outcome 1) align with the strategy's focus on developing cooperative enterprises and improving their competitiveness.
- **Gender Strategy:** The National Gender Strategy (2022-2027) aims to promote gender equality and empower women economically. The project's focus on gender-sensitive value chain development (Output 1.2) and the clustering of women small producers (Activity 1.2.1) directly contribute to these objectives. By training women cooperatives on safety measures and business efficiency (Activity 1.3.2), the project enhances women's skills and their participation in the economy, aligning with national gender equality goals.

Stakeholders have confirmed that the project's focus on capacity building, market integration, and gender-sensitive approaches aligns well with national priorities. They highlighted the relevance of the project's objectives in addressing local needs and promoting sustainable development, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives in the current socio-economic context.

## **Alignment and Contribution to ILO Frameworks**

The project aligns with and significantly contributes to various ILO frameworks, including the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for 2023-2026, the Programme & Budget (P&B) for 2022-2023 and 2024-2025, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

The DWCP aims to enhance employment and livelihood opportunities, focusing on inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic growth. The project contributes to several key DWCP outcomes. Under Output 1.2, the project enhances the productivity and resilience of enterprises and cooperatives in priority sectors, promoting a just transition. This is achieved through capacity-building interventions that introduce new technology and environmentally sustainable practices, thereby improving the productivity and competitiveness of small farmers and producers (Activities 2.1.1 and 2.2.1). By developing entrepreneurship, self-employment, and business management training packages, the project directly contributes to Indicator 1.2.2. Training provided to cooperative members on business management, governance, and market access enhances their capacity to manage and sustain their enterprises (Outputs 2.1 and 2.2). Additionally, the project supports the use of green technologies and improves working conditions in priority sector enterprises, aligning with Indicator 1.2.3. Training on sustainable farming systems and technology promotes environmentally sustainable solutions (Activity 2.1.3). Under Output 1.3, the project fosters and promotes women's employability in new and diversified sectors. Activities such as clustering women small producers and farmers (Activity 1.2.1) and training and coaching women cooperatives on safety measures (Activity 1.3.2) support women's entrepreneurship and enhance their skills in the agricultural sector.

The project aligns with several country programme outcomes and outputs under the ILO's P&B frameworks. More specifically:

- **Country Programme Outcome 126 (2024-2025)**

Outcome 3: Full and Productive Employment for Just Transition Output 3.3 focuses on increasing the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to formulate and implement policies and strategies for creating decent work in rural areas. The project contributes by developing targeted interventions for rural and small producers, including cooperatives in the honey and dairy sectors (Outputs 1.1 and 1.3), thereby promoting decent jobs in the agrifood sector. The project's activities align with measures for decent work in rural areas, supporting enhanced employment opportunities and productivity (Indicator 3.3.1).

- **Country Programme Outcome 103 (2024-2025)**

Outcome 4: Sustainable Enterprises for Inclusive Growth and Decent Work Output 4.3 aims to support enterprises, particularly MSMEs, to achieve decent work and improve productivity. The project aligns with this by providing technical advisory and support to targeted cooperatives (Activity 2.2.2) and promoting innovative and environmentally sustainable farming practices (Activity 2.1.1). By enhancing the capacity of farmers and small producers on business management and new methods, the project supports productivity, entrepreneurship, and green business models (Indicator 4.3.1).

- **Country Programme Outcome 103 (2022-2023)**

Outcome 4: Sustainable Enterprises as Generators of Employment and Promoters of Innovation and Decent Work Output 4.2 focuses on strengthening the capacity of enterprises and their support systems to enhance productivity and sustainability. The project contributes by developing



value chains in the dairy and honey sectors (Output 1.1) and introducing environmentally sustainable practices (Output 2.1). Effective interventions to support productivity, entrepreneurship, innovation, and enterprise sustainability are evident in the project's activities, including stakeholder mapping and identifying required interventions to meet market demands (Activities 1.1.3 and 1.1.4).

### **Alignment with and Contribution to UNSDCF Objectives**

The project aligns strongly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2025 for the State of Palestine, contributing directly to its strategic priorities. The UNSDCF aims to ensure that Palestinians have greater access to economic opportunities that are inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. This aligns with the project's objectives, which focus on promoting inclusive value chain development in key agricultural sub-sectors, enhancing business linkages, and fostering partnerships for improved access to business services and markets. Specifically, the project's activities such as value chain analysis, clustering women small producers, and supporting value chain actors to apply quality and safety standards directly contribute to increasing productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of MSMEs, thus enhancing employability and promoting decent work in the agricultural sector.

While the primary focus is economic development, the project indirectly supports the UNSDCF priority of ensuring equal access to sustainable, inclusive, and quality social services. This is achieved by targeting women and youth in cooperative development and capacity-building activities, promoting gender-sensitive value chain development, and ensuring that women have equal access to economic opportunities.

The project also strengthens governance in the cooperative sector, aligning with the UNSDCF's priority of fostering democratic, rights-based, inclusive, and accountable governance. By supporting the CWA in enhancing technical and legal frameworks and building on efforts to strengthen cooperative governance following the 2017 Cooperative Law, the project promotes transparency, accountability, and effective management within cooperatives.

Additionally, the project's emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices and resilience building supports the UNSDCF priority of better access to and management of natural and cultural resources. Activities such as promoting environmentally sustainable solutions in farming practices and enhancing awareness of sustainable farming systems contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources.

### **Project Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The project makes significant contributions to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), directly aligning with their targets and objectives. Below is a detailed analysis of how the project contributes to specific SDGs:

- **SDG 1: No Poverty:** The project contributes to SDG 1 by promoting inclusive economic growth and creating job opportunities, particularly for marginalized groups such as women and youth. By fostering business linkages and enhancing market access (Outcome 2), the project helps to increase incomes and reduce poverty among small-scale farmers and producers.
- **SDG 2: Zero Hunger:** The project's focus on sustainable agricultural practices and value chain development directly supports SDG 2. Activities such as training on food safety standards (Output 1.3) and introducing environmentally sustainable farming practices (Activity 2.1.1) aim to improve food security and nutrition. By enhancing productivity and competitiveness in the

honey and dairy sectors, the project contributes to ensuring access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.

- **SDG 5: Gender Equality:** The project promotes gender equality by targeting women small producers and cooperatives, enhancing their skills and economic participation. Activities like clustering women small producers (Activity 1.2.1) and training women cooperatives on safety measures (Activity 1.3.2) directly contribute to empowering women and ensuring their full participation in economic activities, aligning with SDG 5 targets.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** The project significantly supports SDG 8 by promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all. Through activities that enhance business management skills (Output 2.2), introduce innovative agricultural practices (Activity 2.1.1), and support market access (Output 2.3), the project fosters economic growth and improves working conditions. By developing entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities, the project also aligns with SDG 8's aim of fostering economic growth and job creation.
- **SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** The project's emphasis on introducing new technologies and innovative practices in the agricultural sector supports SDG 9. Activities such as the development of value chains (Output 1.1) and the promotion of innovative and sustainable farming practices (Activity 2.1.1) contribute to building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation.
- **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production:** The project contributes to SDG 12 by promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns. Training on food safety standards and environmentally sustainable practices (Output 1.3 and Activity 2.1.1) encourages responsible production processes and the efficient use of resources. By enhancing the quality and safety of agricultural products, the project supports sustainable consumption practices.

In summary, the project aligns with and supports multiple SDGs by fostering inclusive economic growth, improving food security, promoting gender equality, enhancing decent work and economic opportunities, encouraging innovation, and ensuring sustainable consumption and production practices. The project's comprehensive approach to value chain development and capacity building in the agricultural sector underscores its significant contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda for

### **Alignment with the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" Initiative**

The "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" is a flagship development cooperation program initiated by the Government of Japan to promote economic and social development in Palestine through regional cooperation among Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Japan. This initiative aims to create a foundation for a sustainable and self-reliant Palestinian economy by fostering economic integration and cooperation in the region. The Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP) is the centerpiece of this initiative. It is designed to stimulate the Palestinian economy by supporting agricultural production and processing, creating job opportunities, and encouraging private sector investment. The park facilitates the export of agricultural products, contributing to regional economic stability and prosperity. The JAIP also aims to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance productivity and innovation in agricultural practices.

The project aligns with and significantly contributes to the objectives of the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative in several ways:

- **Focus on Agricultural Value Chains:** The project targets the development of key agricultural sub-sectors, specifically honey and dairy, in the Jordan Valley, which is also the target area of the

JAIP. By conducting value chain analyses and supporting value chain development, the project enhances the productivity and competitiveness of these sectors. This directly supports the JAIP's goal of boosting agricultural production and processing capabilities in the region.

- **Capacity Building and Technology Introduction:** The project includes activities such as capacity-building interventions and the introduction of new technology and environmentally sustainable practices to small farmers and producers. These efforts align with the JAIP's objectives of promoting agricultural innovation and modernizing farming practices. By improving business management skills and cooperative governance, the project ensures that local producers can effectively engage with and benefit from the agro-industrial infrastructure provided by the JAIP.
- **Promotion of Sustainable Practices:** The project emphasizes sustainable agricultural practices, including training on safety measures during production and processing, which enhances food safety and quality. This focus on sustainability aligns with the broader goals of the JAIP to create a resilient agricultural sector that can withstand economic and environmental shocks.
- **Enhancing Market Access:** The project facilitates market linkages and promotes business-to-business relationships between local cooperatives and larger enterprises, including those within the JAIP. This helps local producers access larger markets, increasing their economic opportunities and contributing to the overall economic integration and cooperation envisioned by the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity."

### 3.1.3. Logical Correlations and Indicators Appropriateness

The project's logical framework aligns objectives, outcomes, and outputs, but significant weaknesses in the indicators and measurement frameworks undermine its effectiveness. The absence of outcome indicators, ambiguity in existing indicators, and lack of specific measurement frameworks hinder the project's ability to measure progress and demonstrate impact. Adhering to DCED guidelines by developing robust measurement frameworks, including clear and measurable indicators, is essential for improving the project's ability to track progress, demonstrate a business case, and influence market behaviors. Addressing these weaknesses would significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the project's interventions in promoting inclusive market systems and value chain development in the agricultural sector.

The logical framework of the project is structured to align specific objectives with desired outcomes and measurable outputs. The framework includes two primary objectives: promoting inclusive value-chain analysis and development, and fostering business linkages and partnerships to improve market access. These objectives are supported by specific outcomes and outputs designed to achieve the overall goal of increasing productivity and creating sustainable, decent job opportunities for low-income women and youth.

The objectives aim to promote inclusive value-chain analysis and development in key agricultural sub-sectors. This includes conducting value chain analyses to identify root causes and constraints to inclusive growth of cooperatives and SMEs, developing a gender-sensitive Value Chain Development (VCD) plan, and supporting producers in applying quality and safety standards for fresh and processed food. The project also seeks to foster business linkages and partnerships to improve access to business services and markets by developing skills in agro-industrial value chains, strengthening cooperative management and entrepreneurship, and promoting linkages between small farmers and existing MSMEs and cooperatives.

The outputs associated with these outcomes are detailed and include activities such as stakeholder consultations, training, and capacity building. For example, the output to conduct VCA involves holding consultations, conducting studies, stakeholder mapping, and identifying required interventions. The

development of the VCD plan includes clustering women small producers, assessing informal women-owned businesses, and identifying specific training needs. Support for producers includes raising awareness and training on safety measures, business efficiency, and hygiene standards. Skills development is facilitated through capacity-building interventions and the introduction of new technology and sustainable practices, while business linkages are fostered by providing tools and equipment, establishing business relationships, and promoting innovation in agri-food businesses.

While the project presents a coherent structure, the quality of its indicators and measurement frameworks is mixed, impacting the ability to measure outputs and track progress towards outcomes effectively. On the positive side, the project emphasizes gender-sensitive approaches and includes indicators that measure the number of women small producers and cooperatives supported, ensuring that gender-disaggregated data is collected. Some outputs are associated with clear activities and indicators, such as the number of actors supported with training and coaching on safety measures.

However, there are notable weaknesses. The outcomes specified in the project do not have corresponding indicators, making it difficult to measure the effectiveness of the project in achieving its broader objectives. Several indicators are ambiguous and not easily measurable, lacking clear definitions. For example, the indicator "Number of small producers with improved VCD" does not specify what constitutes improvement, making objective measurement challenging. The project also lacks specific measurement frameworks for its various interventions, which are crucial for MSD projects, including projects that follow the AIMS approach. According to DCED (Donor Committee for Enterprise Development) guidelines, effective MSD projects should include detailed frameworks that track progress, demonstrate business cases, and influence behavior changes among market actors.

For such projects, it is critical to track results to demonstrate the business case and influence behavior changes. This project lacks the necessary measurement frameworks to do so, affecting its ability to achieve systemic and sustainable impacts. According to DCED guidelines, having clear, measurable indicators and robust monitoring systems is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and making informed decisions to adjust strategies as needed, something critical for the project under evaluation.

The project's logical framework aligns objectives, outcomes, and outputs, but significant weaknesses in the indicators and measurement frameworks undermine its effectiveness. The absence of outcome indicators, ambiguity in existing indicators, and lack of specific measurement frameworks hinder the project's ability to measure progress and demonstrate impact. Developing robust measurement frameworks, including clear and measurable indicators, is essential for improving the project's ability to track progress, demonstrate a business case, and influence market behaviors.

#### 3.1.4. Inclusivity and Sustainability in Project Design and Implementation

The project effectively targeted women, youth, and marginalized groups, integrating gender-disaggregated reporting and promoting women-led cooperatives. However, challenges like a short duration, fragmented interventions, and the absence of a comprehensive Theory of Change limited its full potential. Significant strides were made in environmental sustainability and improving women's working conditions, but better integration of disability considerations and mechanisms to track the reduction of women's labor burden are needed for enhanced impact.

As designed, the project aimed to address the specific needs of women, youth, and marginalized groups, integrating considerations for disabilities and environmental sustainability. This focus is evident in various aspects of its design and implementation, although there are areas that could be further strengthened to enhance inclusivity and impact.

As implemented, the project effectively targeted women through several initiatives. It promoted the formation of women-led cooperatives and purposefully included women in mixed-membership cooperatives, thereby ensuring their active participation and leadership in economic activities. For instance, the creation of two new women-led cooperatives in food processing and dairy processing sectors in Jericho and the Jordan Valley is a tangible effort to provide economic opportunities to women. Additionally, gender-disaggregated reporting on key project indicators was implemented, allowing for the monitoring of women's participation and progress .

Training and certification programs, such as the certification of 13 local SIYB trainers who trained 64 youth and women to set up or expand their businesses, further highlight the project's commitment to skill development and economic empowerment. The project's efforts to cluster women small producers and assess the needs of informal women-owned businesses for transitioning to formality and addressing decent work deficits are notable contributions to promoting gender equality and improving market access for women.

However, the project faced challenges and limitations that affected its overall relevance and contributions to advancing gender equality and equitable empowerment of marginalized groups, several of which also affected other aspects of project performance. The short project duration and the fragmented nature of some interventions limited the ability to consolidate project achievements and fully realize its potential. The absence of a ToC and clear results frameworks for pilot interventions weakened the overall design, making it difficult to establish clear performance results and linkages to the broader project goals, including in this case gender equality and empowerment results. This gap impacted not only the design of interventions from a gender perspective, but also the ability to track progress and measure the effectiveness of specific interventions. The lack of clear gender strategy at the project level may have contributed to these limitations.

The project made significant strides in environmental sustainability, particularly through pilots such as smart beehives and silage production. The introduction of smart beehives aimed to improve honey production while promoting sustainable beekeeping practices. The pilot on silage production using corn shredders addressed high feed costs and encouraged agricultural waste reduction and circularity. These interventions not only laid important ground work for improving production efficiency, but also made important contribution to environmental resilience by promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

In the dairy value chain, the project provided tools that enhanced production and reduced the labor burden shouldered by women. For example, battery-operated milking machines and solar energy systems addressed issues related to unreliable electricity access and promoted off-grid operations. However, the project did not include a comprehensive mechanism to track or measure achievements in reducing women's labor burden holistically.

Despite these achievements, some beneficiaries expressed that the project support, while appreciated, did not always align with their specific needs. Interviews with cooperative members revealed a desire for more consultative processes in identifying their needs. Although a needs assessment was conducted, the cooperatives felt that their voices were not sufficiently integrated into the decision-making processes.

The project also conducted an assessment of working conditions for women in the Jordan Valley, responding to identified needs and challenges. This assessment provided important evidence on the gendered dynamics of agricultural work, highlighting the economic and political challenges faced by women, such as land abandonment and insufficient legal protection. The project's interventions were designed to improve these conditions by promoting cooperative models and supporting small farmers, which are essential for preserving agricultural traditions and enhancing women's economic participation.

Despite these strengths, there are areas for improvement. The project documentation did not provide specific details on how considerations for disabilities were integrated into the design and implementation, and the evaluation could not substantiate implementation of any such considerations in practice. Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for individuals with disabilities in training programs, cooperative development, and market access initiatives would have strengthened the project's overall relevance and alignment with broader inclusivity goals.

## 3.2. Coherence

For the purposes of this evaluation, coherence assesses as the extent to which the project is compatible with other interventions in the OPT, particularly in the agriculture, cooperative, and labor sectors.

### 3.2.1. Alignment with National and International Interventions

The project aligns well with national and international strategies, particularly in agriculture, labor, and cooperative development. It demonstrated coherence with past ILO interventions, continuing the certification process for trainers, although practical limitations in cooperative capacity building affected overall coherence.

The project aligns well with national strategies and international frameworks, supporting key priorities in agriculture, labor, economic development, cooperatives, and gender equality, as detailed under the relevance section.

Building on these alignments, the project also demonstrated coherence with past and ongoing ILO interventions, particularly in the development of the cooperative sector. It enabled the continuation of the certification process for Master trainers in Start Your Business (SYB), Grow Your Business (GYB), and Improve Your Business (IYB), which began under a previous ILO project. This continuation is crucial as it builds on established foundations, ensuring sustained capacity development within the cooperative sector. Additionally, the project kick-started a new process of certification for trainers, demonstrating coherence by expanding and deepening the ILO's capacity-building initiatives in the region. This approach not only aligns with national and international priorities but also ensures that previous investments in training and capacity building are leveraged and extended, creating a more robust and sustainable cooperative sector. However, it is important to note that cooperative capacity building interventions had limitations in practice, which are discussed in detail under the effectiveness section. These limitations suggest that coherence was not as strong in practice as it could have been in theory.

### 3.2.2. Adherence to International Norms and Standards

The project aligns with key International Labour Standards, promoting decent work, gender equality, and occupational safety. It effectively integrates these standards into its design and implementation, contributing to Palestine's adherence to international labor norms.

The project adheres to several key International Labour Standards (ILS), which are a comprehensive set of legal instruments designed to promote opportunities for decent and productive work, under conditions of freedom, equity, security, and dignity. These standards are established by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and ratified by member states, including Palestine. The project aligns with these standards both in theory and practice.

In supporting the establishment and strengthening of cooperatives, the project aligns with Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize. This was practically demonstrated by forming new women-led cooperatives and strengthening existing mixed-gender cooperatives, which

facilitated freedom of association and enhanced organizational capacities. Furthermore, by improving market access conditions, including through supporting productivity improvements and increased competitiveness- for producers, the project can align with Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining. This was evidenced through capacity-building activities and the promotion of cooperative governance, enhancing members' ability to engage in collective bargaining and decision-making processes.

The project also promotes gender equality and non-discrimination in the workplace, aligning with Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration and Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation). Gender-disaggregated reporting, the formation of women-led cooperatives, and targeted training programs for women ensured equitable access to economic opportunities and fair remuneration, actively working to reduce gender disparities. Indirectly, the project supports the elimination of child labor, aligning with Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age and Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, by improving economic conditions for families and providing decent work opportunities for adults, thus reducing the economic necessity for child labor.

In terms of occupational safety and health, the project adheres to Convention No. 155 by emphasizing safe working conditions and occupational health. This was practically demonstrated through training on safety measures, business efficiency, and hygiene standards in food processing and dairy cooperatives. The project's assessment of working conditions for women in the Jordan Valley and subsequent interventions addressed specific occupational health challenges, promoting a safer working environment.

Palestine has demonstrated a commitment to adhering to these international labor standards by ratifying key conventions and integrating their principles into national policies and programs. The project's alignment with these standards underscores its commitment to promoting decent work, ensuring fair treatment and equitable opportunities for all workers, and fostering a safe and healthy working environment.

### **3.2.3. Synergies and Complementarities with Other Interventions**

The project achieved significant synergies with other national and international interventions through strong collaboration with MoA and local NGOs, aligning with the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative, and engaging various stakeholders. This coordination enhanced the likelihood of project impact and sustainability.

The project achieved several synergies and complementarities with other interventions at both national and international levels. By collaborating with local NGOs and forming a consortium for market-based interventions, the project leveraged local expertise and resources, laying important foundations for impact and sustainability. This consortium approach ensured that interventions were well-coordinated and complementary, avoiding duplication of efforts and maximizing resources.

Moreover, the project's activities complemented other international development efforts in the OPT. Its alignment with the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative facilitated synergies in promoting agricultural value chains and enhancing market access. The project's focus on capacity building and sustainable practices also complemented efforts by other international organizations (such as Oxfam, CARE International, and others), and local NGOs –including the five implementing organizations- to promote resilience and economic development in the Jordan Valley.

The project's coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, both at the central and local levels, further enhanced its coherence. Regular consultations and continuous engagement of MoA in the project implementation ensured that project activities were aligned with broader development goals and that synergies with other interventions in the agricultural sector were leveraged. Moreover, the project's

continuation of the certification process for Master trainers in SYB, GYB, and IYB not only built on previous ILO efforts, but also integrated new training initiatives and expanded the pool of national trainers in these areas, enhancing the overall national capacity to provide business development support.

### 3.3. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is here understood as the extent to which the Project's outcomes and objectives are achieved – or expected to be achieved - taking into account their relative importance.

#### 3.3.1. Results Achievement

Before delving into the discussion of the project achievement of its intended results, it is important to note that the project's AIMS approach has made considerable efforts to balance immediate and long-term development needs in the two targeted value chains by focusing on both short-term relief and sustainable development:

1. **Immediate Needs:** The project addressed immediate needs through direct delivery of production inputs to the targeted cooperatives and their members, as well as targeted training and capacity-building initiatives, improving the skills and productivity of local farmers and cooperatives. This helped mitigate some of the immediate impacts of the conflict and economic instability.
2. **Long-term Development:** By promoting sustainable agricultural practices, supply-side improvements, and enhancing market access conditions, the project laid groundwork for long-term economic stability. The emphasis on building local capacities and fostering resilient market systems is well-suited to the protracted and volatile context of the OPT.

While the project had a well-structured logical framework, the absence of specific outcome indicators and the ambiguity of some existing indicators posed significant challenges for comprehensive progress tracking. Consequently, it is difficult to fully ascertain the project's effectiveness due to the lack of clearly defined indicators and targets for the two main outcomes and the higher-level objective of the project. Despite these challenges, the project achieved all of its output targets and made substantial progress towards its outcomes through (i) broad capacity building, awareness raising, and advocacy interventions to facilitate cooperative and enterprise development and improved governance in the project target areas; (ii) needs-based support to cooperative development, focusing on the eight cooperatives targeted by the project; and (iii) value chain-specific interventions in the dairy and honey value chains. Key reported achievements are summarized in the following paragraphs.

The project has fostered cooperative and enterprise development through wide-ranging training and advocacy efforts, leveraging findings from the VCA and ILO tools and methodologies. The comprehensive understanding generated by the VCA has informed the design of project activities, ensuring they are well-aligned with the needs and realities of the sector. The insights gained from the VCAs have been instrumental in tailoring support to enhance productivity, quality, and market access for honey and dairy products. Addressing the challenges identified by the VCA, the project recognized that small-scale producers often work in isolation and lack awareness of the benefits of cooperative models, which hinders their growth.

Key interventions implemented to address this included:

- Strengthening the understanding of cooperative values and benefits among 444 women and young farmers (223 women) through 17 workshops organized by the ILO, PARC, and the CWA in January and February 2024.
- Raising awareness of the benefits of cooperatives through a media campaign targeting the general public and local communities using social media, roundtable discussions, and advertisements on local radio stations.



- Initiating the formation of two new cooperatives in the honey and dairy subsectors in Jericho and the Jordan Valley, where there was demand but no existing cooperatives. Local experts from the project's implementing partners coordinated the selection of producers and proposed business models for the cooperatives' development. At the time of the evaluation, both cooperatives were in process of completing their registration requirements.
- Based on a needs assessment of the eight target cooperatives, the project provided a 6-day business management skills training course for 42 dairy and honey producers/cooperative members, including 20 women. This training was intended to equip the participants with the knowledge and skills to enhance their respective cooperative and personal business' operations by improving their knowledge and skills in several key areas: (i) principles of cooperative work, including democratic and transparent management; (ii) financial and bookkeeping practices, encompassing financial literacy and access to financial resources; and (iii) market readiness and access, with a focus on hygiene, quality consistency, production, and marketing, including digital marketing strategies.

Moreover, the project addressed a significant challenge in the target area by localizing the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) toolkit to the Palestinian context. This initiative involved re-certifying three local trainers in Generate Your Business (GYB) and Start Your Business (SYB) and beginning the certification process for nine trainers in Improve Your Business (IYB) through a training of trainers (ToT) course. Under the direct supervision of an ILO-Certified Master Trainer and ILO's Enterprises Department, the re-certified trainers cascaded the GYB and SYB training to 59 women and men from the project target areas. Simultaneously, the new trainers delivered the IYB training to 49 women and men, enhancing their entrepreneurial skills, supporting business model development, and helping them start or strengthen their small businesses. This approach provided localized, relevant entrepreneurial training, directly addressing the lack of business skills and support among small-scale producers in the project target areas.

The project targeted the honey value chain to address significant challenges identified in the Palestinian beekeeping sector, particularly among Bedouin communities in Jericho and the Jordan Valley. Key issues included the need for annual queen bee replacement to maintain genetic purity, lack of extension services and technical support, reliance on costly and often low-quality Israeli queens, and environmental challenges such as extreme temperatures and diseases.

The project's interventions in the honey value chain included establishing a specialized center for high-quality queen bee production, enhancing farmer capacity, and supporting Bedouin communities to improve their agricultural livelihoods. A needs assessment study of targeted cooperatives was conducted by the project in cooperation with MoA and CWA, which included the Northern Jordan Valley, Tubas Governorate Cooperative, Al-Auja, Aduuk Cooperative Agricultural Societies, Young Women of Nuwaimah Cooperative Society, and Aqbet Jabr Beekeepers' Cooperative Society.

Notable progress was made to respond to the needs identified in the assessment, including provision of essential beekeeping materials such as nets, frames, and beehives to augment production capacity in four of the five the targeted cooperatives. This included a provision of insulated beehives which seem to be having positive outcomes on production and hive health according to cooperative members met by the evaluation. In Tubas Cooperative, the project supported the establishment of a fully equipped laboratory with solar panels, an LCD screen, a microscope with a camera, and various other tools, crucial for facilitating research, testing, and quality control in beekeeping and honey production. The cooperative also received project support to establish a Queen Honeybee Production Center (QHBPC). This was done through provision of essential training, materials and specialized equipment and inputs, including 30 beehives, 2 artificially inseminated queens, queen production cups, larvae holders, fertilizing nuclei, queen excluders, feeders, varroa medications, air conditioners, evaporators, and magnifying lenses. These

resources are crucial for modernizing beekeeping practices and promoting high-quality queen bee production. To support the sustainability and productivity of bee units, the project provided sugar for year-round bee feeding, using a syrup-based approach. This ensured consistent nutrition for the bees, essential for maintaining hive health and productivity.

Training sessions were organized for 54 trainees, including 22 women and 32 men, from Jericho and Bardala/Tubas. Topics included beekeeping best practices, honey harvesting, wintering strategies, and disease management. Specialized training on artificial insemination and hive management was provided to professional beekeepers and practitioners, focusing on advanced expertise in beekeeping and practical experience, to build capacity to run the QHBPC. Two prototype hives equipped with advanced temperature and humidity regulation technologies were delivered to Tubas Cooperative to improve bee productivity and honey production quality. Additionally, the project included the design phase for a new controlled hive model to increase honey yields while maintaining high-quality standards.

In addition to these interventions, the project focused on developing products and market access in the honey sector. Capacity-building workshops were conducted to enhance product quality, packaging standards, and food safety compliance. Four workshops were held, reaching 20 participants (7 men, 13 women) from four beekeeping cooperatives in the Jordan Valley. Practical methods for extracting and processing hive outputs like royal jelly, propolis, and bee bread were introduced, along with insulated foam beehives to regulate temperature and enhance production.

To develop branding and packaging for honey, the project provided the targeted cooperatives (The Rural Development Cooperative in Auja, Al Dyouk Agricultural Cooperative, Aqbat Jaber Beekeepers Cooperative) with a 10-gram glass filling and sealing machine (one per coop), along with 1500 samples of 10-gram bottles and 560 samples of 20g bottles per coop. Additionally, customized product labels were provided by the project for each of the five targeted cooperative targeted coop to enhance the visual appeal and marketability of these cooperatives' products.

The project implemented several key activities in the livestock/dairy value chain, aiming to enhance production efficiency, improve product quality, and support the economic resilience of local communities. One of the primary interventions was the establishment of an alternative fodder production unit. This community-based initiative utilized plant waste, particularly maize and yellow corn, to produce over 240 tons of fresh fodder annually. The project supported the Bardala Cooperative with 2 pellet fodder production machines, 8 chopper machines, 4 scales, and 4 simple electric mixers for this purpose. Herders and cooperative members use these machines to produce alternative fodder under a special contract between them and the cooperative. By leveraging local resources and engaging with the Bardala Cooperative, this intervention significantly reduced fodder costs for livestock herders by up to 35%, benefiting over 1,000 sheep.

Another crucial aspect of the project was the introduction of a community-based para-vet model. This model involved training 55 livestock farmers in essential veterinary practices, sustainable farming technologies, and vaccine delivery. The para-vets provided swift responses to disease outbreaks, routine health check-ups, and preventive measures, improving livestock health and productivity. A comprehensive vaccination campaign was also conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, targeting 11,000 sheep and goats owned by 127 producers across three cooperatives. The vaccinations against chlamydia and mycoplasma resulted in significant health improvements and an estimated USD360,000 in production loss savings.

The project also provided extensive support to improve dairy production. This included supplying equipment to livestock cooperatives, such as five battery-operated milking machines, five solar energy systems, 20 stainless-steel milk containers, and 50 cheese-making stencils. These tools enhanced

production efficiency, reduced work burden on women, and enhanced the quality and safety of cheese products the beneficiary farmers produce. Furthermore, a rehabilitated small factory in Jericho, equipped with modern facilities, improved working conditions for eight women engaged in traditional food processing.

Through capacity-building workshops and practical training sessions, the project enhanced the skills of farmers and dairy producers. Training covered various aspects of dairy production, including principles of cooperative work, financial practices, and market readiness. A total of 55 practical sessions were conducted, with each session attended by 3-5 farmers, to provide hands-on experience in diagnosing diseases and administering vaccines. These efforts aimed to empower local communities, particularly women and youth, and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

A promotional day and closing ceremony on June 27, 2024, increased consumer awareness and appreciation for small-ruminants dairy and honey and bee products. The event, attended by around 120 participants, showcased innovative practices and allowed consumers to directly engage with the products, resulting in positive feedback and increased sales for the cooperatives.

Furthermore, and in line with ILO's normative work, the project conducted a study on women's livelihoods in the Jordan Valley, providing insights into the conditions and gendered dynamics of agricultural work. The study highlighted the economic and political challenges that force women into jobs on Israeli settlement farms and proposed steps to enhance cooperative awareness, support small farmers, and safeguard women's rights. Recommendations included strategies for strengthening small-scale farming and promoting agricultural tourism.

### 3.3.2. Market System Level Results and Monitoring

Overall, while the project achieved several immediate outputs and benefits, systemic changes and broader market impacts were not strongly evident at the time of evaluation.

While the project delivered several immediate benefits and outputs, interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries suggested that outcomes beyond these initial results, including at the market system level, were not strongly evident. For instance, the evaluation could not find evidence that the para-vet model was functional as described in project reports. While interviewed farmers who participated in the training on veterinary practices, sustainable farming technologies, and vaccine administration indicated increased knowledge of diseases, disease prevention, and vaccine administration, none of them were engaged in delivering any type of veterinary services to other farmers differently than they had done before the project. None of the trained farmers were referred to or described as para-vets by other farmers interviewed during the evaluation.

Moreover, interviews with farmers did not reveal a strong change in behavior regarding disease prevention and vaccination. The vaccination campaign's direct delivery approach limited its broader market impact.

Technical training on best practices in farm management and honey production led to improvements in some practices. The provision of advanced insulated hives appears to be having positive effects on yields, as reported by farmers. However, these impacts have not yet been verified at a system level and will be more accurately assessed after the harvest in July/August. Similarly, the Honeybee Queens Production Centre and lab were not yet fully operational at the time of evaluation, despite the commitment of Tubas Cooperative to operate it as per the MoU it signed with the project and MoA. This delay in operationalization suggests a lag in achieving intended outcomes.

Furthermore, the production of alternative feed machines had limited management and maintenance plans in place. While the model was extremely useful for farmers, it was not leveraged to strengthen the cooperative's capacity to deliver services to its members. Equipment and tools provided to cooperatives to build their capacity to deliver services to members, including honey filling machines, packaging, and labeling equipment, did not seem to improve market access for farmers or the prices these farmers received for their products.

The GYB, SYB, and IYB ToT certainly strengthened the business development services ecosystem by enhancing the availability and capacity of trainers in these subjects and improved the knowledge and skills of the farmers and entrepreneurs trained. However, the training itself has not resulted in new businesses or tangible business growth, mainly due to the absence of financing. This gap between training and tangible business outcomes indicates a need for more comprehensive support systems.

Finally, changes in governance of the targeted cooperatives were not yet evident, despite the cooperative's enhanced knowledge of cooperative governance and good management practices as a result of the training they received from the project. This lack of evident governance changes further underscores the challenges in translating immediate outputs into long-term, sustainable outcomes.

### 3.3.3. Factors Affecting Achievement of Results

The project's ambitious goals and multifaceted approach led to several immediate benefits and outputs. However, multiple factors limited the achievement of systemic and sustainable changes within the short project duration.

There were several factors, many of which beyond the control of ILO and implementing partners, that affected the delivery of results. These factors are summarized below.

**Ambitious Timelines:** The project, initially planned for one year and later extended to 18 months, faced significant challenges due to its ambitious timelines. Systemic changes in MSD and AIMS projects typically require more time to manifest. The late start and extended inception phase effectively left less than six months for implementation of most project interventions, which was insufficient to deliver system-level changes.

**Israeli-Enforced Movement Restrictions and Closures, and Economic Decline in the West Bank:** The restrictions on movement and access in the West Bank, coupled with the economic decline following the war in Gaza, further constrained project activities. These external factors, despite adaptive strategies and high commitment from implementing partners, severely limited the project's ability to achieve its objectives within the allocated timeframe.

**Overambitious Pilot Interventions:** The project's attempt to implement multiple pilot interventions within a short period proved overly ambitious. Interventions such as the HQBPC, alternative feed machines, and new beehive models required substantial time to demonstrate effectiveness and establish scalability. The limited duration hindered the full assessment and optimization of these pilots, restricting result-monitoring and their potential replication and scalability.

**Narrow Focus on Cooperatives:** The pre-selection of eight cooperatives as primary beneficiaries, while logical and in-line with ILO's normative work, limited the project's flexibility during implementation. Given the weak initial capacities of these cooperatives, significant time and resources were needed to elevate their capacities, which inadvertently constrained the project's ability to engage with other market actors who could have driven systemic changes. Furthermore, and despite these instances of adaptability discussed earlier in this report, the project's overall structure, characterized by pre-selected interventions

and beneficiaries, posed some limitations. While the predetermined plans ensured focused and targeted interventions, they also constrained broader adaptive responses that could have addressed emerging needs more dynamically. A more flexible framework might have allowed for greater responsiveness to the evolving context and facilitated more extensive engagement with a wider array of market actors.

**Supply-Side Focus:** The project predominantly focused on supply-side interventions within the value chains, with limited attention to demand-side dynamics. While capacity development for producers was emphasized, the project did not sufficiently address market linkages, policy issues, and new market channel opportunities. This limited interaction with demand-side issues restricted the project's ability to drive comprehensive market system changes.

**Lack of Performance Metrics for Key Pilot Interventions:** The pilot interventions lacked clearly articulated results and performance measures. This absence of detailed planning for results and performance metrics hindered the ability to provide proof of concept and establish a business case for replication and scalability, which are essential in MSD projects.

**Challenges in GYB, SYB, IYB Training:** The training programs for GYB, SYB, and IYB faced several challenges. The small geographic area targeted had a limited population and educational levels, which constrained the pool of suitable trainees. Project partners invested substantial time and effort in advertising training opportunities and identifying participants, but the population pool remained a limitation. The limited population made it difficult to secure a cohort of trainees with similar educational backgrounds and business experience/interest, which impacted the trainers' ability to deliver the programs effectively. Movement restrictions further impacted training quality; for example, individual assignments could not be effectively administered due to difficulties in reaching training locations. Additionally, the lack of financing for project ideas generated by participants disincentivized them from completing practical exercises that would have strengthened their understanding of the acquired knowledge.

### 3.4. Efficiency

Efficiency is here understood as the measure of how economically resources and inputs (such as funds, expertise, and time) are converted into results. In simpler terms, it assesses whether the project has used its resources in the best possible way to achieve its intended outputs and outcomes, including the broader gender and inclusion outcomes.

#### 3.4.1. Resource Utilization

While the project demonstrated efficient resource allocation in key areas such as capacity building and sector-specific investments, the overall resource utilization efficiency is mixed. Immediate outputs were achieved as planned, but the long-term sustainability and systemic impacts of these investments – a key detriment of resource utilization efficiency- are less certain. The project succeeded in laying the groundwork for improvements in the livestock and honey sectors, but its ultimate efficiency will be determined by the sustained adoption of new practices and technologies and the resulting systemic changes in these value chains.

At the time of the evaluation, total project expenditures and commitments were USD742,120.50, including a total of USD 331,080 (44.6% of total expenditures) allocated to the five implementing partner organizations. These expenditures were made in line with the donor-approved budget to implement various activities, each contributing to the overall objectives of enhancing productivity, market access, and cooperative and business development in the livestock and honey sectors, with a particular focus on

women's livelihoods in the Jordan Valley. Of the total expenditure, USD 198,191.00 (or 26.7% of total expenditures) were for ILO management costs.

Value Chain Analysis (VCA) Studies accounted for USD27,596.00, representing 3.7% of total expenditures. This foundational activity was crucial in identifying key areas for intervention, setting the stage for subsequent actions. The allocation for consultations with community members, existing SMEs, and cooperatives, totaling USD15,023.00 (2.0%), ensured stakeholder engagement and validation, vital for the success of the VCA studies. Additionally, the study on women's livelihoods in the Jordan Valley, costing \$18,600.00 (2.5%), was important for understanding gender-specific impacts and needs, aligning with the project's goal of gender inclusivity.

The SIYB Master Training, costing USD10,800.00 (1.5%), was a relatively small but significant investment in sustainable business management skills development as it enabled the cascading GYB, IYB, and SYIB training to farmers and business owners in the project targeted sectors. Significant resources, however, were dedicated to management and financial training to women and men farmers and business owners in the livestock and honey sectors based on these methodologies, amounting to USD50,915.00 (6.9%). Increasing productivity in the honey and livestock sectors was a core focus, with expenditures of USD80,230.00 (10.8%) and USD74,984.50 (10.1%) respectively. These investments aimed directly at improving sector productivity, reflecting the project's primary objectives.

Product development and access to markets in the livestock and honey sectors received USD75,000.00 (10.1%), supporting the goal of improving market linkages and product value, crucial for sector sustainability. Cooperative development was another key area, with an expenditure of USD49,950.00 (6.7%). This investment in community-based economic growth was reasonably budgeted, highlighting the project's commitment to fostering local capacities.

The ILO management cost of USD198,191.00 (26.7%), being the largest single expense, covered essential management and technical backstopping functions required in MSD projects, without any seemingly excessive overhead. Communication, advocacy, and visibility activities accounted for USD20,248.00 (2.7%), necessary for stakeholder engagement and project visibility. Monitoring and evaluation expenses totaled USD33,200.00 (4.5%), essential for tracking project progress and ensuring accountability. Finally, the project support costs and provision for contingency, amounting to USD87,383.00 (11.8%), provided a necessary buffer for unforeseen expenses, ensuring project resilience and adaptability to its challenging operational context.

Evaluating resource utilization efficiency, however, involves comparing the financial inputs with the tangible results and outputs achieved by the project. The significant investments made in various activities need to be weighed against the actual benefits realized by the target beneficiaries and the broader market system. While the project managed to execute several key interventions, the efficiency of these resource allocations is measured by the extent to which these expenditures translated into meaningful and sustainable impacts. We discuss this in the following paragraphs.

**Alignment of Expenditures with Project Interventions on the Ground:** The allocation of USD331,080 to the five implementing partner organizations represents a substantial commitment to on-the-ground activities. The expenditure on Value Chain Analysis (VCA) studies, consultations, and the study on women's livelihoods was crucial for setting a strategic direction and ensuring that interventions were well-informed and targeted. These foundational activities laid the groundwork for subsequent actions, and their relatively modest costs (8.2% of total expenditures combined) suggest a cost-effective approach to essential planning and stakeholder engagement.

**Investment in Capacity Building and Training:** The project's emphasis on capacity building is evident from the significant resources dedicated to management and financial training for women and men farmers and business owners. The USD50,915 spent on these trainings aimed to enhance sector skills and promote sustainable practices, directly contributing to the project's objectives. Additionally, the SIYB Master Training, though a smaller investment at USD10,800, played a pivotal role in cascading training to a broader audience. The effectiveness of these investments can be assessed by the improved knowledge and skills reported by the trainees, although the translation of these skills into tangible business growth remains limited, as discussed in the effectiveness chapter.

**Sector-Specific Investments:** Investments in increasing productivity in the honey and livestock sectors, totaling USD155,214.50, were substantial and directly aligned with the project's core focus. The provision of advanced insulated hives, alternative feed machines, and other productivity-enhancing equipment represents a targeted approach to addressing sector-specific challenges. While these investments were necessary and have shown promising initial results, the full impact on productivity and market integration is yet to be fully realized and verified at a systemic level. The efficiency of these expenditures will ultimately depend on the sustained adoption and utilization of the provided technologies and practices by the beneficiaries.

**Market Development and Cooperative Support:** The USD75,000 allocated to product development and access to markets, along with the USD49,950 spent on cooperative development, underscores the project's commitment to fostering market linkages and community-based economic growth. These expenditures were intended to improve market access and product value, crucial for sector sustainability. However, the effectiveness of these investments in achieving long-term market integration and enhanced cooperative performance is mixed, with some interventions not fully translating into improved market outcomes as expected. The efficiency of these resource allocations could be enhanced by ensuring stronger linkages between capacity-building efforts and market access strategies.

**Management and Operational Costs:** The ILO management cost of USD198,191, representing 26.7% of total expenditures, highlights the significant resources dedicated to project management and technical backstopping. While effective management is critical for the success of complex MSD projects, the high proportion of funds allocated to management invites scrutiny regarding cost-effectiveness. Ensuring that these costs are justified and that management functions are streamlined could potentially free up resources for direct interventions. However, given the challenging operational context and the need for robust oversight, these costs were likely necessary to maintain project integrity and accountability.

**Buffer and Adaptability** The allocation of USD87,383 for program support costs and contingency provided a necessary buffer for unforeseen expenses, ensuring project resilience. This financial flexibility was crucial in adapting to the dynamic and often unpredictable context of the West Bank and Gaza. The project's ability to reallocate resources and adjust plans in response to emerging challenges reflects a prudent approach to financial management, contributing to overall project efficiency. For example, the switch from hydroponic fodder production to maize/corn silage production was a significant adaptive measure based on the Ministry of Agriculture's recommendations. This change illustrated the project's ability to pivot strategies in response to practical field realities and expert advice. Furthermore, the project exhibited flexibility in addressing logistical challenges. Despite movement restrictions and economic instability, the project managed to reallocate resources effectively and adjust plans to ensure the continuation of key activities. The decision to extend the project duration by an additional six months also reflects a flexible approach to managing time constraints and optimizing the implementation of interventions. This extension allowed the project to better align activities with seasonal agricultural cycles, thereby enhancing the relevance and responsiveness of its support.

While the project demonstrated overall good efficiency in resource allocation and utilization, the true measure of efficiency lies in the long-term sustainability and systemic impacts of the project's investments. The balance between immediate outputs and sustainable outcomes will determine the overall efficiency of resource utilization. As we discuss in the final chapter of this report, future projects might benefit from a more integrated approach, ensuring that capacity-building efforts are closely linked with market development strategies and that management costs are continuously assessed for potential savings.

### 3.4.2. Management Structure and Human Resources

While the project management structure was robust and coordination among partners was effective, the lack of strategic oversight from the PSC and the rigid structure of pre-selected interventions limited the project's overall efficiency. The experience and dedication of the project staff and the strong coordination mechanisms in place were key strengths, but these were somewhat undermined by the challenges in strategic direction and adaptive capacity.

The project allocated substantial resources as planned for effective project management. Key staff within the ILO and the implementing partners were highly experienced, bringing extensive knowledge and skills to the table. The oversight from ILO's technical departments, particularly from Geneva and the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), provided robust support and quality assurance. This structured approach aimed to leverage the specialized expertise and local knowledge of various stakeholders, fostering a comprehensive and effective strategy to address the challenges faced by the target communities.

Despite these strengths, there were some challenges in project management. Although a Project Steering Committee (PSC) was planned to provide strategic direction and oversight, it met only once during the project's lifetime. Instead, a technical committee composed of technical staff from the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Labour (MoL), ILO, and project implementing partners acted as the PSC. This deviation affected the oversight and strategic guidance needed for the project, potentially leading to some inefficiencies, particularly lack of consideration and discussion of alternative approaches to implement interventions to deliver results sustainably (such as, for example, alternatives to housing the HQBPC in the Northern Jordan Valley Cooperative). Members of the PSC met by the evaluation were critical of the lack of engagement in the project decision making processes and performance monitoring, acknowledging their own responsibility for this but also expressing that ILO should have been more proactive in engaging them. Several PSC members indicated they were not adequately informed about the project's progress, noting that internal mechanisms within their organizations did not always ensure that technical committee representatives shared updates or sought strategic advice.

The Project Implementation Unit (PMU) within the ILO Jerusalem Office was responsible for day-to-day project management. Although the PMU functioned well under the guidance of the ILO Jerusalem Office management, the lack of guidance from the PSC may have limited its effectiveness. The Project Manager played a crucial role in coordinating technical work, overseeing project monitoring, and ensuring complementarity with other ongoing projects. However, the absence of the PSC's strategic oversight meant that the Project Manager and the PMU had to rely heavily on the ILO Jerusalem Office management for direction.

Coordination among the project partners was notably strong. Leveraging existing frameworks and ongoing ILO interventions, the national implementing partners found effective ways to work together, acting as a consortium even though this was not initially planned. ACAD, one of the partners, assumed the coordination role, ensuring seamless implementation of the different activities by the five partners. This coordination was facilitated by constant communication, including regular weekly and bi-weekly



meetings and WhatsApp groups for general and technical matters. Partners lauded the project for bringing them together to implement a project, noting that this was the first time such collaboration had occurred.

Despite the overall positive coordination among partners, the project's rigid structure of pre-selected interventions and beneficiaries limited broader adaptive responses. While the project demonstrated flexibility in some areas, such as switching from hydroponic fodder production to maize/corn silage production based on the Ministry of Agriculture's recommendations, the predetermined plans and targets constrained its ability to adapt to the dynamic and often unpredictable context of the West Bank and Gaza. This lack of flexibility may have affected the project's ability to respond effectively to emerging challenges and opportunities.

### 3.4.3. Promotion of Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination

The project effectively promoted gender equality and non-discrimination by prioritizing women-led cooperatives and including women in mixed-membership cooperatives, evident through targeted initiatives and gender-disaggregated reporting. However, the absence of formal gender and disability inclusion strategies limited the project's ability to systematically address these specific challenges and opportunities throughout its implementation. Integrating comprehensive tracking mechanisms for reducing women's labor burdens and ensuring inclusivity for people with disabilities could have further enhanced the project's contribution to women's empowerment and gender results.

The project demonstrated strong commitment to promoting gender equality and non-discrimination, particularly targeting women-led cooperatives and purposefully including women in mixed-membership cooperatives. This was evident in the priorities given by the project in working with women-led cooperatives and cooperatives serving women producers, as well as initiatives such as the creation of new women-led cooperatives in the food processing and dairy processing sectors in Jericho and the Jordan Valley. Gender-disaggregated reporting on key project indicators ensured that women's participation and progress were consistently monitored and supported.

Training programs underscored the project's commitment to the economic empowerment of women. Measures were implemented to ensure that these trainings were designed and executed with a gender-sensitive lens, facilitating equitable access to capacity-building opportunities. These measures included prioritizing women in trainee selection, holding separate trainings for women and men to ensure cultural sensitivity, and adapting training sessions to respond to specific needs expressed by women. The clustering of women small producers and the assessment of informal women-owned businesses for transitioning to formality addressed significant gender equality and market access issues.

Despite these efforts, the project lacked a formal gender strategy document that would provide comprehensive guidance on ensuring a gender-equitable approach in line with ILO standards. The absence of this written strategy limited the project's ability to systematically address gender-specific challenges and opportunities throughout its implementation.

Similarly, the project did not articulate a strategy for disability inclusion. There was a noticeable lack of sensitivity towards disability issues, with no evidence of measures to ensure inclusivity for people with disabilities. The project did not track or address the specific needs and challenges faced by this group. Integrating a focus on disability inclusion, in line with ILO's normative work on promoting decent work for all, could have further enhanced the project's commitment to non-discrimination and inclusive development.

Additionally, the project could have further strengthened its impact by incorporating a comprehensive mechanism to track or measure achievements in reducing women's labor burden. For example, tools

provided in the dairy value chain, such as battery-operated milking machines and solar energy systems, aimed to reduce the labor burden shouldered by women. However, the project lacked a holistic approach to comprehensively track these improvements.

### 3.5. Likelihood of Impact

Impact is here understood as positive and negative changes generated by the Project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Sustainability is understood as systems, knowledge and ideas that are likely to continue after the project ends.

Assessing the project's comprehensive impact is challenging due to its recent completion, but early indications show potential in economic empowerment, cooperative strengthening, and environmental sustainability. However, unintended consequences, such as dependency on donor funding and unmet expectations for financing, highlight areas needing further attention and support.

Assessing the project's impact in a comprehensive manner is challenging because not enough time has passed since the project's completion to observe long-term effects. Given the relatively short duration of the project and the evolving socio-political context in the region, the full extent of its impacts is not yet visible. Therefore, this discussion focuses on the potential impacts based on early indications and the initial outcomes observed.

One of the primary intended impacts is the economic empowerment of women and youth. Through increased income and employment opportunities, the project has the potential to uplift these groups significantly. The capacity building of cooperatives and the provision of targeted training have enabled women and youth to engage more effectively in the market, potentially leading to higher earnings and better job security. Moreover, the training programs, such as GYB and SIYB, have equipped participants with essential business management skills. This empowerment is likely to result in the establishment of new businesses and the growth of existing ones, contributing positively to the local economy. This, however, requires some follow-up support and financing.

Additionally, the project has strengthened cooperatives and small and medium-sized farming and agro enterprises. By improving cooperative governance and management practices, the project aimed to create more sustainable and efficient operations, and there is some evidence that this has been achieved, at least in part. Better-managed cooperatives can provide more reliable services to their members, enhancing productivity and profitability. Furthermore, the project has facilitated better market integration by fostering some business linkages and promoting cooperative models. This has the potential to increase competitiveness and access to new markets, both locally and internationally, providing a broader economic base for the region. Again, results in this area need to be further consolidated and supported to achieve their full potential.

A key impact of the project is the in-depth knowledge of the honey and dairy value chains generated through the VCAs. The VCAs conducted by the project identified critical bottlenecks and opportunities within these value chains, enabling targeted interventions that address specific constraints faced by producers. The VCAs serve as an important resource for development actors in the Jordan Valley. By providing a detailed map of the value chains, these analyses enable quick and efficient identification of development needs, allowing for more targeted and effective interventions. This resource serves as an important guide future projects and initiatives, ensuring that efforts are focused on the most critical areas for development.

The project's impact is also evident in the increased knowledge and technical know-how among many partners and producers involved in the activities. The five implementing NGOs have benefited from enhanced capacities and better coordination, enabling them to establish ways of working together to deliver more effective support to local communities.

Environmental sustainability is another critical area of impact. The introduction of environmentally sustainable practices, such as the use of smart beehives and alternative fodder production, aims to improve agricultural productivity while minimizing environmental impact. These practices contribute to the long-term sustainability of the agricultural sector in the region, ensuring that the environmental resources are preserved for future generations. This focus on sustainability also supports the resilience of local farmers against economic and environmental shocks, thereby enhancing food security in the region.

The vaccination campaign implemented by the project has not only delivered immediate health benefits to livestock, as discussed under effectiveness, but it has also assisted the MoA in updating its outdated records on farmers' holdings in the project target area. This is particularly significant given that the MoA administers vaccinations for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis, and many NGOs run their own complementary campaigns. Updated records enhance the MoA's ability to plan and execute vaccination campaigns more effectively, ensuring wider coverage and better health outcomes for livestock. This improved coordination between MoA and NGOs can lead to more comprehensive and efficient animal health management across the region.

While the above benefits are acknowledged, the project's systemic impacts remain unclear and likely require further follow-up. While immediate outputs and benefits are evident, achieving broader market system changes is a complex and time-consuming process. The short project duration and the evolving socio-political context in the West Bank, including the Jordan Valley, mean that the full extent of systemic impacts may not yet be visible. Continued monitoring and additional support may be necessary to ensure that the project's long-term goals are realized and that its positive impacts are sustained and scaled up.

In addition to the intended impacts, the project has generated some unintended positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, it has fostered the establishment of communities of practice among farmers by facilitating trainings and supporting the creation of WhatsApp groups for ongoing communication. This networking has enhanced knowledge sharing and collaboration among farmers. Furthermore, by engaging private sector input suppliers in delivering production inputs and innovative solutions to cooperatives (e.g., the QHBPC and lab equipment), the project has raised awareness among these market actors about the significant demand potential within cooperatives and their membership base. This increased awareness has sparked a heightened interest in serving this market. While the project could have further leveraged the MSD/AIMS pull approach to deepen these engagements, this remains a critical impact that can be strategically leveraged in future initiatives.

On the negative side, the project's approach of direct delivery of inputs and training, without incorporating conditionality or performance-based incentives, has not effectively addressed the entrenched reliance on donor funding and grants among market actors in the targeted communities. This method may inadvertently reinforce dependency rather than encourage self-sufficiency and market-driven solutions. Additionally, by raising expectations for financing opportunities among participants of the GYB and SIYB trainings without delivering on these expectations, the project has left many feeling disappointed and disillusioned, potentially undermining the trust and motivation necessary for long-term entrepreneurial growth.

### 3.6. Sustainability

Impact is here understood as positive and negative changes generated by the Project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. Sustainability is understood as systems, knowledge and ideas that are likely to continue after the project ends.

The project's results show potential for sustainability, provided that the foundational work is built upon and expanded. The strong alignment with national priorities, the focus on capacity building (mainly through training), and the strategic engagement with local partners and government institutions all contribute to the likelihood of sustained impact. However, addressing the remaining challenges, such as ensuring market access, securing financial resources, and fostering systemic behavioral changes, will be crucial for realizing the project's long-term goals. Continuous support, adaptive strategies, and robust monitoring mechanisms will be essential to sustain and build upon the successes achieved by the project.

This chapter discusses the sustainability of the project's various interventions and evaluates the likelihood of their continuation and institutionalization by government institutions and implementing partners. A critical assessment of each intervention reveals strengths, potential challenges, and areas needing further support for long-term sustainability.

#### 3.6.1. Engagement and Ownership

The strategic and high-level collaboration with government entities, such as the MoA, CWA, and MoL during the early stages of project implementation, and the continued engagement on a technical level with MoA and CWA during implementation, ensured that the project's activities aligned with national development plans and policies. This alignment facilitated the integration of successful project components into government programs.

The project's strategic approaches, such as building local capacities and enhancing cooperative management practices, lay a solid foundation for sustainability. The project's alignment with the AIMS approach ensures that interventions address systemic issues, which is crucial for long-term sustainability. However, the institutionalization of these results by government institutions is contingent upon continued support and integration into national programs. In interviews, both CWA and MoA confirmed commitment to following up with the project's eight targeted cooperatives to ensure that results achieved are consolidated and sustained. They expressed keen interest in doing this, as relevant, in collaboration with ILO and other UN Agencies and NGOs, including the project's five implementing partners

The implementing partners have shown strong commitment to retaining and building upon the project's work. The consortium of local agricultural NGOs—PARC, UAWC, LRC, PFU, and ACAD—played a critical role in executing the project's interventions. These organizations have a vested interest in and commitment to the continued success of the initiatives, as they directly contribute to their mandates and mission statements.

The incentives for these organizations to continue the work are multi-faceted. The success of the project enhances their credibility and ability to attract future funding. The project outcomes contribute to the broader goal of sustainable agricultural development in the West Bank, which aligns with their organizational missions. Furthermore, the enhanced capacities and improved management practices within these organizations enable them to deliver more effective support to local communities in the future. However, the sustainability of certain interventions remains uncertain due to the existing challenges within these organizations.

### 3.6.2. Likelihood of Sustainability of Various Interventions

**High-Quality Bee Production Center (HQBPC):** The sustainability of the HQBPC is unclear. While the center aims to produce high-quality queen bees to improve honey production, the market for these bees is not yet evident or established. The Bardala cooperative, where the center is housed, suffers from several weaknesses, including governance, financial management, and membership issues, which hinder effective and business-oriented operations. Although an MoU was signed with the cooperative to confirm its commitment to operating the center, with provisions allowing MoA and LRC to transfer the center and associated equipment, this does not necessarily ensure the center's successful operation.

**Alternative Feed Production Equipment:** The alternative feed production equipment has demonstrated good financial returns for livestock breeders by reducing feed costs. The sustainability of these results will largely depend on the willingness and ability of the user farmers to invest in maintenance and operation costs of these machines. While farmers have indicated their commitment to maintaining and operating the machines, this could not be objectively ascertained and assessed by the evaluation. Ensuring long-term sustainability will require continuous support and possibly additional training in maintenance and business management.

**GYB and SIYB Training:** The GYB and SIYB training programs improved the knowledge and skills of local farmers and entrepreneurs, fostering a more resilient and capable local workforce. However, the training alone is insufficient to ensure sustainable business growth. The lack of financing for project ideas generated by participants has limited the practical outcomes of the training. For these programs to be truly sustainable, there needs to be a stronger link between training and access to financial resources.

**Vaccination and Farmers' Behavior:** The project's vaccination campaign improved livestock health and reduced disease outbreaks. The long-term changes in farmers' behavior regarding disease prevention and vaccination remain uncertain due to persistent challenges. Changing entrenched behaviors and practices of farmers requires more than a vaccination campaign; it involves continuous education and support to encourage new, sustainable practices. Economic hardships faced by farmers often force them to rely on negative coping strategies in farm management and disease control, further complicating efforts to implement long-term changes. Additionally, MoA's financial constraints prevent it from leveraging the data generated by the project to administer regular campaigns, limiting the project's potential impact on systemic improvements in livestock health management. The long-term sustainability of the health improvements in the livestock value chain achieved by the project depends on continued changes in farmers' behavior regarding disease prevention and vaccination. Interviews with farmers indicated increased knowledge of disease prevention, but there was no strong evidence of a systemic change in behavior. Ensuring sustainability will require ongoing education and support to reinforce the importance of regular vaccinations and preventative measures. The same is true for the results of the technical training in beehive management and milk production.

**Honey Filling Machine and Market Linkages:** The honey filling machines and associated packaging inputs and labels provided to cooperatives aimed to enhance the marketability of honey products. However, its use is unlikely to be sustainable without strong business linkages and market access. While the project has facilitated linkages between cooperatives and buyers, these have not yet transformed into secured supply or contractual arrangements. The cooperatives need to establish robust connections with buyers and develop effective marketing strategies to ensure that the filling machines are used to their full potential. Without these linkages, the machine risks becoming underutilized or abandoned.

While the project has laid a strong foundation for sustainability through capacity building, improved governance, and strategic alignments, several interventions require additional support to ensure their long-

term viability. Continuous engagement with government institutions, strengthening market linkages, and ensuring access to financial resources are critical for sustaining the project's outcomes.

## 4. Good Practices

In the implementation of the JSB project, several good practices emerged that can be replicated in similar projects. These practices not only contributed to the immediate success of the project but also offer valuable insights for future initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable development and economic growth in challenging environments. Two notable practices stand out: the adaptation and localization of training programs to fit the local context and the strategic partnerships established with local NGOs and government entities.

### **Capacity Building through Localized Training Programs**

One effective practice from the project was the adaptation and localization of the ILO's SIYB toolkit to fit the Palestinian context. This initiative included re-certifying local trainers and conducting extensive training sessions to improve the entrepreneurial skills of participants. The project successfully trained 59 women and men in Generate Your Business GYB and SYB, and 49 individuals in IYB. These localized training programs enhanced the capacity of local trainers and participants, providing them with necessary skills to develop and strengthen their small businesses. This practice of tailoring global tools to local contexts can be leveraged in other similar projects to ensure relevance and effectiveness in capacity-building initiatives .

### **Strategic Partnerships with Local NGOs and Government Entities**

Another notable practice was the strategic partnership established with local NGOs and government entities. The consortium of local agricultural NGOs—PARC, UAWC, LRC, PFU, and ACAD—played a critical role in implementing the project's interventions. These partnerships ensured that the project's activities were well-aligned with national development plans and policies. The involvement of the MoA and CWA facilitated the integration of successful project components into government and NGO programs, thereby enhancing the potential for sustainability of project outcomes. This model of leveraging local partnerships for project implementation can be beneficial in other contexts to ensure alignment with local priorities and enhance project sustainability.

## 5. Lessons Learned

Several valuable lessons have emerged from this evaluation. These lessons, drawn from both the successes and challenges encountered during the project, offer critical insights into effective strategies for sustainable development in similar contexts. Five key lessons emerged, emphasizing the need for comprehensive capacity building, extended project durations, a balanced approach to interventions, flexibility in project design, and a holistic approach to gender and inclusivity.

### **Lesson 1: Importance of Comprehensive Capacity Building**

A significant lesson learned from the project is the critical importance of comprehensive capacity-building initiatives. The project successfully localized the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business SIYB toolkit, which involved training local trainers and cascading this training to farmers and cooperative members. However, the lack of financing for project ideas generated by participants highlighted the need for an integrated approach that combines capacity building with access to financial resources. Future projects should ensure that training programs are complemented with financial support mechanisms to translate knowledge and skills into tangible business growth and sustainability.

## **Lesson 2: Need for Longer Project Durations**

The short duration of the project significantly constrained its ability to achieve systemic and sustainable impacts. Systemic changes in market systems development projects typically require more time to manifest. The project's 18-month timeline was insufficient for fully implementing and assessing the effectiveness of pilot interventions, such as the community-based para-vet model and the Queen Honeybee Production Center. Future projects should consider longer durations to allow for the full development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions, ensuring that systemic changes are achieved and sustained.

## **Lesson 3: Balancing Supply-Side and Demand-Side Interventions**

The project's primary focus on supply-side interventions, such as capacity building and provision of equipment, highlighted the need for a balanced approach that also addresses demand-side dynamics. Limited attention to market linkages, policy issues, and new market opportunities restricted the project's ability to drive comprehensive market system changes. Future interventions should incorporate strategies to enhance market access, develop new market channels, and engage with policy makers to create an enabling environment for sustainable market growth.

## **Lesson 4: Flexibility and Adaptability in Project Implementation**

The project's pre-determined structure, characterized by pre-selected interventions and beneficiaries, posed limitations on its adaptability to emerging needs. While a structured approach ensures focused interventions, it can also constrain responsiveness to changing contexts and opportunities. The project demonstrated instances of adaptability, such as the adaptive use of alternative feed machines, but a more flexible framework could have facilitated broader engagement with market actors and more dynamic responses to evolving challenges. Future projects should incorporate mechanisms for flexibility and adaptability in their design to enhance their responsiveness and impact.

## **Lesson 5: Holistic Approach to Gender and Inclusivity**

While the project made significant strides in promoting gender equality and supporting women-led cooperatives, it highlighted the need for a more holistic approach to gender and inclusivity. The absence of comprehensive mechanisms to track and measure the reduction of women's labor burden and the integration of disability considerations limited the project's inclusivity impact. Future projects should develop detailed gender and inclusivity strategies, incorporating specific indicators and monitoring frameworks to ensure that interventions effectively address the needs of all marginalized groups, including women and individuals with disabilities.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1. Conclusions

The project has concluded with several key achievements and insights. This section evaluates the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, rendering a strategic judgment on its overall performance.

#### 6.1.1. Relevance and Coherence

The project was highly relevant to the socio-economic context of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), addressing critical barriers in the agricultural sector. By focusing on the honey and dairy value chains, the project directly responded to the needs of small-scale farmers, particularly women and youth, who are among the most marginalized groups in the region. The alignment with national strategies, such as the National Agriculture Sector Strategy and the National Employment Strategy, as well as international frameworks like the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme and the Sustainable Development Goals, underscores the project's strategic fit and its potential to contribute to broader development goals.

#### 6.1.2. Effectiveness

The project's effectiveness in achieving its objectives was mixed, with notable successes and some limitations. The comprehensive value chain analyses and the subsequent capacity-building initiatives significantly improved the knowledge and skills of the targeted cooperatives. The establishment of new cooperatives and the support provided to existing ones fostered better governance and operational efficiency. However, the short project duration and the fragmented nature of some interventions limited the full realization of the project's potential. Key outcomes, such as the operationalization of the Honeybee Queens Production Centre and the systemic changes in cooperative governance, were still in progress at the project's end.

#### 6.1.3. Efficiency

Resource utilization in the project was generally efficient, with funds appropriately allocated to key activities like capacity building, sector-specific investments, and cooperative development. The project's management structure and the collaboration with local NGOs optimized the use of available resources. However, the ambitious timelines and the challenges posed by the external environment, including movement restrictions and economic decline, impacted the overall efficiency. While immediate outputs were achieved, the long-term sustainability and systemic impacts of these investments remain uncertain.

#### 6.1.4. Impact

The project's impact on the agricultural sector in the Jordan Valley and Jericho was evident in the improved productivity and market access for small-scale farmers. The introduction of sustainable practices and the enhancement of cooperative management contributed to better economic opportunities for women and youth. However, broader market system changes and the scalability of pilot interventions were less evident at the time of evaluation. The project's emphasis on gender equality and the support provided to women-led cooperatives had a positive socio-economic impact, enhancing women's participation in the agricultural sector.



### 6.1.5. Sustainability

Sustainability remains a critical challenge for the project. While the foundational work in capacity building and cooperative development has laid important groundwork, the continuation and scaling of these efforts require sustained support and investment. The project's reliance on local NGOs and the emphasis on building local capacities are positive steps towards sustainability. However, the lack of comprehensive performance metrics and the need for a longer-term commitment to fully embed systemic changes highlight the risk of achieving lasting impact.

## 6.2. Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings and lessons learned, the following recommendations are provided to guide immediate actions, follow-up programming, and future similar programs. Recommendations for immediate action are presented in a table for clarity.

### 6.2.1. Recommendations for Immediate Action

These recommendations require prompt implementation to address urgent needs and set the foundation for long-term success.

Recommendation	Responsible Stakeholder	Resource Implication	Timeframe
<p><b>Follow-Up and Strengthen Facilities Established by the Project to Bolster their Sustainability:</b></p> <p><b>Action Needed:</b> Follow up with the targeted cooperatives to discuss and finalize agreements on the utilization and sustainability of project-established facilities and tools, such as the HQBPC, lab, honey filling machines, and alternative fodder machines. This should include mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance to operate these facilities on a commercially viable basis.</p>	ILO Jerusalem Office, Implementing Partners	Medium	By the end of 2024
<p><b>Support GYB, SIYB Trainees in Accessing Finance</b></p> <p><b>Action Needed:</b> ACAD, with ILO, should follow up with GYB and SIYB trainees to ensure their readiness to seek financing for their business ideas and business development needs, including facilitation of access to finance.</p>	ILO Jerusalem Office, ACAD	Medium	By the end of 2024

## 6.2.2. Recommendations for Follow-Up and Similar Future Projects

The following recommendations are intended to guide future programming to build on the current project's successes and address its limitations, as well as to inform the design and implementation of future similar programs, including any follow-on projects to the project under evaluation. It is recommended to avoid relying solely on pure MSD/AIMS approaches for projects expected to span less than two years. Instead, adopt hybrid approaches that integrate elements of MSD/AIMS with more traditional, direct delivery methods to ensure immediate impact while still fostering sustainable systemic changes.

Recommendation	Responsible Stakeholder	Resource Implication	Timeframe
<p><b>Enhance Private Sector Engagement</b></p> <p><b>Action Needed:</b> Increase collaboration with private sector actors to drive and lead broader market changes and ensure scalability. Private sector engagement is crucial for creating sustainable market linkages and driving innovation. Increase collaboration with private sector actors to drive and lead broader market changes and ensure scalability. Private sector engagement is crucial for creating sustainable market linkages and driving innovation. This can be achieved through the following strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Regular Stakeholder Meetings:</b> Organize periodic meetings and forums with private sector stakeholders to discuss market trends, challenges, and opportunities. These meetings will facilitate open communication, build trust, and encourage collaborative problem-solving.</li> <li>2. <b>Facilitation of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):</b> Establish and support PPPs to leverage the strengths of both sectors. This includes identifying areas where private sector expertise and resources can complement public sector efforts, developing joint initiatives, and creating formal agreements that outline roles, responsibilities, and shared goals.</li> <li>3. <b>Incentivizing Private Sector Investments:</b> Create incentives for private sector investments in project activities. This can involve providing financial incentives, such as grants or tax breaks, as well as non-financial incentives like recognition programs or access to new markets and networks.</li> <li>4. <b>Leveraging ILO Partnership with Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture:</b> Utilize existing partnerships with Chambers of</li> </ol>	<p>ILO Country Office, Project Management</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>

Recommendation	Responsible Stakeholder	Resource Implication	Timeframe
<p>Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture to enhance private sector engagement. These organizations can act as intermediaries to facilitate connections, provide valuable insights into market dynamics, and support advocacy efforts. Specific actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Joint Workshops and Seminars:</b> Co-organize events with Chambers to educate businesses about project objectives and opportunities for collaboration.</li> <li>○ <b>Advisory Committees:</b> Establish advisory committees involving Chamber representatives to provide ongoing input and feedback on project activities.</li> <li>○ <b>Information Sharing:</b> Develop mechanisms for regular information exchange between the project team and Chambers to keep the private sector informed and engaged.</li> </ul> <p>5. <b>Engaging Industry Leaders:</b> Identify and engage industry leaders and influencers who can champion project initiatives within the private sector. Their endorsement and active participation can enhance credibility and encourage broader industry involvement.</p> <p>6. <b>Capacity Building:</b> Provide training and capacity-building programs for private sector partners to enhance their ability to participate in and benefit from project activities. This includes training on market analysis, business development, and sustainable practices.</p> <p>7. <b>Market Research and Data Sharing:</b> Conduct market research to identify key opportunities and challenges for private sector engagement. Share this data with private sector partners to help them make informed decisions and align their strategies with project goals.</p>			
<p><b>Focus on Demand-Side Interventions</b></p> <p><b>Action Needed:</b> alance supply-side initiatives with demand-side strategies, including market linkages and policy advocacy. Integrating demand-side strategies will enhance market access and create more comprehensive value chain development. This involves</p>	<p>ILO Country Office, Project Management</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>

Recommendation	Responsible Stakeholder	Resource Implication	Timeframe
conducting market research to identify demand trends, advocating for supportive policies, and building relationships with key market players in line with the preceding recommendation.			
<p><b>Foster Synergies with Existing Projects</b></p> <p><b>Action Needed:</b> Leverage synergies with ongoing and future projects to maximize resource utilization and impact. Coordinating with other ILO and external projects can create complementary actions, reduce duplication, and enhance overall project outcomes. This requires establishing coordination mechanisms, sharing resources and information, and aligning project goals with broader initiatives.</p>	ILO HQ Technical Unit, ILO Country Office, Project Management	Low	Medium-term
<p><b>Promote Inclusive Practices</b></p> <p><b>Action Needed:</b> Continue emphasizing gender equality, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability in all project activities. Ensuring inclusivity will maximize benefits for marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities. This can be done through targeted outreach, inclusive program design, and monitoring inclusion indicators</p>	ILO Country Office, Project Management	Low	Long-term
<p><b>Address Policy and Regulatory Barriers</b></p> <p><b>Action Needed:</b> Advocate for policy and regulatory changes to facilitate market access and improve the operating environment for cooperatives and SMEs. Addressing systemic barriers is essential for creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises. This involves engaging in policy dialogues, drafting policy recommendations, and mobilizing stakeholders to support regulatory reforms.</p>	ILO Country Office, Tripartite Constituents	High	Long-term
<p><b>Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation Systems</b></p> <p><b>Action Needed:</b> Develop robust M&amp;E frameworks with clear and measurable indicators at all project result levels. Future programs should avoid direct delivery and instead focus on systemic changes. Intervention design and delivery should be guided by DCED best practices, emphasizing clear incentive-based performance metrics. Monitoring and evaluation should include detailed plans to track progress, demonstrate impact, and facilitate data-driven decision-making. This involves training project staff on M&amp;E best practices, utilizing technology for data collection and analysis,</p>	ILO HQ Technical Unit, ILO Regional Office, Project Management	Low	Medium/Long-Term

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsible Stakeholder</b>	<b>Resource Implication</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
and ensuring continuous feedback loops for adaptive management.			

## 7. Annexes

### **Annex A: Evaluation Terms of Reference**

Terms of Reference (ToR) for the final evaluation of the Project:  
Evaluation of “Promotion of an Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises  
and Decent Jobs for Women and Youth in the Agricultural Sector (JSB-OPT)”

<b>Key Facts</b>	
<b>DC Symbol:</b>	<b>PSE/22/03/JPN</b>
<b>Country:</b>	<b>Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)</b>
<b>Project titles:</b>	<b>“Promotion of an Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises and Decent Jobs for Women and Youth in the Agricultural Sector (JSB -OPT)”</b>
<b>Duration:</b>	<b>18 months – (Jan. 2023 – June 2024)</b>
<b>Start Date:</b>	<b>Jan. 2023</b>
<b>End Date:</b>	<b>June 2024</b>
<b>ILO Administrative unit:</b>	<b>Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS)</b>
<b>ILO Technical Backstopping Unit:</b>	<b>DWT-Beirut; ILO-OPT;</b>
<b>Collaborating ILO Units:</b>	<b>COOP, INWORK; ENTERPRISES, RO-Arab States;</b>
<b>Evaluation requirements:</b>	<b>Internal final Evaluation</b>
<b>Donor:</b>	<b>ROJ, the Government of Japan</b>
<b>Budget:</b>	<b>740,740 USD</b>
<b>Evaluation Manager</b>	<b>Younis Sbeih</b>

## Background

The current global challenges of soaring food prices and widespread shortages, coupled with the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, have raised significant alarm regarding the availability of essential commodity crops like wheat, corn, and oil seeds. These critical concerns are particularly worrisome for the most vulnerable communities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) who are likely to bear the brunt of further price escalations and supply constraints. The urgency is directly linked to the rise of the annual inflation rate worldwide, as measured by the consumer price index (CPI), which in March 2022 was more than twice the rate of 3.7 percent recorded in March 2021<sup>1</sup>. The overall rise in inflation started as a reflection of the effects of the COVID-19-related lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, and more recently has been driven by a surge in energy and food prices since the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 and the Gaza war since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This conflict has inflicted a major shock on commodity markets, disrupting global and National patterns of trade, production, and consumption in ways that are likely to keep prices at high levels in the coming years. Food prices are now soaring. In March 2022, they were 9.1 percent higher than in March 2021 rendering people in low-income countries the most vulnerable. The higher food prices contribute to a reduction in purchasing power, particularly amongst the most vulnerable communities in less developed countries. Women and youth are particularly vulnerable to inflation shocks, as they tend to have lower income, less access to stable and well-paying jobs, and limited savings and financial assets compared to other demographic groups. It is therefore critical to design measures that support the resilience of these groups and introduce systematic and sustainable initiatives to encourage local production as an immediate response to the global and national food crisis.

The rich agricultural heritage of Palestinians, deeply rooted in their connection to the land, can play a vital role in ensuring food security and resilience in the face of global uncertainties. Agriculture has been central to the Palestinian national identity and is largely associated with the concepts of resilience and steadfastness. By harnessing the strength of their agricultural potential, OPT can address concerns about food supply shortages and reduce their dependence on imported items that are susceptible to price fluctuations and supply disruptions.

The 'Promotion of Sustainable Enterprises for Women and Youth in the Agricultural Sector' project, funded by the Government of Japan (ROJ), facilitates connections between innovation, productivity, and environmental sustainability. , built on the advancement of the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity” Initiative, the flagship project of the Government of Japan since 2006. The project aims to contribute to the sustainable creation of decent jobs in the agricultural sector through inclusive market systems and value chain development (VCD) in agriculture sectors. The activities of the project build on sectoral assessments conducted in seven agriculture subsectors (honey, dairy, dates, grapes, medicinal herbs, vegetables, and agritourism) and in-depth value chain analysis carried out in the honey and dairy sectors. The project’s strategy includes piloting market-based interventions to enhance productivity, expand access to markets and create employment opportunities for the target groups.

## The core Problem

In the agricultural sector in the OPT, farmers and workers face interconnected challenges:

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<sup>1</sup> ILOStat, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/inflation-more-than-doubled-between-march-2021-and-march-2022/> (accessed 19/07/2023)

1. Limited cooperative participation and awareness of the benefits of cooperative membership among potential members.
2. Limited business and financial management skills and awareness hamper the effective management of income-generating activities among small-scale dairy farming and small beekeepers and processors.
3. Limited resources or expertise for accessing new markets due to logistical or regulatory barriers. And product innovation and packaging improvement.
4. Limited domestic production and prevalent disease outbreaks contribute to Low productivity of the dairy and honey sector.
  - a. In the dairy sector:  
 Limited access to cost-effective feed options, hindering productivity improvements.  
 High prevalence of disease outbreaks due to inadequate veterinary support and prevention measures.  
 Insufficient knowledge or resources for implementing hydroponic fodder production and para-vet models.
  - b. In the honey sector:  
 Lack of modern infrastructure and resources for queen bee production.  
 Limited technical training opportunities for beekeepers to enhance productivity.  
 Challenges in addressing factors contributing to declining bee populations, such as disease and habitat loss.

Tackling these constraints sustainably will require long-term efforts of ILO and partners targeted pilot interventions, including:

- The provision of business management training to honey and dairy producers.
- The development of cooperatives and the design of strategies that help attract new members.
- The encouragement of product diversification, improved packaging, and access to new markets, for instance by raising consumer awareness about the health benefits of dairy and honey products.
- The implementation of strategies to enhance productivity:
  - a. In the dairy sector, through the establishment of a community-driven hydroponic fodder production system that reduces production costs and a community-based para-vet model that helps contain the prevalence of disease outbreaks.
  - b. In the honey sector, through the establishment of a modern queen bee production centre and provision of technical training to beekeepers

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies to enhance productivity, market access, and sustainability in the OPT agricultural sector.

## Project objectives

The project has been working, since March 2023, on the development and implementation of a strategy to improve the lives and livelihoods of women and youth in Jericho and Jordan Valley. After a thorough analysis of different agricultural subsectors, the project selected honey and dairy as sub-sectors with potential for women- and youth-inclusive growth and job creation. The project then conducted in-depth



analyses of the root causes of constraints in each sub-sector and developed, in consultation with key stakeholders, a strategy to create more decent opportunities for women and youth in these sectors.

After building this solid strategy, the ILO carefully selected and mobilized five NGOs specialized in agriculture to establish a consortium: the Land Research centre (LRC), the Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU), the Agricultural Development Association (PARC), the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) and the Arab Centre for Agricultural Development (ACAD). With this collaborative approach, to project aims to build local ownership and leverage the complementary expertise of these organizations to drive market transformations.

The strategy involves a long-term strategy with short-term goals to help vulnerable producer groups, especially women and youth, in both sectors access better inputs, develop capacities to diversify production, exploit new market opportunities, enhance productivity, and improve the management of their production.

**Project Development objective:**

Promotion of Inclusive Markets and Value Chains for increased productivity and sustainable decent job opportunities for low-income women and youth in the Jordan valley and Jericho.

**Project-Specific Objectives:**

Inclusive value-chain analysis and development in key agricultural sub-sectors fostered through business linkages and partnerships for improved access to business services and markets.

**Outcome 1:** Inclusive Value-chain Analysis and development in key agricultural sub-sectors promoted.

**Output 1.1:** Value Chain Analysis (VCA) of pre-selected value chains and producers to identify root causes and constraints to inclusive growth of cooperatives and SMEs with high potential for absorption of unemployed youth and women.

**Output 1.2:** A gender-sensitive Value Chain Development (VCD plan) developed for economic social and environmental upgrading with clear targeting criteria of small producers and linkages for opportunities and priorities for interventions.

**Output 1.3:** Producers, processors, and other value chain actors supported towards applying quality and safety standards for fresh and processed food for feasibility requirements and market potential, using ILO's capacity-building tools including those for improving capacities of agricultural cooperatives (e.g. My. Coop and Manage. Coop), linking agricultural innovation and VCD, to improve competitiveness and productivity.

**Outcome 2:** Business linkages and partnerships fostered for improved access to business services and markets for small producers and their cooperatives.

**Output 2-1:** Through the provision of expertise and technical know-how, skills in agro-industrial value chains developed with a focus on introducing smart, innovative, and environmentally sustainable, solutions in farming practices, processing, packaging, and marketing of agri-business value chains.

**Output 2.2:** Rural/small producers and farmers in selected value chains supported through cooperative management and entrepreneurship training using ILO's capacity-building tools that allow them to effectively engage in new opportunities and markets.

**Output 2.3:** Linkages between small farmers and producers with existing MSMEs and cooperatives in agri-food businesses fostered, and access to relevant financial and marketing services promoted to increase efficiency and outreach in selected value chains thus enhancing their access to markets.

## Project Strategy

The ILO implements the 'Approach to Inclusive Market Systems' (AIMS) to enhance livelihood interventions for vulnerable groups, prioritizing market-based and sustainable solutions. Unlike traditional approaches focused on direct service delivery, AIMS seeks to understand systemic barriers

hindering economic opportunities for marginalized groups and develops long-term strategies for their integration into functional market systems.

The project aims to improve the lives and livelihoods of women and youth in Jericho and Jordan Valley by focusing on the honey and dairy sectors. Through careful analysis and collaboration with a consortium of NGOs specializing in agriculture, the project has designed strategies to address specific constraints in these sectors, such as access to inputs, diversification of products, and market access.

Pilot interventions, including business management training, cooperative development, product diversification, and productivity enhancement, have been initiated to increase production, access new markets, and reduce input costs for women and youth. These interventions are expected to have a significant impact on participants' incomes and stability.

While these pilot initiatives are crucial first steps, the project aims to scale up successful interventions to reach more women and young people, ensuring a large-scale and long-lasting impact in the region.

## Justifications for the internal evaluation

1. **Assessment of Program Design and Scope:** The internal final evaluation ensures that the project's design aligns with its objectives and intended outcomes. Starting a new phase allows early identification of discrepancies for improved implementation and superior outcomes.
2. **Evaluation of Implementation Status:** The final internal evaluation aims to assess the project's current implementation status, identifying challenges or bottlenecks that may hinder progress. These insights serve as valuable lessons learned for the second phase of the project, enabling smoother implementation and improved outcomes.
3. **Analysis of Lessons Learned:** By analyzing lessons learned, the project team can gain valuable insights into what has worked well and what hasn't during the implementation period. These lessons serve as a guide for future projects, allowing for informed decision-making and continuous improvement.
4. **Assessment of Performance Against Planned Results:** The internal final evaluation assesses the program's performance against its planned results, providing valuable feedback on the effectiveness of strategies and interventions. This allows the project team to make data-driven decisions to optimize outcomes and ensure accountability to stakeholders.
5. **Evaluation of Intended and Unintended Impacts:** Through internal final evaluation, the project team can evaluate both the intended and unintended potential impacts of the program, including its contribution to capacity development and sustainable development goals. This comprehensive assessment ensures that the project's efforts are aligned with broader development objectives and have a lasting positive impact.
6. **Communication of Findings and Recommendations:** Sharing the findings and recommendations of the internal evaluation with key stakeholders facilitates transparency and accountability. It allows stakeholders, including funders, government agencies, NGOs, and target beneficiaries, to be informed about the project's progress and areas for improvement, ultimately leading to enhanced relevance, performance, and sustainability.

It is imperative to synchronize the second phase project documentation and activities with updated national priorities, including shifts in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and the National Emergency

Strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative Sector. Identifying any necessary adjustments in the project, implementation strategy, arrangements, and partnerships is crucial in response to changes in national priorities.

The internal final evaluation process encompasses a comprehensive review of the project's design, scope, and implementation status. It's essential to ensure that the second phase remains aligned with evolving national priorities, changes in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), and the National Emergency Strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative Sector.

The evaluation will address these concerns by assessing the project document and activities to determine if adjustments are necessary for the next phase of the project. This includes evaluating the implementation strategy, arrangements, and partnerships to ensure they remain relevant and effective in light of changes in national priorities.

### III. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

#### Evaluation Background and Purpose

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of development cooperation projects. Provisions are made in all projects in accordance with ILO evaluation policy and based on the nature of the project and the specific requirements agreed upon at the time of the project design and during the project as per established procedures. The Regional Evaluation Officer (REO) at the ILO ROAS supports the evaluation function for all ILO projects.

According to the project document, a final internal evaluation is due. The evaluation will be used to assess and provide analysis according to OECD criteria and will examine the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, potential impact, and sustainability of the projects.

This evaluation will also identify strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy, and implementation as well as lessons learned, good practices, and recommendations. It will also touch upon cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, disability, social dialogue, environmental sustainability, international standards, in terms of challenges and opportunities for tackling the most vulnerable segments in line with guidelines and protocols set by EVAL/ILO<sup>2</sup>. The insights gained from the evaluation will be integrated into the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework of future projects or programs and inform their implementation strategies..

The evaluation will comply with the ILO evaluation policy including the protocols and guidelines set by EVAL. Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, which are based on the OECD DAC and United Nations Evaluation Norms and Standards and the UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed.

#### Scope

The final evaluation will cover 18 months of project implementation (Jun. 2023 to June 2024).

The evaluation will take into consideration the project duration, existing resources, and political, security and environmental constraints. It will also look into the link between the project objectives and the ILO's P&B strategy, DWCP in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), framework for Social Protection, and the UNSDF in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)

The evaluation will take place from May 2024 until July 2024 through desk work, online, and field engagement to collect information from different stakeholders. If the situation allows the evaluator is

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<sup>2</sup> ILO Evaluation Office, [ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation](#): Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

expected to travel to the field during data collection. The evaluation will cover areas where the project implementation took place (Jericho and Jordan Valley ). The evaluation will integrate gender equality<sup>3</sup>, inclusion of people with disabilities, environmental sustainability, ILS and social dialogue, as crosscutting concerns throughout its methodology and deliverables, including the final report. This is based on EVAL's protocols on crosscutting issues.

### Beneficiaries/Users of the Evaluation

The primary users of this evaluation are the: ILO Project Team, ILO-Jerusalem Office, ILO ROAS, the Government of Japan, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Agriculture NGOs the Cooperative Work Agency and target cooperatives, Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (FPCCIA).

- As cooperatives operate across several sectors, their government counterparts also vary. Government Ministries and Official Bodies that are directly involved in the cooperative sector and will benefit from the findings include The Ministry of Labor (MOL); The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA); The Ministry of National Economy (MONE);. Relevant international organizations active in the field of cooperation include We Effect, Oxfam, CARE International, and FAO.
- the ILO carefully selected and mobilized five NGOs specialized in agriculture to establish a consortium: the Land Research Center (LRC), the Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU), the Agricultural Development Association (PARC), the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) and the Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD). With this collaborative approach, the project aims to build local ownership and leverage the complementary expertise of these organizations to drive market transformations.

### Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation utilizes the standard ILO framework and follows the OEC-DAC criteria while integrating gender equality as a cross-cutting issue throughout the evaluation questions (see Annex 1):

- **Relevance:** The extent to which the objectives are aligned with sub-regional, national, and local priorities and needs, the constituents' priorities and needs, and the donor's priorities for the country. the extent to which the project correlations between design, logic, strategy, and elements are/remain valid vis-à-vis problems and needs.
  1. How well did the project's approach fit in the context of the ongoing challenges in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)?
  2. Were the problems and needs adequately analyzed? Was gender prioritized?
  3. How well were the project's objectives aligned with the national strategies and priorities, the framework of the ILO Decent Work Country Project of Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) (2018-2022), the ILO's Project and Budget (P&B) 2020-2021, UNSDCF (2018-2022) and the SDGs?
  4. What is the extent of logical correlations between the objective, outcomes, and outputs? Are the set indicators logical with specified baseline and targets? Can data be gender disaggregated? Are monitoring and evaluation activities adequately planned?
  5. To what extent did the project design consider: specific gender equality and non-discrimination concerns relevant to the project context? As well as concerns relating to the inclusion of people with disabilities, environmental sustainability, ILS, and social dialogue.
  6. To what extent have project results been useful in addressing the identified problems?

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<sup>3</sup> ILO Evaluation Office, [Supplementary Guidance Note: Integrating gender equality in ILO monitoring and evaluation](#), November 2023

7. To what extent has the project responded to the institutional capacity development needs of social partner organizations?

Do the initial needs and problems still exist and have new needs emerged?

- **Coherence:** The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the project and vice versa. The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions by the ILO, other UN agencies, and the government.
  1. How does the intervention ensure internal and external coherence, including synergy with other interventions, adherence to international norms, and coordination with other actors, while avoiding duplication?
  2. How does the intervention align with existing initiatives within the country, sector, or institution, ensuring compatibility with policies and international standards?
- **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, including re-purposing in the mitigation of impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
  1. Have resources been utilized efficiently to reach the project's objectives?
  2. How efficient has the coordination with the national implementing partners been, mainly MOA, CWA and NGOs? And other national stakeholders like primary cooperatives?
  3. To what extent has the project been on track in terms of timely achieving the assigned milestones? If not, what factors contributed to the delays? How could they be mitigated in the upcoming phase?
  4. To what extent did the project leverage resources (financial, partnerships, expertise) to promote Gender equality and non-discrimination?
- **Effectiveness** - the extent to which the project can be said to have contributed to the project objectives and more concretely whether the stated outputs have been produced satisfactorily with gender equality, in addition to building synergies with national initiatives and with other donor-supported projects as well as the extent of efficient operational arrangements that supported the timely, efficient, and effective delivery of the project.
  1. Have all set targets, outputs, and outcomes (considering the time frame) been achieved according to plan?
  2. Is there a suitable M&E framework to monitor and support the implementation of the targeted results?
  3. Is the project effective in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries? What results can it show?
  4. How have stakeholders been involved in the project's implementation?
  5. What steps did the project take to address issues related to gender equality and non-discrimination within the framework of its overall objectives and strategies?
  6. How effective was the communication between the project's teams, the regional office, and the responsible technical department at headquarters? Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?
  7. To what extent has the project management been participatory and has the participation contributed towards the achievement of the project objectives?
- **Impact** - positive and negative intended and unintended changes and effects caused by the project at the national level, i.e. the impact on social partners, government entities, beneficiaries, etc.; special attention should be given to secondary job effects.
  1. What is the potential impact that can be associated with the intervention strategy?

2. Until now, what is the potential impact of the project on the Palestinian cooperative panorama? And on women and youth farmers? And on the general economy?
  3. Is there any unintended impact that the project generated in other sectors, stakeholders etc.?
- **Sustainability** – the extent to which adequate capacity building of social partners 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 extent to which key stakeholders have the incentives and capacity to continue performing new roles that contribute to addressing livelihood challenges faced by the target group; the extent to which the knowledge developed throughout the project (research papers, progress reports, manuals, and other tools) can still be utilized after the end of the project to inform policies and practitioners.
    1. Are the results achieved by the project so far likely to be sustainable and last beyond the lifespan of the project?
    2. How will the implemented work be institutionalized and used by government institutions to enhance future work on social protection (SP)
    3. Will the implementing partners be able to retain the work after the end of the project? What are their incentives and capacity to keep performing their new functions that address key challenges?

## Methodology

The following is the proposed evaluation methodology. Any changes to the methodology should be discussed with and approved by the evaluation manager.

1. This evaluation will follow a mixed-method approach relying on available quantitative data and primary qualitative data collected through interviews and group interviews.
2. This evaluation will utilize all available quantitative and qualitative data from progress reports to monitoring studies and databases. The information will be analyzed in light of the main thematic questions and results will be integrated with the data from the primary collection.
3. The primary data collection will mainly focus on a qualitative approach investigating the perceptions and inputs of the different stakeholders that had some form of interface with the project. Triangulation of data will also be done using both the primary and the secondary data collected. The analysis will follow a thematic examination of the main evaluation areas as guided by the evaluation questions. A list of stakeholders will be prepared and provided by the project team. Depending on the number and nature of stakeholders, the number of group interviews and individual KIIs to be conducted will be defined. Gender will be mainstreamed throughout the methodology from data collection to data analysis. Where appropriate, the methodology will ensure equal representation of women and men throughout data collection and provide separate group meetings as relevant.

The evaluation will follow the ILO EVAL Guidelines on integrating gender equality.

Tool: The interview guide will be developed in light of the evaluation themes and main questions as well as the type of stakeholders.

Sample: The study sample should be reflective of all relevant stakeholders taking into consideration the scope of the project and its evaluation as well as data saturation.

All analysed data should be disaggregated by sex.

The results shall address the crosscutting issues described above ().

## Work Assignments and Main Deliverables

### Work Assignments

#### 1. Internal briefing by the project team(s)

The evaluator will have an initial consultation with the ILO relevant staff. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the status of logistical arrangements, the project's backgrounds and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, and the outline of the inception and final report.

#### 2. Desk Review

In parallel with the initial briefing period, the evaluator will review the project's background materials before conducting any interviews.

These include:

- Project documents (Logic Framework, Theory of change, Sector Selection report and Market Systems Assessments...)
- ILO's [AIMS guide](#) (project's approach)
- Baseline reports and related data (if available)
- Monitoring reports conducted during the project
- Progress and status reports, extensions, and budget revisions
- Previous phase or related evaluation reports of the project (if available)
- Other studies and research were undertaken by the project
- Project beneficiary documentation
- Strategic documents (e.g., DWCP, Government's strategic plan)

During the inception period, the following activities will be performed:

- Preparation of the inception report
- Report to be shared with Evaluation manager for comments
- Report to be shared with key stakeholders for comments
- The inception report is revised and interviews to begin

### Individual Interviews and group interviews

Following the initial briefing, the desk review, and the inception report, the evaluator will have meetings with constituents/stakeholders.

Individual or group interviews will be conducted with the following:

- a) ILO staff/consultants that are involved in the project.
- b) ROJ representatives.
- c) Interviews with constituents and other stakeholders as relevant: MOA, NGOs, CWA, target primary cooperatives.
- d) International civil society organizations that support the agriculture cooperative sector include; We Effect, Oxfam, CARE International, COSPE (Italian), Spanish organizations, and the Italian Banking Association (ABI), as well as the WFP and FAO.
- e) National civil society institutions that actively support the cooperative sector include the Palestinian Economic and Social Development Center (ESDC), Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), Ma'an Development Center, ARIJ Institute, Palestinian Youth Union, Arab

Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD), Palestinian Youth Union, the Land Research Center (LRC), the Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU), and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)

- f) As Cooperatives operate across a number of sectors, their government counterparts include a number of different ministries including MOL, MOA, MONE, etc.
- g) The end beneficiaries of the project who are women and youth involved in the agricultural sector, particularly those in Jericho and Jordan Valley.

### 3. Presentation

Upon completion of the missions, the evaluator will provide a presentation to the stakeholders on the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

### Evaluation Management

The evaluator will report to the project coordinator at ILO. The project coordinator will be the first point of contact for the consultant as well as the project team for any technical and methodological matters related to this evaluation. All communications regarding this evaluation must be marked to the evaluation managers. The project team will provide administrative and logistical support for the interviews.

### The Main Deliverables

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report
- Deliverable 2: Draft evaluation report
- Deliverable 3: PowerPoint Presentation (PPP)
- Deliverable 4: Draft 2 evaluation report
- Deliverable 5: Comments log of how all comments were considered and taken on board by the evaluation team or not and why not.
- Deliverable 6: Final evaluation report with executive summary (report will be considered final after all comments are integrated).

### *Inception Report*

The evaluator will draft an Inception Report, which should describe, provide reflection and fine-tune the following issues:

- Project background
- Purpose, scope and beneficiaries of the evaluation
- Evaluation criteria and questions
- Methodology and instruments
- Main deliverables
- Management arrangements and work plan
- Evaluation Questions Matrix (EQM)

### *Final Report*

The final version of the report will follow the below format<sup>4</sup>:

- Title page
- Table of Contents, including List of Appendices, Tables
- List of Acronyms or Abbreviations

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<sup>4</sup> The quality of the report will be assessed against the [ILO EVAL Checklist 4.9](#).



- Executive Summary with methodology, key findings, conclusions and recommendations
- Background and Project Description
- Purpose of Evaluation
- Evaluation Methodology and Evaluation Questions
- Clearly identified findings along OECD/DAC criteria, substantiated with evidence
- Key results (i.e. figures and qualitative results) achieved per objective (expected and unexpected)
- Clearly identified conclusions and recommendations that are linked to findings (identifying which stakeholders are responsible, priority of recommendations, and timeframe)
- Lessons Learned per ILO template
- Potential good practices per ILO template
- Annexes (list of interviews, TORs, lessons learned and best practices in ILO EVAL templates, list of documents consulted, different phases' log frames with results status, by phase, etc.),

The quality of the report will be assessed against the relevant EVAL Checklists. The deliverables will be submitted in the English language and structured according to the templates provided by the ILO.

## Management Arrangements and Workplan

### Roles And Responsibilities

- a. The External Evaluator is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the terms of reference (ToR). He/she will:
  - Review the ToR and prepare questions/ clarifications or suggestions of refinements to assessment questions during the inception phase.
  - Review project background materials (e.g., project document, progress reports, etc.);
  - Prepare an inception report including a matrix of evaluation questions, workplan and stakeholders to be covered.
  - Develop and implement the evaluation methodology (i.e., conduct interviews, review documents, etc.) to answer the evaluation questions.
  - Conduct online/ field research interviews, as appropriate, and collect information according to the suggested format.
  - Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report with input from ILO specialists and constituents/stakeholders.
  - Conduct a presentation on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation to stakeholders.
  - Prepare the final report based on the ILO, donor, and stakeholders' feedback obtained on the draft report.
  - Attend to other deliverables as per the TOR
- b. The ILO Evaluation Managers are responsible for:
  - Drafting the ToR;
  - Finalizing the ToR with input from colleagues.
  - Hiring the consultant.
  - Providing the consultant with the project background materials.
  - Providing a list of stakeholders;
  - Reviewing and providing comments on the inception report;
  - Assisting in the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate
  - Reviewing the initial draft report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the External Evaluators (for the inception report and the final report);
  - Reviewing the final draft of the report.

- Participating in the debriefing on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations;
  - Disseminating the final report to all the stakeholders.
  - Coordinating follow-up as necessary.
- c. The ILO REO:
- Providing technical support as needed.

## Duration of Contract and Timeline for Delivery

The collaboration between ILO and the Consultant is expected to start in April 2024 and last until July 2024 with an estimate of 32 working days.

### Evaluation Timeframe

Tasks	Number of Working days
Kick-off meeting	1
Desk review of documents related to the project	5
Drafting Inception report	3
Interviews	12
Drafting report	6
Developing Second Draft and comments log	2
Present findings, lessons learned and recommendations to stakeholders	1
Integration of comments and finalization of the report	2
<b>Total Number of Working Days</b>	<b>32</b>

## Supervision

The evaluator will work under the direct supervision of the Evaluation Manager. The evaluator will be required to provide continuous updates on the progress of work and revert to the ILO with any challenges or bottlenecks for support. Coordination and follow-up with the evaluator will take place through e-mail or Teams or any other digital communication mean.

## Legal and Ethical Matters

- This internal evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation guidelines and UN Norms and Standards.
- These ToRs will be accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out the evaluation “Code of conduct for evaluation in the ILO”
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the internal evaluation.

## Requirements and How to Apply

### 1. Requirements

The evaluator(s)/evaluation team should have:

- An advanced degree in social sciences;
- Proven expertise in evaluation methods, labor markets, conflict issues and the ILO approach;
- Extensive experience in the evaluation of development interventions;
- Expertise in the Labour-intensive modality, job creation projects, capacity building and skills development, and other relevant subject matter;
- An understanding of the ILO’s tripartite culture;

- Knowledge of OPT, and the regional context;
- Full command of the English language (spoken and written) will be required.
- Command of the Arabic language would be an advantage.

## 2. How to Apply:

Candidates intending to submit an expression of interest must supply the following information:

1. Cover letter, with a description of how the candidate's skills, qualifications and experience are relevant to the required qualifications of this assignment (maximum 1 page).
2. Curriculum Vitae, including a list of previous evaluations that are relevant to the context and subject matter of this assignment, indicating the role played by the consultant(s).
3. A statement confirming their availability to conduct this assignment, and the daily professional fee expressed in US dollars (indicating also fees received for similar assignments in the last 2 years as a reference).
4. A statement confirming that the candidates have no previous involvement in the implementation and delivery of the project to be evaluated or a personal relationship with any ILO Officials who are engaged in the project.
5. The names of two referees (including phone and email) who can be contacted.
6. A sample of a report in which the evaluator has paid a similar role for the position he/she is applying.

This call is open to international and national consultants. In case the applicant does not speak Arabic, and s/he prefers national support in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), please enclose her/his CV with a brief description of her/his responsibilities, the number of estimated working days requiring her/his service and the daily professional fee in US\$. If not provided, ILO will recruit national support separately (if deemed necessary).

Please send an application and relevant questions via email to the following contacts:

To: Mr. Younis Sbeih, ILO National Project Coordinator <sbeih@ilo.org>

Cc: Ms. Razan Asfour Project Assistant <asfourr@ilo.org>

**Deadline to submit applications is April 15, 2024.**

## Annex B: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Measures/Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Stakeholders/ Informants	Analysis & Assessment
<b>Relevance</b>						
EQ1: How well did the project's approach fit in the context of the ongoing challenges in OPT?	1. Did the project implement the AIMS approach in practice as ? 2. How was the AIMS approach tailored to address the specific economic and social challenges in OPT? 3. What were the main obstacles faced/adaptations made while implementing the AIMS approach in OPT? 4. How did the push-pull strategy of AIMS address the immediate and long-term needs of marginalized groups in OPT? What else could have been done? 5. What is different about this project, if anything, than traditional market development projects?	Evidence that the project has indeed implemented the AIMS approach in accordance with ILO guidance and standards.  Strong evidence from various sources that justifies that MSD through the AIMS approach is at least no less effective than conventional livelihood development approaches. Strong evidence that livelihoods of project-end beneficiaries has improved as a result of the project.	Project document and progress reports.  ILO AIMS guidance and ILO staff and project stakeholders	Desk review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (including during field visits to 6 cooperatives),	ILO Project Team, ILO Technical Departments at HQ, ILO ROAS, Project implementing partners, beneficiary cooperatives, MoL, MoA, PGFTU, PFCCIA, ROJ.	Assess the degree to which the AIMS approach was implemented based recommended processes and phase in guidance documents.  Trinagulation of data collected to render objective judgement on questions. Assessment of stakeholders views on project approach as designed and as implemented.
EQ2: 2. Were the project's objectives aligned with national strategies, ILO frameworks, and the SDGs?	1. Does the AIMS approach align with development approaches espoused in national plans, particularly those related to agriculture and economic development.	Strong linkages can identified between the project results and the named planning and policy documents. Stakeholders articulate specific linkages	National Policy Agenda, National Employment Strategy, Economic and Agriculture	Desk review, key informant and stakeholders' interviews.	ILO Project Staff, ILO Programme Analyst in Jerusalem, Representatives of MoL, MoA, MoNE, and ROJ.	Analyzing linkages (and strength thereof) between project objectives (mainly outcomes and outputs, and their indicators) and results

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Measures/Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Stakeholders/ Informants	Analysis & Assessment
	<p>2. In what ways do the project outcomes contribute to national objectives, and address priorities, including sectoral and geographic development priorities?</p> <p>3. To what extent has the project contributed to DWCP, P&amp;B, and UNSDF results?</p> <p>4. What contributions does the project make to SDGs, and to which SDG Targets specifically?</p> <p>5. What are the views of stakeholders on project alignment with its broader institutional and operational planning framework?</p>	<p>between the project results, its approach, and choice of sub-sectors/VCS and geopolitical target areas and their respective organizations' plans and priorities.</p>	<p>Sector Strategies, CWA Strategy, DWCP, P&amp;B, and SDGs.</p> <p>ILO staff and project stakeholders from national government.</p>			<p>and policy priorities identified in relevant national policy and planning documents and the relevant DWCP, P&amp;B, and UNSDCF?</p>
<p>EQ3. What is the extent of logical correlations between the objectives, outcomes, and outputs? Are the indicators logical and can data be gender-disaggregated?</p>	<p>1. How were the project objectives, outcomes, and outputs designed to align logically with each other? i.e. what is the theory behind design</p> <p>2. What rationale behind the selection of indicators and how they reflect the project's goals?</p> <p>3. How were baseline data and targets established for each</p>	<p>Alignment: Degree of alignment between project objectives, outcomes, and outputs as evidenced in the project documentation.</p> <p>Consistency: Logical consistency in the selection and definition of indicators relative to the project's objectives and outcomes.</p>	<p>Project M&amp;E data, Progress reports, ILO Project Team and staff of implementing partners, Steering Committee members</p>	<p>Desk review, key informant and stakeholders' interviews.</p>	<p>Project staff, implementing partners staff (particularly M&amp;E officers), SC members</p>	<p>Examining the logical framework to understand the connections between the project's objectives, outcomes and outputs. Reviewing the indicators, baseline data, and targets specified in the LogFrame.</p>

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Measures/Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Stakeholders/ Informants	Analysis & Assessment
	<p>indicator? How logical was this?</p> <p>4. To what extent are the project's monitoring and evaluation activities planned and implemented?</p> <p>5. What measures were designed and implemented to ensure that project progress is tracked from a gender lens? Was data collected to enable analytical disaggregation by gender and age?</p> <p>6. What challenges have been faced in tracking and reporting on the indicators? How were these addressed?</p> <p>How was the project's monitoring and evaluation framework/processes designed and implemented to track results in accordance with the AIMS Approach and DCED standards? included your feedback and</p>	<p>Indicator Quality: Presence of clearly defined baselines and targets for each indicator. Indicators assessed against SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).</p> <p>Data Disaggregation: Evidence of gender-disaggregated data collection and reporting.</p> <p>Inclusivity: Inclusion of other relevant disaggregation (e.g., age, location) to ensure comprehensive monitoring.</p> <p>M&amp;E Planning: Adequacy and comprehensiveness of M&amp;E plans, including scheduled activities, methodologies, and responsible parties.</p> <p>Implementation: Actual implementation of M&amp;E activities as planned</p>				<p>Reviewing the M&amp;E plans to assess the adequacy of planned activities for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.</p> <p>Checking if the M&amp;E plans include provisions for gender disaggregated data collection.</p> <p>Analyzing progress reports for information on the achievement of targets and the logic coherence of reported results.</p> <p>Assessing evidence of gender-disaggregated data in these reports.</p> <p>Examine baseline and these surveys to assess the adequacy of baseline data and the setting of targets.</p> <p>Reviewing tables or matrices used to track indicators over time ensure they reflect</p>

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Measures/Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Stakeholders/ Informants	Analysis & Assessment
		<p>and documented in reports.</p> <p>Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholder feedback on the logical coherence between objectives, outcomes, and outputs.</p> <p>Stakeholder perceptions on the effectiveness of indicators in measuring project progress and impact.</p>				<p>logical correlations and are adequately monitored.</p> <p>Triangulation of evidence.</p>
<p>EQ4: To what extent did the project design and implementation address the specific needs of women, youth, and marginalized groups, including considerations for disabilities and environmental sustainability?</p>	<p>1. How did the project identify and address the needs of women, youth, and marginalized groups in its design?</p>	<p>Evidence of needs assessments and inclusion strategies in project documents.</p>	<p>Project documents, needs assessments, and design reports.</p>	<p>Desk review, key informant interviews.</p>	<p>Project team, implementing partners, women and youth beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Assess the degree to which the AIMS approach was implemented based on recommended processes and phases in guidance documents. Triangulation of data collected to render objective judgement on questions. Assessment of stakeholders views on project approach as designed and as implemented.</p>
	<p>2. What specific measures were implemented to address these needs during the project?</p>	<p>Number and type of specific measures implemented (e.g., training, support programs).</p>	<p>Project reports, M&amp;E data.</p>	<p>Desk review, key informant interviews, focus groups.</p>	<p>Project team, implementing partners, women and youth beneficiaries.</p>	
	<p>3. How effective were these measures in addressing the identified needs?</p>	<p>Beneficiary feedback on the effectiveness of measures.</p>	<p>Beneficiary surveys, focus groups.</p>	<p>Focus groups, interviews.</p>	<p>Women and youth beneficiaries, implementing partners.</p>	

<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Sub-Questions</b>	<b>Measures/Indicators</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>Stakeholders/ Informants</b>	<b>Analysis &amp; Assessment</b>
	4. Were considerations for disabilities and environmental sustainability integrated into the project?	Evidence of integration of disability and environmental considerations.	Project reports, M&E data.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, implementing partners, beneficiaries with disabilities.	
EQ5: To what extent have project results addressed the identified problems and institutional capacity needs?	1. What problems and capacity needs were identified at the start of the project?	Documented problems and capacity needs in the project design phase.	Project design documents, needs assessments.	Desk review.	Project team, implementing partners.	Analyzing linkages (and strength thereof) between project objectives (mainly outcomes and outputs, and their indicators) and results and policy priorities identified in relevant national policy and planning documents and the relevant DWCP, P&B, and UNSDCF?
	2. How have the project results addressed these identified problems?	Evidence of problem resolution and capacity improvement.	Project reports, M&E data.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, implementing partners.	
	3. What institutional capacities were developed or enhanced?	Number and type of capacity-building activities conducted.	Project reports, training records.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, implementing partners, beneficiaries.	
<b>Coherence</b>						
EQ6: How does the intervention ensure internal and external coherence, including synergy with other interventions, adherence to international norms,	1. How does the project align with other national and international interventions in the same sector?	Evidence of coordination and alignment with other interventions.	Project documents, national and international reports.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, national and international partners.	Examining the logical framework to understand the connections between the project's objectives, outcomes and outputs. Reviewing the indicators, baseline
	2. How does the project adhere to international norms and standards?	Evidence of adherence to international norms and standards.	Project documents, international guidelines.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, international partners.	



Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Measures/Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Stakeholders/ Informants	Analysis & Assessment
and coordination with other actors?	3. What synergies and complementarities were achieved with other interventions?	Examples of synergies and complementarities.	Project reports, stakeholder feedback.	Interviews, focus groups.	Project team, national and international partners.	data, and targets specified in the LogFrame. Reviewing the M&E plans to assess the adequacy planned activities for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. Checking the M&E plans include provisions for gender disaggregated data collection. Analyzing progress reports for information on the achievement of targets and the logic coherence of reported results. Assessing evidence of gender-disaggregated data in these reports. Examining baseline and these surveys to assess the adequacy of baseline data and the setting targets. Reviewing tables or matrices used to track indicators over time ensure they reflect

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Measures/Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Stakeholders/ Informants	Analysis & Assessment
						logical correlations and are adequately monitored. Triangulation of evidence.
Efficiency						
EQ7: Have resources been utilized efficiently to reach the project's objectives, and how effective has the coordination with national implementing partners been?	1. How effectively were resources allocated and utilized to achieve project objectives?	Evidence of resource allocation and utilization.	Financial reports, project reports.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, implementing partners.	
	2. How effective was the coordination with national implementing partners?	Feedback from partners on coordination effectiveness.	Partner feedback, project reports.	Interviews, focus groups.	Implementing partners, project team.	
	3. What challenges were faced in resource utilization and coordination?	Documented challenges and solutions.	Project reports, partner feedback.	Interviews, focus groups.	Project team, implementing partners.	
EQ8: To what extent did the project leverage resources to promote gender equality and non-discrimination?	1. What resources were allocated to promote gender equality and non-discrimination?	Evidence of resource allocation for gender equality and non-discrimination initiatives.	Project reports, financial reports.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, implementing partners.	Review project documentation for needs assessments and inclusion strategies.
	2. How effectively were these resources utilized?	Feedback on the effectiveness of resource utilization.	Partner feedback, beneficiary surveys.	Interviews, focus groups.	Implementing partners, beneficiaries.	
	3. What impact did these initiatives have on gender equality and non-discrimination?	Evidence of impact on gender equality and non-discrimination.	Project reports, beneficiary feedback.	Interviews, focus groups.	Project team, implementing partners, beneficiaries.	

<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Sub-Questions</b>	<b>Measures/Indicators</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>Stakeholders/ Informants</b>	<b>Analysis &amp; Assessment</b>
EQ9: Have all set targets, outputs, and outcomes been achieved according to plan, and is there a suitable M&E framework to monitor these?	1. To what extent have the project's targets, outputs, and outcomes been achieved?	Evidence of achievement of targets, outputs, and outcomes.	Project reports, M&E data.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, implementing partners.	
	2. How suitable is the M&E framework for monitoring project progress?	Feedback on the suitability and effectiveness of the M&E framework.	Project reports, stakeholder feedback.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, implementing partners.	
	3. What challenges were faced in achieving the set targets, and how were they addressed?	Documented challenges and solutions.	Project reports, stakeholder feedback.	Interviews, focus groups.	Project team, implementing partners.	
<b>Effectiveness</b>						
EQ10: Is the project effective in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, and what are the visible results?	1. How well did the project respond to the needs of the beneficiaries?	Beneficiary feedback on project effectiveness.	Beneficiary surveys, project reports.	Surveys, interviews, focus groups.	Beneficiaries, project team.	Compare identified problems with reported results. Review training and capacity-building records.
	2. What are the visible results of the project?	Documented results and beneficiary feedback.	Project reports, beneficiary feedback.	Desk review, interviews, focus groups.	Beneficiaries, project team.	
	3. How do beneficiaries perceive the effectiveness of the project?	Feedback on perceived effectiveness.	Beneficiary surveys, focus groups.	Surveys, interviews, focus groups.	Beneficiaries.	
EQ11: How effectively were stakeholders involved in the project's implementation, and how did communication and support from ILO units contribute to this?	1. What was the level of stakeholder involvement in project implementation?	Evidence of stakeholder involvement.	Project reports, stakeholder feedback.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, stakeholders.	Analyze documentation for alignment and coordination efforts. Review project documentation for adherence to standards. Triangulate feedback and reports for evidence of synergies.
	2. How effective was communication between the project teams and stakeholders?	Feedback on communication effectiveness.	Stakeholder feedback.	Interviews, focus groups.	Project team, stakeholders.	
	3. What support was provided by ILO units, and how effective was it?	Evidence of support provided and feedback on its effectiveness.	Project reports, stakeholder feedback.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, ILO units.	

Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Measures/Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Stakeholders/ Informants	Analysis & Assessment
<b>Impact</b>						
EQ12: What is the potential impact of the project on the cooperative sector, women and youth farmers, and the general economy?	1. What changes have occurred in the cooperative sector due to the project?	Documented changes in the cooperative sector.	Project reports, cooperative records.	Desk review, interviews.	Cooperative members, project team.	Review financial and project reports for evidence of resource utilization. Analyze feedback and reports for coordination effectiveness. Review reports and feedback for challenges and solutions.
	2. What impact has the project had on women and youth farmers?	Beneficiary feedback, documented impact.	Beneficiary surveys, project reports.	Surveys, interviews, focus groups.	Women and youth farmers, project team.	
	3. What is the broader economic impact of the project?	Economic indicators, stakeholder feedback.	Economic reports, stakeholder feedback.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, stakeholders.	
EQ13: Is there any unintended impact that the project has generated?	1. What unintended impacts have been observed?	Documented unintended impacts.	Project reports, stakeholder feedback.	Desk review, interviews, focus groups.	Project team, stakeholders.	Review financial and project reports for resource allocation. Analyze feedback and surveys for effectiveness of resource utilization.
	2. How have these impacts affected the project and its beneficiaries?	Beneficiary feedback on unintended impacts.	Beneficiary surveys, project reports.	Surveys, interviews, focus groups.	Beneficiaries, project team.	
<b>Sustainability</b>						
EQ14: Are the results achieved by the project likely to be sustainable, and how will they be institutionalized and used by government institutions?	1. What measures have been taken to ensure the sustainability of project results?	Documented sustainability measures.	Project reports, sustainability plans.	Desk review, interviews.	Project team, implementing partners.	Review project reports and M&E data for evidence of achievement. Analyze feedback and reports on the M&E framework.
	2. How will government institutions use and institutionalize the project's results?	Evidence of institutionalization plans.	Government reports, project reports.	Desk review, interviews.	Government officials, project team.	

<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Sub-Questions</b>	<b>Measures/Indicators</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>	<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>Stakeholders/ Informants</b>	<b>Analysis &amp; Assessment</b>
EQ15: Will the implementing partners retain and build upon the work after the project ends? What are their incentives and capacities?	1. What capacities have been developed among implementing partners?	Training records, capacity-building activities.	Project reports, training records.	Desk review, interviews.	Implementing partners, project team.	Review reports and feedback for challenges and solutions.
	2. What incentives do implementing partners have to continue the work?	Documented incentives and plans.	Project reports, partner feedback.	Desk review, interviews.	Implementing partners, project team.	Analyze feedback and reports for evidence responsiveness. Triangulate feedback and reports for evidence of results.

## **Annex C: List of Project Stakeholders Consulted**

### **ILO**

Younis Sbeih	JSB Project Manager, ILO Jerusalem
Razan Asfour	JSB Project Assistant, ILO Jerusalem
Luisa Iachan	Technical Officer, ILO Geneva

### **Representative Office of Japan to Palestine**

Kenichi Sadamori	Coordinator for Economic Cooperation
Asma Ibrahim	Advisor to the Economic Cooperation Section

### **Palestinian Ministries and National Institutions**

Bilal Thawaba	Head of Cooperative Work Agency
Samah Makhoulouf	Public Relations Officer, Cooperative Work Agency
Reyad Abu Shihab	Deputy Head, Cooperative Work Agency
Amjad Barakat	Head of Jericho and Jordan Valley Agriculture Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture
Ali Al-Sawy	Assistant Deputy Minister for Employment and TVET, Ministry of Labor
Ashraf Anabtawi,	Director General of NGOs; Shrouq Hanishi, Director of the Rural Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture
Ahlam Odeh	Rural Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture

### **Implementing Partners**

Samar Michael	Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD)
Saed Jaser	Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD)
Anas Baker	Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)/Agricultural Development Association
Moayyad Bsharat	Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UWAC)
Adleen Karaja	Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU)
Mohamad Motawe	Land research Center (LRC)

### **Project Targeted Cooperative Associations and their Members**

Mahmoud Sawafta	Bardala Beekers' Cooperative Association
Ibrahim Sawafta	Bardala Livestock Development Cooperative Association
Rasha Sawafta	Bardala Livestock Development Cooperative Association
Wisam Bani Odeh	Bardala Livestock Development Cooperative Association
Mohamad Abu Suleiman	Bardala Beekers' Cooperative Association
Yahya Neirat	Bardala Beekers' Cooperative Association
Muna Jaber	Aqbet Jaber Beekers Association
Jamal Hamdan	Aqbet Jaber Beekers Association
Naser Bitar	Aqbet Jaber Beekers Association
Yousef Abu Al-Asal	Aqbet Jaber Beekers Association
Naji Abu Nima	Aqbet Jaber Beekers Association
Mariam Sheikh Ibrahim	Aqbet Jaber Beekers Association
Andaleeb Khalil	Aqbet Jaber Beekers Association
Inshirah Khalil	Aqbet Jaber Beekers Association
Fawaz Abu Dawas	Tubas Livestock Development Cooperative Association

Wisam Draghme  
Saleh Shihad  
Ayda Sawafta  
Hafeth Masaeed

Tubas Livsetock Development Cooperative Association  
Tubas Livsetock Development Cooperative Association  
Tubas Livsetock Development Cooperative Association  
Tubas Livsetock Development Cooperative Association

**GYB, SIYB Trainers**

Noha Fathi  
Ahlam Odeh  
Shurouq Abu Atwan  
Zafer Abu Baker  
Thaer Fakhouri

Master Trainer, SIYB  
IYB Trainer  
IYB Trainer  
GYB/SYB Trainer  
GYB/SYB Trainer

## **Annex D: List of Participants in Evaluation Validation Workshop**

### **ILO**

Frida Khan	Representative, ILO Jerusalem
Rasha El-Shurafa	Programme Analyst, ILO Jerusalem
Younis Sbeih	JSB Project Manager, ILO Jerusalem
Razan Asfour	JSB Project Assistant, ILO Jerusalem
Badra Alawa	Chief Technical Officer, ILO ROAS, Beirut
Luisa Iachan	Technical Officer, ILO Geneva

### **Representative Office of Japan to Palestine**

Kenichi Sadamori	Coordinator for Economic Cooperation
Asma Ibrahim	Advisor to the Economic Cooperation Section



## Annex E: Lessons Learned Templates

### Lesson 1: Design and Implementation of GYB/SIYB

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Project design, Implementation, Financial mechanisms
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	Comprehensive capacity building must be integrated with financial support mechanisms to translate training into tangible business growth.
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	During the project, capacity-building activities significantly improved the skills and productivity of local farmers and entrepreneurs through the localization and delivery of the ILO's GYB/SIYB toolkit. However, the lack of integrated financial support mechanisms hindered the ability of these farmers and beneficiaries to leverage their new skills into actual business growth.
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	Project managers, program designers, financial coordinators, and development practitioners within ILO and the broader development community.
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	The project's capacity-building initiatives were not coupled with financial mechanisms or access to capital. As a result, beneficiaries faced difficulties in applying their newly acquired skills to expand or start businesses, limiting the overall impact of the training provided.
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	Despite the lack of financial support, the capacity-building activities successfully enhanced the skills and productivity of the beneficiaries. This indicates a high potential for impact if future projects can integrate financial support mechanisms with training programs.
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Design and Implementation  The project management structure supported capacity building but lacked mechanisms to provide or facilitate access to financial resources for trainees. Future project designs should include integrated financial support to maximize the impact of capacity-building activities.

### Lesson 2: Need for Longer Project Durations to Deliver MSD/AIMS Projects

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Elements included: Project design, Timeline management, Implementation
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<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	Longer project durations are necessary to achieve systemic and sustainable impacts as short timelines constrain the full development and assessment of interventions.
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	The project duration was notably short, 18 months, funded by the Government of Japan. The constraints of a short timeline affected the project's ability to achieve deeper, systemic changes. The project aimed to implement pilot interventions like the community-based para-vet model and the Queen Honeybee Production Center, which require longer timelines for full development and assessment.
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	Project planners, funders, timeline managers, and evaluators within ILO and the broader development community.
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	The short duration limited the ability to consolidate project achievements and fully implement the AIMS approach, which requires longer timelines for systemic impact.
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	Despite the short duration, the project managed to implement several capacity-building and sustainability initiatives, indicating the potential for greater impact with extended timelines.
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Design and Implementation  The need for longer project durations should be considered in future project planning to allow sufficient time for achieving systemic and sustainable impacts..

### Lesson 3: Balancing Supply-Side and Demand-Side Interventions

<b>LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT</b>	Elements included: Project design, Market analysis, Implementation
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	A balanced approach that includes both supply-side and demand-side interventions is crucial for driving comprehensive market system changes.
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	The project primarily focused on supply-side interventions, such as capacity building and provision of equipment, but limited attention to market linkages, policy issues, and new market opportunities restricted its ability to drive comprehensive market system changes.

<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	Market analysts, project designers, policy advisors, and implementers within ILO and the broader development community.
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	The narrow focus on supply-side interventions restricted the project's impact, as demand-side dynamics were not adequately addressed.
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	Supply-side interventions, such as capacity building and training, significantly improved skills and productivity, showing the importance of also addressing demand-side factors for comprehensive impact.
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Design, Market analysis, and Implementation  Future projects should incorporate a balanced approach, addressing both supply-side and demand-side factors to enhance market system changes.

#### **Lesson 4: Flexibility and Adaptability in Project Implementation**

<b>LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT</b>	Elements included: Project design, Adaptive management, Implementation
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	Flexibility and adaptability in project implementation enhance responsiveness to changing contexts and emerging needs.
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	The project was implemented in a highly volatile socio-economic and political context, requiring adaptive management to respond to emerging challenges. The project's pre-determined structure, characterized by pre-selected interventions and beneficiaries, posed limitations on its adaptability to emerging needs.
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	Market analysts, project designers, policy advisors, and implementers within ILO and the broader development community.
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	The project's rigid structure limited its ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges, affecting overall responsiveness.
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	Adaptive management practices, where applied, allowed for some responsiveness to emerging needs, highlighting the importance of flexibility in project design and implementation.
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Administrative Issues: Design, Adaptive management, and Implementation  Incorporating flexibility and adaptability in project design can enhance the ability to respond to changing contexts and needs, improving overall project effectiveness.

## Lesson 5: Holistic Approach to Gender and Inclusivity

<b>LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT</b>	Elements included: Project design, Inclusivity strategy, Implementation
<b>Brief description of lessons learned</b> (link to specific action or task)	A holistic approach to gender and inclusivity, with detailed strategies and specific indicators, ensures that interventions effectively address the needs of all marginalized groups including women and individuals with disabilities.
<b>Context and any related preconditions</b>	The project targeted marginalized groups, particularly women and youth, but lacked specific indicators and comprehensive strategies to measure and address the needs of all marginalized groups effectively.
<b>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</b>	Gender specialists, inclusivity strategists, project designers, and implementers within ILO and the broader development community.
<b>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</b>	The absence of detailed strategies and specific indicators for gender and inclusivity limited the project's ability to track and measure its impact on marginalized groups comprehensively.
<b>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</b>	The project made significant strides in promoting gender equality and improving women's working conditions, demonstrating the potential impact of a holistic approach to inclusivity.
<b>ILO Administrative Issues</b> (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Administrative Issues: Design, Inclusivity strategy, and Implementation  Future projects should incorporate detailed gender and inclusivity strategies with specific indicators to ensure comprehensive tracking and measurement of impact on all marginalized groups.

## Annex F: Good Practice Templates

### Good Practice 1: Adaptation and Localization of GYB and SIYB Training Programs

<b>GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT</b>	<b>Localization of GYB/SIYB Tools</b>
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The adaptation and localization of the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training programs aimed to enhance the capacity of local trainers and participants. This initiative equipped them with essential skills to develop and strengthen small businesses, directly linking to the project's goal of promoting sustainable enterprises and decent jobs for women and youth in the agricultural sector.
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	The localization effort was particularly relevant in the context of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, where local trainers and participants required training that addressed specific regional challenges and opportunities. For replicability, similar contexts with unique local challenges should adapt global tools to fit local conditions.
<b>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</b>	The training programs improved business management skills, which directly led to the establishment and growth of small businesses. This in turn contributed to increased employment and income generation.
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	The program certified 13 local SIYB trainers and provided training to 64 youth and women, resulting in enhanced business skills and the establishment of new businesses. The primary beneficiaries were local trainers and aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth.
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	This practice can be replicated by development organizations, government agencies, and NGOs working in regions with similar socio-economic conditions. Local adaptation of global tools can enhance effectiveness in diverse contexts.
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This practice supports ILO goals of promoting sustainable enterprises, decent work, and economic growth (aligned with SDG 8). It contributes to the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes and the broader strategic framework aimed at fostering sustainable livelihoods.
<b>Other documents or relevant comments</b>	Further documentation on the adaptation process and feedback from local trainers and participants can provide valuable insights for similar initiatives in other regions.

## Good Practice 2: Strategic Partnership with Local NGOs to Deliver Projects

<b>GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT</b>	<b>Establishment of Strategic Partnerships with Local NGOs and Government Entities</b>
<b>Brief summary of the good practice</b> (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The project established strategic partnerships with local NGOs and government entities, involving a consortium of local agricultural NGOs—PARC, UAWC, LRC, PFU, and ACAD. This practice ensured the integration of successful project components into broader government and NGO programs, enhancing the potential for sustainability.
<b>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</b>	The success of this practice depended on the existing capacities and expertise of the local NGOs and their alignment with national development plans and policies. For replicability, similar partnerships should be formed based on mutual goals and complementary expertise.
<b>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</b>	The partnerships facilitated the effective implementation of project activities, leveraging the specialized expertise and local knowledge of the NGOs, which enhanced the project's impact and sustainability.
<b>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</b>	The project's strategic partnerships enabled the project to tap technical expertise of the implementing partners, as well as their deep-rooted presence in the target communities, with notable results in strengthening cooperative management, cooperative members production practices and productivity, benefiting small-scale farmers, particularly women and youth, in the dairy and honey sectors.
<b>Potential for replication and by whom</b>	This practice can be replicated by international development organizations and governments seeking to leverage local expertise and ensure the sustainability of development initiatives
<b>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</b> (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This practice aligns with the ILO's strategic goals of fostering sustainable enterprises and decent work by promoting collaboration and capacity building among local institutions.
<b>Other documents or relevant comments</b>	-