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Social dialogue for formalisation and employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM)

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACTRAV	ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
ACT/EMP	ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities
ALI	Association of Lebanese Industrialists
ATUC	Arab Trade Union Confederation
CGEA	Confédération Générale des Entreprises Algériennes
CGTL	General Confederation of Lebanese Workers
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPO	Country Programme Outcomes
DEINVEST	Development and Investment Programme (of the ILO)
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DIALOGUE	Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit (of the ILO)
DWT/CO	Decent Work Team/Country Office
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programmes
EDLC	Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress
ETUF	Egyptian Trade Union Federation
EU	European Union
FEI	Federation of Egyptian Industries
FENASOL	The National Federation of Employees' and Workers' Unions in Lebanon
FGD	Focus group discussion
FPCCIA	Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture
FYB	Formalise-Your-Business
GAP III	Gender Action Plan III
HR	Human rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILS	International Labour Standards
INWORK	Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions Branch
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MADR	Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural (of Algeria)
MC	Ministère du Commerce (of Algeria)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFEP	Ministère de la Formation et l'Enseignement Professionnels (of Algeria)
MoL	Ministry of Labour

MSMEDA	Micro Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (of Algeria)
MTA	Ministère du Tourisme de l'Artisanat (of Algeria)
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
MTESS	Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Sécurité Sociale (of Algeria)
NCE	Non-cost extension
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC)
ONDEFOC	National Office for the Development of Vocational Training (of Algeria)
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
P&B	Programme & Budget
PGFTU	Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
RF	Results framework
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
ROAF	Regional Office for Africa (of the ILO)
ROAS	Regional Office for Arab States (of the ILO)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SKILLS	Skills and Employability Branch (of ILO)
SME	Small and medium-sized business
SOLIFEM	Social Dialogue for Formalisation and Employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UGTA	Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WBL	Work Based Learning

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Executive Summary

Background of the project and its objectives

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), between 40 to 67% of workers in the EU's southern neighbourhood are part of the **informal economy**¹. Prevailing trends across the Southern Neighbourhood consistently show that informal employment is linked to poorer working conditions, lower wages, and reduced productivity compared to formal employment.

Without labour rights protections, informal workers lack access to minimum wages, maternity protection, and social security. Workers and enterprises in the informal economy face unique challenges in terms of representation and participation in social dialogue. Informal work environments are often characterised by a lack of transparency in worker-employer relationships, absence of contracts, and a decline or lack of workers' solidarity— all within a weak regulatory framework.

Within this context, the **Social Dialogue for Formalisation and Employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM)** project was initiated to support the transition from the informal to the formal economy through tripartite social dialogue. The project was implemented in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), focusing on two key areas:

- Developing integrated strategies to promote formalisation through enhanced social dialogue, capacity building, and policy coordination (Outcome 1)
- Strengthening skills training and recognition systems, especially for women and youth, to improve employability and access to formal employment (Outcome 2). *This outcome was deprioritised after the mid-term evaluation.*

The SOLIFEM project started in March 2021, was initially expected to end in August 2024, and it was extended under a no cost-extension until the 31st of December 2024. A second no cost-extension was approved, extending the project until the 31st of March 2025. The project is co-funded by the European Union (European Commission DG NEAR); its budget of 4,000,000 Euros comes from the EU, with another 400,000 Euros from the ILO.

Purpose, objectives, scope and clients of the evaluation

The final evaluation aims to independently assess SOLIFEM's performance, focusing on its results against expected objectives, key lessons learned, and recommendations². It also aims at assessing the added-value and the challenges of the regional / multi-country nature of the project.

The evaluation built on the MTE's findings with a more targeted focus on the period from August 2023 to November 2024, which was not covered by the MTE. The geographical coverage aligned with that of the project in each of the four countries. The regional multi-country dimension of the SOLIFEM project was of particular focus across the analysis.

The primary clients of this evaluation were the relevant constituents, the Governments, the Employers and Workers' Organisations, in Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt and OPT. In addition to the above, the ILO CO-Algiers, the project team, the ILO DWT in Cairo and Beirut, the ILO Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), the ILO Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) and the relevant technical units in ILO Headquarters, and the donor, represented by the European Commission in Brussels and its delegations in the four focus countries. Secondary users include other project stakeholders and units within the ILO that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.

¹ Evaluation ToR

² SOLIFEM Evaluation ToR ; Interviews with ILO staff

Evaluation criteria and questions (including Cross-cutting issues/ issues of special interest to the ILO)

The evaluation criteria of the OECD/DAC were used to structure the evaluation. A reflection on the integration of ILO's crosscutting concerns is provided in the effectiveness chapter: gender equality, persons with disability, environmental sustainability, social dialogue, and international labour standards.

The evaluation questions were guided by the six OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability).

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation used a theory-based approach to understand the intervention's theory of change (ToC) and whether the intervention succeeded in each step of its theory to produce the proposed results. The theory of change was used as basis for this approach as it outlines the hypothesis of how specific activities are meant to create immediate and longer-term results.

For this evaluation, the Evaluation Team used a qualitative data collection and analysis approach relying on desk research, interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs).

- *Desk research* comprised all project documentation, as well as additional research on country strategies and priorities.
- *51 Interviews* (29 males, 22 females) were conducted with:
 - 14 ILO staff (5 males, 9 females)
 - Eight donor staff (DG NEAR, DG EMPL, EU Delegations) (3 males, 5 females)
 - Four staff of SOLiD II project (2 males, 2 females)
 - Four stakeholders in Egypt (4 males)
 - Seven stakeholders in Algeria (5 males, 2 females)
 - Seven stakeholders in Lebanon (4 males, 2 females)
 - Seven stakeholders in the OPT (6 males, 1 female)
- *Seven FGDs* were conducted with project beneficiaries, totalling:
 - One FGD in Algeria with workers' representative bodies (7 males, 9 females)
 - One FGD in Egypt with trade union representatives (4 males, 5 females)
 - One FGD in Egypt with FYB beneficiaries (6 males, 3 females)
 - One FGD in Lebanon with FYB beneficiaries (11 females)
 - One online FGD in Lebanon with FYB beneficiaries (10 females)
 - One online FGD in the OPT with SIYB beneficiaries (7 male, 5 females)
 - One online FGD in the OPT with unionisation workshop participants (6 males, 12 females)

In ensuring that the evaluation methodology was participatory - reflecting tripartite constituents and beneficiaries' diverse perspectives—and feminist, explicitly integrating gender equality, the Evaluation Team adopted several measures:

- Wherever logistically possible for the evaluation team, the FGDs were held in person to foster trust and create a supportive environment, allowing participants to feel empowered in sharing their perspectives. In several cases, transportation to/from focus groups was also covered and/or the interviewees' office was visited to ensure minimal inconvenience.
- To explore the elements of gender in the evaluation, several of the FGDs were held with only women that were reached by the SOLIFEM project being evaluated. This segmentation aimed at ensuring that the groups could engage in open dialogue without the potential influence of hierarchical power dynamics.
- Ethical standards were clearly outlined at the beginning of the interviews and FGDs. Respondents were also informed about the purpose, confidentiality, interview time before the interview. Respondents were provided a right to refuse and consent.

The evaluation faced certain limitations:

1. The evaluation had a limited time scope, which required the team to rely for certain cases (like in Egypt in Alsharkeia) on convenient sampling of beneficiaries, rather than a randomised sample, which would have increased the representativeness of the responses. This potential bias was considered in the analysis, but the content of the interviews/FGDs did not indicate that the sampled beneficiaries had a disproportionate positive or negative view, as compared with the desk research.
2. The initially scheduled FGD with the RPL workshops participants in Algeria did not take place, which required the Evaluation Team to rely on the desk review and interviews to assess the extent to which Outcome 2 was achieved in Algeria.
3. The project is still under implementation and a second was confirmed at the time of the evaluation. This hinders the Evaluation Team's ability to address the project's outcomes and longer-term impact.

Key findings

Relevance

Since the completion of the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) in December 2023, the project's priorities and objectives remained relevant and some key concerns were addressed. The changes in country contexts in the OPT and Lebanon affected the project relevance, as the increase in unemployment enhanced the importance of job creation (before formalisation).

The project team responded to the key recommendations of the MTE with regards to the project scope, timeline and engagement of women.

Coherence

The Project lacked holistic alignment with SOLiD II, a second regional project co-funded by the EU, supporting social dialogue in the Southern Mediterranean. However, SOLIFEM managed to align itself with other national ILO projects focusing on formalisation of employment and businesses, and/or skills development.

The Project managed to establish strong links with both EU priorities in line with the UfM agenda, as well as with the ILO's institutional and country level priorities throughout its implementation, which is reflected in its P&Bs and CPOs. However, its capacity to establish links with national strategies regarding formalisation was limited, as national strategies did not contain references to informal labour, or had different perceptions on how the issue of informal labour should be tackled.

Effectiveness

Overall, important steps were taken towards Outcome 1 on formalisation, as related to enhanced awareness and capacity of constituents and beneficiaries. Examples of roadmaps and policy recommendations were identified as well as many examples of beneficiaries taking steps to formalise their business. Delays and external factors, such as the war in the OPT, hindered the Project from achieving the change of policy in the four countries.

At the time of the evaluation, some activities for Outcome 2 on skills development were implemented and targets achieved, and some improvements in RPL were identified. Most progress was identified in Algeria, where the existing RPL system was strengthened.

The Project benefited from multiple enabling factors, mainly the notable buy-in from constituents and beneficiaries who were interested in formalising the informal labour sector. However, the Project had to contend with multiple barriers to progress. These included an overambitious logframe, a lack of buy-in from some stakeholders, and national and regional contexts that were subject to change.

The Project contributed to the cross-cutting concerns of social dialogue and International Labour Standards (specifically Recommendation 204), as social dialogue was effectively used as both method and objective in the Project. While the Project focused extensively on the inclusion of women, project documentation did not include measures beyond equal participation and disaggregated monitoring. The Project did not include actions targeting persons with disability or addressing environmental sustainability.

Efficiency

The adjustments to the budget and prioritisation of Outcome 1 enhanced the Project's efficiency and ensured that the available resources were sufficient to implement quality activities. However, the approach to allocating country budgets was unclear to staff and stakeholders. The Project faced various barriers contributing to delays. Therefore, two no-cost extensions (NCE) were granted.

The Project was largely well-managed at regional and national levels and received sufficient technical support. Challenges identified related to the nature of SOLIFEM as a regional project covering two ILO regions. (North Africa and the Arab States). The M&E system lacked sufficient indicators to measure progress at different levels of the Project.

Impact

The Project has established a foundation to achieve impact. While the impact is still limited as some activities remain on-going, the Project's monitoring data shows that a limited number of workers were already able to formalise their businesses. A mentality shift has occurred regarding the narrative about informal work and the willingness to tackle the issues through social dialogue. As some Project activities remain under implementation, it is unclear whether the activities have made a specific impact on female and young workers or on achieving SDGs 5, 8, 10, and 16 in the target countries.

Sustainability

The Project did not establish an exit strategy in its design or during the evaluation process. While evidence of exit strategy discussions was found, multiple high-level stakeholders remain unaware of an existing exit strategy for the Project. Despite the progress made so far, which includes increased awareness of informal labour market issues, the creation of knowledge products, and developed awareness of capacity and awareness, stakeholders emphasised the need for an additional phase to consolidate its achievements.

At the country level, awareness and capacity-building efforts provided a foundation for sustaining results. However, region-specific challenges—such as armed conflict and the destruction caused by it, lack of financial and human resources, and limited capacity—will undermine continuity.

Conclusions

The SOLIFEM project was designed to address critical issues regarding formalisation and employability of (female) workers and businesses in the Southern Neighbourhood region, founded on the principles of social dialogue and tripartism as presented in the Formal Economy Recommendation 204. The project objectives aligned closely with ILO P&B and DWCP priorities, as well as with EU priorities in the region and with countries' own strategies.

The regional project's ToC was applied to all four countries, allowing for the exchange of lessons learned and good practices among the national ILO staff and the tripartite partners. However, the coverage of two (ILO) regions and four quite different countries was sometimes perceived as hindering effective coordination.

The adaptations responding to the MTE recommendations enhanced the Project's relevance, focus and achievability by shifting budget resources from Outcome 2 to Outcome 1 to increase the focus on social dialogue and national policies regarding informality. As a result, various activities under Outcome 2 were not yet implemented or achieved by the time of the final evaluation, beyond the implementation of the study and initial workshops which enhanced awareness on skills and qualifications.

However, after the outbreak of the war in the OPT and the escalation of this in Lebanon, the relevance of the focus on formalisation was put into question as the direct needs of both countries were job creation and protection due to the increased unemployment.

The Project benefited from flexible budgeting that allowed the reallocation of funding in line with spending patterns and needs, thereby enhancing the Project's efficiency. The Project was also perceived as well-managed and benefited from extensive technical expertise and support.

As the Project was still on-going during the time of the final evaluation and given that the two outcomes were not (yet) fully achieved, it was too early for this evaluation to detect concrete signs of impact. Some foundation for potential future impact was created through the enhanced awareness of stakeholders

and beneficiaries, and enhanced capacity of social partners through the Project's pilot tools and training activities. Particularly, there is a lack of data on the potential effectiveness and impact of the Project on women.

Despite the increased capacity and awareness, various factors hinder project sustainability when the Project ends. Social dialogue and the role of trade unions remain weak, and it is unclear whether the social partners can contribute to policy development without the explicit support of the ILO.

Overall, the Project was of value for its target stakeholders and beneficiaries as it responded to important challenges in the region, in terms of informality, but also in terms of barriers to social dialogue and effective tripartism. Following the ILO Recommendation No. 204, the Project made important steps on enhancing capacity and awareness regarding informality. However, various challenges hindered the Project from achieving its expected outcomes fully and create a solid foundation for impact and sustainability.

Lessons learned

LL 1. *Country-level budget allocation should be agreed upon in the proposal or early inception stage to ensure that each national ILO office is aware of the resources available to them for the project.*

LL 2. *Regional activities should be planned chronologically after initial national achievements are made.*

Good practices

GP 1. *Flexibility of budget reallocation by the donor and ILO staff allows for a project to enhance its relevance and effectiveness based on its M&E activities.*

GP 2. *Close alignment with the ILO International Labour Standards proved effective and relevant for the design of the concrete intervention.*

GP3. *The organisation of peer-learning events with a small group of countries is effective for concrete exchange of lessons and practices.*

Recommendations

Based on the evaluation's findings and conclusions, the Evaluation Team has developed the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1. Future projects should improve gender mainstreaming beyond the equal participation of women.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
Future ILO project staff and M&E staff	Medium (for monitoring and consultations)	Future projects' inception stage	High (for future projects)

Recommendation 2. Enhance the link between the regional project concept and the national context.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
Future national and regional project staff, donor, constituents	Low	Future projects' inception stage	Medium (for future projects)

Recommendation 3. Enhance the achievability of future projects, by creating a Theory of Change with realistic Outcomes that can be achieved within the scope of one project.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:

ILO HQ and Country offices conceiving new projects, donors	Low	Future projects' inception stage	High
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Recommendation 4. Expand the M&E system of future projects to measure every step along the ToC and obtain different data to measure project achievements.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
ILO HQ and Country offices conceiving new projects, donors	Medium (more M&E resources)	Future projects' inception stage	Medium

Recommendation 5. Consider organising regional meetings towards the end of the project when there are concrete lessons to share. During the interim phases, exchange can take place through in-person study visits and peer-learning.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
ILO HQ and Country offices conceiving new projects, donors	Low (less regional event costs)	Future projects' inception stage	Medium

Recommendation 6. Integrate follow-ups on the roadmaps, strategies, policy recommendations and other strategic outputs of SOLIFEM in other projects and programmes of the ILO, the EU and in the UfM context.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
ILO HQ and DWT, EU's DG NEAR and DG EMPL	Medium (new projects costly, integration in existing work less costly)	Throughout 2025	High

1. Description of the Project

1.1. Context and background

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), between 40 to 67% of workers in the EU's southern neighbourhood are part of the **informal economy**³. Prevailing trends across the Southern Neighbourhood consistently show that informal employment is linked to poorer working conditions, lower wages, and reduced productivity compared to formal employment.

Most of the countries in the EU Southern Neighbourhood continue to contend with the enduring effects of past crises, particularly the 2008 global recession, the Arab Spring of 2011, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly hindered the prospects of their populations. The informal economy, varying widely across these countries, has been exacerbated by factors such as structural adjustments, high unemployment, inequality, and social exclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated these challenges, particularly affecting young people, women, and the most vulnerable groups.

Without labour rights protections, informal workers lack access to minimum wages, maternity protection, and social security. This lack of regulation and investment also hinders private sector dynamism, productivity, and competitiveness, further hampering growth and development. In the Southern Neighbourhood, workers and economic units in the informal economy face specific barriers to representation and social dialogue. Many are unable to organise or have their needs heard in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, they lack channels to seek redress in cases of employer misconduct. They also face twice the poverty risk of formal sector workers⁴. Informality also stifles the dynamism, efficiency, and competitiveness of the private sector, hindering overall economic growth and development. Private sector enterprises of all sizes struggle to secure essential financial resources, including small loans and long-term foreign direct investment. Thus, the combined effect of an unfavourable regulatory environment and limited investment prospects usually dampen economic growth.

Workers and enterprises in the informal economy face unique challenges in terms of representation and participation in social dialogue. Informal work environments are often characterised by a lack of transparency in worker-employer relationships, absence of contracts, and a decline or lack of workers' solidarity—all within a weak regulatory framework. Even when representation for informal workers is established, gaining recognition and inclusion in bipartite and tripartite social dialogue frameworks remains difficult. Therefore, fostering an inclusive social dialogue that accommodates a wider range of voices, particularly those traditionally marginalised, such as women informal workers and young people, is essential. Moreover, the impact of the pandemic has underscored the critical need for strong tripartite cooperation among stakeholders and inclusive social dialogues⁵.

1.2. Project description

Within this context, the **Social Dialogue for Formalisation and Employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM) project** was initiated in March 2021 to support the transition from the informal to the formal economy through tripartite social dialogue.

The SOLIFEM project is also part of the EU's long-term support to social dialogue in the Southern Mediterranean region. Social dialogue is a priority in the EU's Agenda for the Mediterranean of 2021 and under the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour (UfM), which explicitly refers to the SOLIFEM and SOLiD projects. SOLIFEM is therefore complementary to the SOLiD II project⁶ which seeks to foster dynamic and inclusive social dialogue in the region by

³ SOLIFEM Evaluation ToR

⁴ ILO (2018), Women and Men in the Informal Economy: a statistical picture (third edition).

⁵ ILO (2021), ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work. (1st - 5th eds.)

⁶ SOLiD South Med Social Dialogue. (2021, October). Towards an Inclusive & Structured Social Dialogue in the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood. Available [here](#)

strengthening the consultative role of economic and social partners, including the broader civil society. The SOLiD II project namely developed the Charter on Social Dialogue in the Southern Mediterranean⁷.

The SOLIFEM project started in March 2021, was initially expected to end in August 2024, and it was extended under a no cost-extension until the 31st of December 2024. A second no cost-extension was approved, extending the project until the 31st of March 2025. The Project is co-funded by the European Union (European Commission DG NEAR); its budget of 4,000,000 Euros comes from the EU, with another 400,000 Euros from the ILO.

The Evaluation Team developed the Intervention Logic (IL) through a review of the Project documentation, including the **Results Framework** :

The Project is implemented in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). More specifically, the Project focused on two key areas:

- **Developing integrated strategies** to promote formalisation through enhanced social dialogue, capacity building, and policy coordination (Outcome 1)
- **Strengthening skills training and recognition systems**, especially for women and youth, to improve employability and access to formal employment (Outcome 2)

The Project sought to include a comprehensive set of **activities** which resulted in measurable **outputs** including tripartite diagnostic studies, capacity-building, awareness-raising, policy development and knowledge sharing (Figure 1). These activities took place at two levels: national and regional. As activities occurred at **national and regional levels**, the Project could foster cooperation through shared experiences and south-south cooperation among stakeholders from the Southern Neighbourhood region.

At the **outcomes level**, these outputs, in the longer term, translate into:

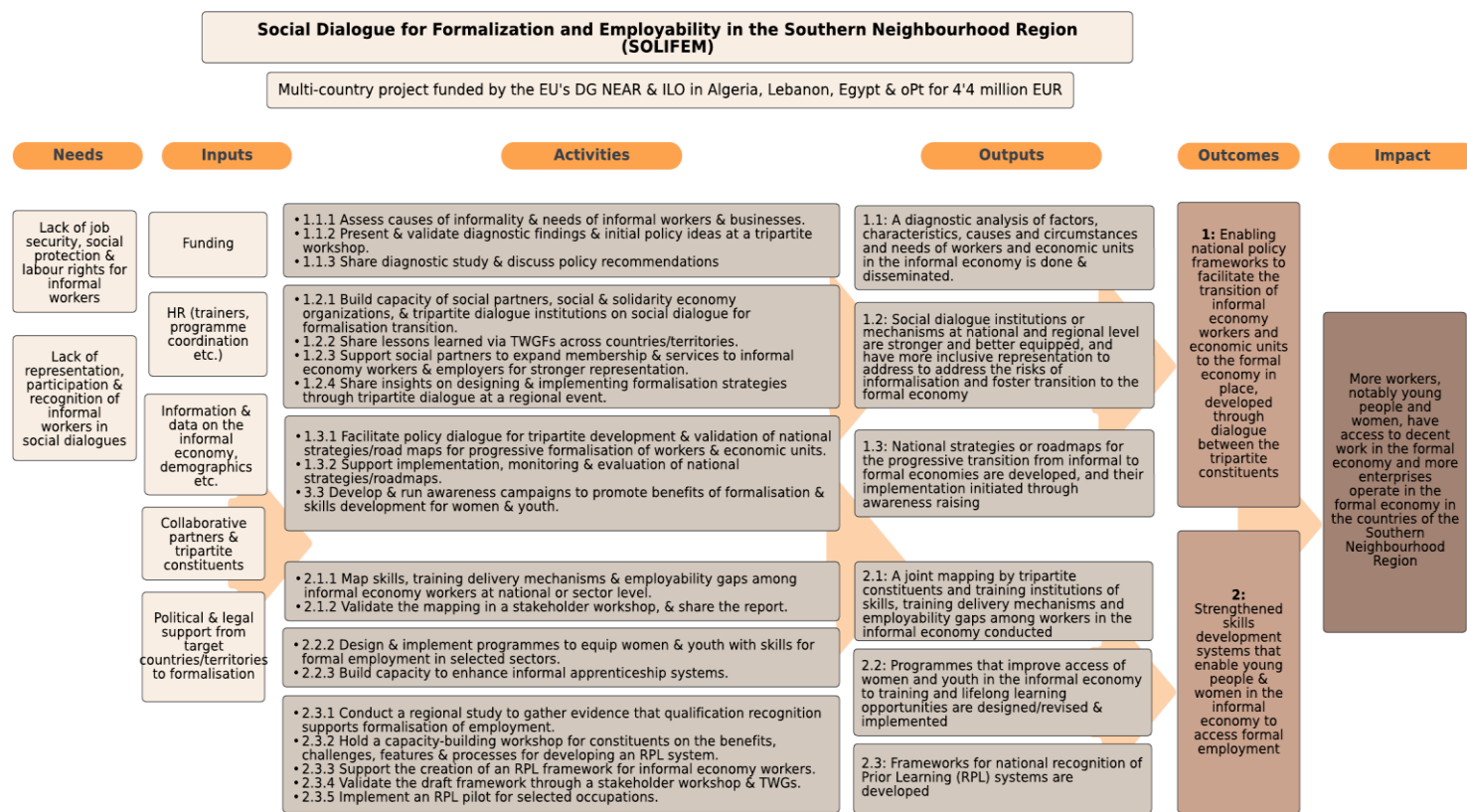
- At the **national level**, the Project aimed to support the development of national strategies for formalisation, based on (1) an improved understanding of the informal economy and its risks, (2) strengthened capacity through concrete tools supporting workers and businesses' formalisation, and (3) enhanced policy dialogue and coordination among the tripartite constituents and other key stakeholders on promoting formalisation and boosting skills and employability for youth and women as key dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development.
- At the **regional level**, it aimed to strengthen mechanisms for regional policy dialogue, allowing partners to share the knowledge and experience, lessons, and jointly devise recommendations and plans to carry their work forward at both national and regional levels. Thus, the Project's outcomes aimed to inform and support joint action and future initiatives for social dialogue through south-south and triangular cooperation across the Southern Neighbourhood.

Ultimately, the IL framework envisions achieving long-term **impact** through workers', and notably women and young people's access to formal employment in the four target countries of the Southern Neighbourhood.

The SOLIFEM target groups include the representative national employers and workers' organisations, Ministries of Labour and other concerned ministries, tripartite social dialogue institutions and representative membership-based organisations in the informal economy, as well as vocational training institutions in the four target countries. The ultimate beneficiaries are workers and economic units in the informal economy, with a focus on youth and women.

⁷ SOLiD South Med Social Dialogue. (2019, March). Charter to promote social dialogue in the South Mediterranean: Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco. Available [here](#)

Figure 1 SOLIFEM Project Intervention Logic



Source: Evaluation Team's elaboration based on the project documentation & interviews

SOLIFEM's project strategy is built on the foundations of tripartism and social dialogue, in line with the ILO's overall mandate and with [Recommendation No. 204](#) on the transition from informal to the formal economy. Moreover, the project is a driver for practical-oriented programming, with its principles framed within the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals: 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)**. The project specifically contributes to the targets **5.2⁸** and **5.5⁹**, **8.2¹⁰**, **8.3¹¹** and **8.5¹²**, as well as **16.6¹³** and **16.7¹⁴**.

The Project was implemented by ILO project staff present in the four target countries (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and the OPT). The team was headed by an internationally recruited Chief Technical Advisor based in the ILO office in Algiers. In October 2023, SOLIFEM witnessed the resignation of Daniel Cork, the project Chief Technical Advisor, to take up a new post at ILO Headquarters (HQ). The Project

⁸ SDG Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

⁹ SDG Target 5.5: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

¹⁰ SDG Target 8.2: Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high value added and labour-intensive sectors.

¹¹ SDG Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises including through access to financial service.

¹² SDG Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

¹³ SDG Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

¹⁴ SDG Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

Technical Officer from Egypt was recruited to replace him starting December 2024. To ease the transition, the Chief Technical Advisor remained in Algeria during November 2023 to allow a thorough handover of responsibilities to the new incumbent. Each of the four countries has a National Project Coordinator (NPC) and three of them have a finance and administration assistant (excluding the ILO OPT office).

The Project was supported by technical specialists from the Decent Work technical support teams (DWT) in Cairo and Beirut, as well as from the INWORK (Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions Branch), DIALOGUE (Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit), DEVINVEST (Development and Investment Programme and SKILLS (Skills and Employability Branch) in ILO HQ, and works in close collaboration with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) in the field and at HQ. Furthermore, the project has been receiving support from the newly established AP/Formalisation programme and joint initiatives/interventions are planned accordingly.

The project document foresaw the establishment of a tripartite Project Advisory Committee in each focus country so as to embed it into existing governance frameworks. In practice, certain adjustments were made considering the national context. In the OPT, the tripartite body is a sub-committee of the National Labour Policies Committee, the official tripartite social dialogue institution. In Lebanon, there is a smaller tripartite Reference Group established to guide the project strategy and implementation, with involvement only of the Ministry of Labour (MoL), given the limited government capacity in the context of the ongoing economic crisis. In Algeria, there is a large Project Advisory Committee that includes many government ministries and national institutions, in addition to the social partners. In Algeria the project is also supported by two technical working groups on formalisation and on skills, a structure initially foreseen for all focus countries. In Egypt, the project works with social partners.

Countries context

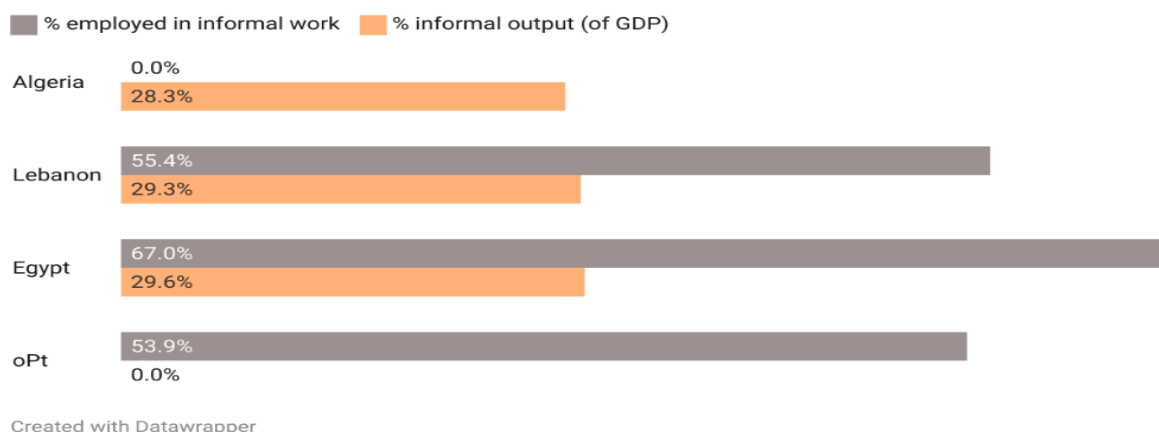
The selected Southern Neighbourhood countries experience high levels of informality in the labour market (Figure 2), which is in particular prevalent among younger, less educated workers, and those in low-skill occupations. In each country, the informal economy accounts for about one-third of GDP, leading to substantial revenue losses (Figure 2). It should be noted that measuring and comparing informality levels in the MENA region is particularly challenging due to restricted public access to microdata, disruptions to national labour force surveys since COVID-19, as well as discrepancies between labour force surveys variables¹⁵.

In such a context of limited data availability, the SOLIFEM project's development of sector-specific tripartite diagnostic studies shedding light on the causes, characteristics and factors linked in informality in the focus countries contributed to increased understanding and knowledge, as observed in the MTE¹⁶.

¹⁵ In Egypt, the OPT and Lebanon, labour force surveys have been conducted on a relatively regular basis, which allowed for the measurement of informal employment. However, in Algeria, its labour force survey was bi-annual until 2019, but data collection stopped with the pandemic and has not resumed as of 2024. Please refer to OECD/ILO/UNDP (2024), *Informality and Structural Transformation in Egypt, Iraq and Jordan: A Framework for Assessing Policy Responses in the MENA Region*, OECD Publishing, Paris

¹⁶ Mid-term evaluation (MTE) SOLIFEM

Figure 2. Characteristics of informality in the project countries



Source: ILO LFS for informal employment, World Bank Informal Economy Database, 0% denoting a lack of data for the specific country in the databases; all data is from 2019.

As an indirect measure of informality in Algeria (where recent data on informal employment is not available), the informal sector in the form of unregistered enterprises is also significant. Indeed, it is estimated that nearly two-thirds of self-employed workers lack a trade register, and 63.8% engage in economic activities without the necessary administrative authorisation, particularly in the private and agricultural sectors¹⁷. Moreover, an estimated 41.9% of employees and self-employed workers are not affiliated with the social security system¹⁸.

In most of the project countries, the **trade, commerce, retail, and agriculture** sectors have the highest levels of informality. By recent estimates, in **Egypt**, wholesale and retail represent 59% of informal businesses, and agriculture 4.9% of such informal businesses. In **Lebanon**, although roughly half the labour force is informally employed, 90% of informal workers worked in agriculture as of 2019¹⁹.

In small retail and commerce, informality tends to be higher due to the complex and costly regulations, alongside low barriers to entry. In agriculture, informal practices are common due to the nature of the work, particularly seasonal or subsistence farming and contract work. While small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) dominate these sectors and are the main employers of informal workers, other sectors with larger enterprises, such as construction, also employ high numbers of informal workers. This is often due to broader institutional challenges, including weak or poorly enforced workers' rights and limited social dialogue mechanisms.

Most people involved in informal work often belong to vulnerable groups. For instance, in Egypt, 90% of young workers and 90% of individuals with basic or lower education were engaged in informal work, according to 2019 data²⁰.

However, informal employment rates also hide important **gender differences**. Indeed, over the past decade, men in several MENA economies have been more likely to take up informal jobs than women, whereas the informal employment of women declined in the period 2017-2020. However, this trend reversed in 2020 where women in informal employment suffered greater job losses than men during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the informal service sector²¹. The literature suggests that women's unpaid care work and limited access to job retention schemes contributed to higher job losses for

¹⁷ Data from Algeria's Office National des Statistiques in: ILO and CREAD (2024). Diagnostic of the Informal Economy in Algeria. Summary of the Final Report. (In French)

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ OECD/ILO/UNDP (2024), Informality and Structural Transformation in Egypt, Iraq and Jordan: A Framework for Assessing Policy Responses in the MENA Region, OECD Publishing, Paris

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ IMF (2022), Informality, Development, and Business Cycle in North Africa, Departmental Paper, No. DP/2022/011, International Monetary Fund, Middle East and Central Asia Department, Washington, DC

informally employed women²². As a result, the drop in female informal employment in 2019-2020 did not lead to higher formal employment but increased female unemployment or caused women to exit the labour force.

Moreover, the outbreak of the war in Gaza in October 2023, and its escalation in Lebanon, only serves to further complicate the security conditions and context for the Project' activities and MTE's implementation. Indeed, due to the ongoing war in Gaza since October 2023, SOLIFEM activities in the OPT were disrupted and subsequently restructured. In response to the crisis, the ILO in the OPT has developed a three-phase response programme to address the impact of the crisis on Palestinian labour market and livelihoods²³. As part of this response plan, the ILO has conducted flash analysis of the war's impact on livelihoods and social security in the OPT, reiterating the need for continued effort towards supporting social protection systems especially once peace is restored²⁴. The SOLIFEM project team contributed with analytical inputs to multiple of these assessments, being part of the ILO's immediate response tools in the context of the OPT²⁵. The severe impact of the war on the OPT's GDP and labour market, as well as on access to livelihood and social services, limited the positive outcomes the Project might have achieved.

As emphasised by interviewed ILO staff, the achievements of planned outputs were also significantly affected by the political context in Lebanon²⁶. After the October 2024 invasion of its territories, activities tied to the development of a national roadmap, skills development and Formalise Your Business (FYB) trainings were put on hold²⁷. To mitigate the impact of these disruptions, the ILO project team shifted some training activities online²⁸.

The implications of these contextual factors for the achievement of the project outputs and long-term sustainability and impact were further assessed by the Evaluation Team after the Inception Stage.

Findings of the mid-term evaluation

A mid-term evaluation (MTE) conducted for the project between September and December 2023, and approved by ILO in February 2024, found that the SOLIFEM project **was highly relevant and especially successful in laying the foundations for strengthening the formal economy** in the four target countries²⁹. The awareness-raising activities were found highly effective in changing perceptions about the importance of formal employment, and the capacity-building efforts strengthened the effectiveness of social dialogue institutions.

Moreover, the MTE indicated that **both the general and specific approach used for formalisation and the promotion of decent work showed promises**. Firstly, prioritising formalisation to support decent work was an effective way of avoiding a confrontational tone and reaching consensus to the benefit of all tripartite parties. Secondly, the sector-specific diagnostic studies on informality were more detailed, which allowed for the inclusion of specific and relevant stakeholders in a more committed manner. Finally, it was found that the regional approach was beneficial for knowledge exchange.

However, some weaknesses were also noted with the implementation, which were primarily due to the delays incurred. Protracted consultations with tripartite constituents, the COVID-19 pandemic, staffing issues, and political/administrative changes and uncertainties (to be later detailed) all postponed activities. Consequently, the MTE deemed the overall logframe, especially the second outcome – to strengthen skills development systems – too ambitious given the resources and time initially allocated. In the context of the project's final evaluation, interviewed national and regional ILO staff also agreed

²² ILO (2023), Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical update, International Labour Organization.

²³ SOLIFEM Third Annual Technical Progress Report 2023; Interviews with ILO staff

²⁴ ILO (2024), A Year of War in Gaza: Impacts on Employment and Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip - Bulletin No. 5.

²⁵ SOLIFEM Third Annual Technical Progress Report; ILO (2024), Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – Bulletin No. 3; ILO/UNDP (2023), Joint Assessment Impact of Gaza War on Employment Opportunities for Palestinian Workers.

²⁶ Interviews with ILO staff

²⁷ SOLIFEM Flash Monthly Report, September 2024

²⁸ Interview with ILO staff

²⁹ Mid-term evaluation (MTE) SOLIFEM

with these needed adjustments to the overall logframe³⁰. Overall, the findings also noted that most of the achievements were on the output-level and less on the outcome. Lastly, the MTE encouraged project teams to address gender disparities and women's participation more systemically in project activities.

During the inception interviews conducted for this evaluation, the team observed that the project team was well aware of the MTE findings and reported having strived to adjust activities in response.

³⁰ Interviews with ILO staff

2. Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The ILO considers evaluations an integral part of the implementation of technical cooperation activities. As per ILO evaluation policy and procedures all programmes and projects with a budget between one and USD five million+ must have to go through one internal and one independent evaluation. The project's mid-term evaluation took place from October – December 2023. The final independent evaluation was managed by an ILO evaluation manager and conducted by independent evaluators.

2.1. Purpose of the evaluation

As outlined in the ToR and highlighted in the inception interviews, this final evaluation aims to independently assess SOLIFEM's performance, focusing on its results against expected objectives, key lessons learned, and recommendations³¹. It also aims at assessing the added-value and the challenges of the regional / multi-country nature of the project.

2.2. Evaluation scope

The evaluation built on the MTE's findings with a more targeted focus on the period from August 2023 to November 2024, which was not covered by the MTE. The geographical coverage aligned with that of the project in each of the four countries; the regional multi-country dimension of the SOLIFEM project was of particular focus across the analysis.

2.3. Clients of the evaluation

The primary clients of this evaluation were the relevant constituents, the Governments, the Employers and Workers' Organisations, in Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt and OPT. In addition to the above, the ILO CO-Algiers, the project team, the ILO DWT in Cairo and Beirut, the ILO Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), the ILO Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) and the relevant technical units in ILO Headquarters, and the donor, represented by the European Commission in Brussels and its delegations in the four focus countries. Secondary users include other project stakeholders and units within the ILO that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.

2.4. Key Dates & Operations

Following the timeline presented in the evaluation ToR, the assessment will run for **15 weeks** in total, with a start at the end of October 2024 and a completion by the middle of February 2025 (a more specific breakdown of the dates can be found in Annex seven). The assessment was organised around **three key project implementation stages**, namely:

- **The Inception Stage** took place between Weeks 1-3. This phase included a kick-off meeting and inception interview, to support the preparation of the inception report, data collection tools and identify stakeholders for data collection.
- **The Data Collection Stage** took place between Weeks 4-9, following the approval of the Inception Report. During this phase, desk research, interviews, FGDs and analysis were conducted.
- **The Finalisation (reporting) Stage** will take place between Weeks 10-15. During this phase, the Evaluation Team will submit the prepared draft evaluation report and finalise it based on stakeholder comments. The team will also present the findings during the validation and learning workshop and integrate remaining comments as needed. The final report with the executive summary will then be submitted to ILO for approval at the end of Week 15.

³¹ SOLIFEM Evaluation ToR ; Interviews with ILO staff

3. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

Following the OECD/DAC criteria of **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact orientation and sustainability**, the evaluation covers the following main evaluation questions (the full matrix is presented in Annex five).

Table 1 Evaluation questions

Criterion	Main Question
Relevance	To what extent are the results from the midterm evaluation still relevant?
	Has there been any updates to the project approach?
Coherence	At the regional level, to what extent is the project coherent with other interventions of the ILO and the EU in the region, especially the SOLiD II project?
	To what extent is the project consistent with the policies and goals of the countries under study, including work on gender?
Effectiveness	To what extent did the project achieve its outputs?
	To what extent did the project achieve its outcomes?
	How did the project's outputs and outcomes contribute to ILO's mainstreamed strategies including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?
	How and to what extent did the project contribute to the ILO's Implementation Report on the Programme & Budget and Country Programme Outcomes?
	To what extent the project is contributing to the EU priorities under the Agenda for the Mediterranean and to the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III), to the UfM policy agenda under the Ministerial declaration on Employment of 2022 and to the partners' national policy frameworks.
	To what extent did the project ensure the implementation of the recommendations, lessons learned, and good practices extracted from the midterm evaluation?
Efficiency	To what extent were the project activities cost-efficient? Were the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) allocated strategically to achieve outcomes, especially in line with the findings of the midterm evaluation?
	How did the project's governance structure facilitate good results and efficient delivery? And if not, why not?
	How have the stakeholders been involved in the project? Are some stakeholders more involved than others and why? How efficient were the coordination efforts and dialogue with the SOLiD II project?
	To what extent did the project consider and address potential gender disparities or biases to ensure efficient utilization of resources and equitable outcomes?
	How effective was communication among the ILO project teams, the regional offices and the responsible technical department at ILO headquarters? Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?
Impact orientation	How likely are the project achievements to contribute to the formalisation of the informal economy in the four countries? What positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects can be linked to the project?
	How has the project contributed to reinforce social dialogue in the region?
	What is the project's expected impact on female and youth workers?
	How is the project contributing to the relevant SDGs? Can any specific achievement be directly linked to the SDG indicators? SDGs 5, 8, 10, 16 → gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities; peace, justice and strong institutions
Sustainability	Did the project establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project at both country and regional levels?
	Did the project consider gender in planning its sustainable measures?

	Can future projects be built upon the results of this project, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?
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The evaluation also addresses cross-cutting concerns, specifically gender equality and non-discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue, International Labour Standards, environmental sustainability and medium and long-term effects of capacity development initiatives. To holistically cover these cross-cutting concerns, the evaluation team used a two-fold approach. It dedicated a specific group of sub-questions under the effectiveness criterion to analyse the progress towards achieving these cross-cutting concerns. Moreover, it integrated cross-cutting concerns throughout the evaluation process by crafting specific data collection instructions to ensure they represent diverse viewpoints, integrating cross-cutting concerns such as gender into the evaluation matrix and being mindful to represent different viewpoints during the analysis process.

4. Methodology and Limitations

The evaluation used a **theory-based approach** to understand the intervention's Theory of Change (ToC) and whether the intervention succeeded in each step of its theory to produce the proposed results. The theory of change was used as basis for this approach as it outlines the hypothesis of how specific activities are meant to create immediate and longer-term results.

4.1. Data collection phase

For this evaluation, the Evaluation Team used a qualitative data collection and analysis approach relying on desk research, interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs).

Desk research

An analysis of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and project documentation (e.g. mid-term evaluation (MTE), progress reports, monitoring data, communication material produced etc.) provided by the ILO helped lay the foundation for the methodology and complement the interviews and FGDs. The MTE was an important source of data which acted as the basis of the final evaluation report. However, the final evaluation did not duplicate the MTE findings but complemented and used them for triangulation. The Evaluation Team also reviewed ILO's strategies (e.g. P&B, DWCPs, etc.) and contextual information about the target countries covered by SOLIFEM. The desk research was implemented in two stages:

- **Initial desk research** was conducted during the final evaluation's design in the Inception Stage. It helped the evaluation team understand the Project, clarify evaluation objectives, and support the design and development of the methodological approach and data collection tools.
- **Desk research for data collection** was carried out during the data collection stage to inform the evaluation questions listed in Annex five. The desk research also facilitated triangulation by supporting findings from the interviews and FGDs.

Interview programme

The Evaluation Team used purposive sampling to select interviewees to ensure that diverse interests, especially the interests of the constituents, are represented. It also aimed to be gender balanced, inclusive and ensure vulnerable groups' voices were represented among interviewees (including women's and people with disabilities, if possible). Respondents were also informed about the purpose, confidentiality, interview time before the interview, and were provided a right to refuse and consent.

Interviews with national and global stakeholders were conducted in two stages:

- **Initial interviews** (eight) were conducted online during the Inception Stage to better understand the specific context for the evaluation and ILO's expectations regarding the evaluation, as well as to determine whether the methodologies proposed were suitable for this evaluation.
- **In-depth interviews** for data collection were conducted during the structured fieldwork phase and focused on the specific evaluation questions found in Annex five.

National experts who speak the beneficiaries' languages, conducted stakeholder interviews mostly face-to-face in Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon, and fully online in the case of the OPT. Interviews with ILO staff, the donor, and regional interviews were conducted online in English and French by the core Evaluation Team. For stakeholders where multiple individuals from the same organisation were involved in SOLIFEM, interviews were conducted either in a group setting or individually with the representatives.

The table below presents a breakdown of the 51 interviews (29 males and 22 females) conducted (additional information available in Annex four) ³².

Table 2 Interview respondents

ILO, SOLiD II & Donor (26)	National Stakeholders Egypt (4)	National Stakeholders Algeria (7)	National Stakeholders Lebanon (7)	National Stakeholders OPT (7)
ILO country staff (2 males, 5 females) ILO HQ & regional specialists (3 males, 4 females) EU Delegations (1 male, 3 females) SOLiD II Team (2 males, 2 females) Donor (DG NEAR & DG EMPL) (2 males, 2 females)	FEI (Federation of Egyptian Industries) (1 male) ETUF (Egyptian Trade Union Federation) (2 males) EDLC (Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress) (1 male) Small Farmers' Trade Union (1 male)	UGTA (Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens) (1 male) CGEA (Confédération Générale des Entreprises Algériennes) (1 male) MADR (Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural) (1 male) MTA (Ministère du Tourisme de l'Artisanat) (1 female) MC (Ministère du Commerce) (1 male) MTESS (Ministère du Travail, de l'emploi et de la Sécurité Sociale) (1 male) MFEP (Ministère de la Formation et l'Enseignement Professionnels) (1 female)	CGTL (General Confederation of Lebanese Workers) (1 male, 1 female) FENASOL (The National Federation of Employees' and Workers' Unions in Lebanon) (1 male, 1 female) ALI (Association of Lebanese Industrialists) (2 males) MOL (Ministry of Labour) (1 female)	MoL (Ministry of Labour) (1 female) FPCCIA (Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture) (1 male) PGFTU (Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions) (4 males)

Focus group discussions

³² This slightly skewed distribution in the gender representation of the collected data likely stems from contextual and cultural norms and constraints in the MENA region, including workforce participation disparities, family and caretaking responsibilities, and potential logistical barriers such as limited access to safe transport, which may limit women's representation in the data collection.

Target beneficiaries

The target beneficiaries of the Project were consulted through FGDs or group interviews when conducted online (usually smaller in size than FGDs). The Evaluation Team conducted:

- In-person FGDs in Algeria and Egypt.
- Online group interviews in the OPT.
- Both FGDs and online group interviews in Lebanon following the developing security situation.

FGD implementation

During the Inception Stage, the Evaluation Team received the lists of beneficiaries per country and per activity, which demonstrated that Project activities were quite different per country and the most useful FGD compositions have to be identified per country (and not aiming to conduct the same FGDs across the four countries). As a result, the following FGDs were conducted:

Algeria	Egypt
One on-site FGD in Algiers with the workers' representative bodies reached by UGTA (7 males, 9 females)	One on-site FGD in Cairo with the trade union representatives reached through the trainings (4 males, 5 females) One on-site FGD in AlSharkeya with FYB beneficiaries (6 males, 3 females)
Lebanon	OPT
One on-site FGD in Chouf with FYB beneficiaries (11 females) One online group interview with FYB beneficiaries in Akkar (10 females)	One online group interview with SIYB beneficiaries (7 male, 5 females) One online group interview with the unionisation workshop participants (6 males, 12 females)

To select the FGD participants, the Evaluation Team sampled randomly and contacted about 12 to 14 participants from the respective participants lists received from the ILO, striving to ensure a gender balance where possible. More specifically:

- In Algeria, an FGD was initially planned by the Evaluation Team with the RPL workshop participants in Algeria. However, this FGD did not take place following the absence of response from the Project partner to support its organisation.
- In Egypt, the FGD with the FYB workshop beneficiaries was initially planned by the Evaluation Team in Alexandria where the workshops were held with specifically female business owners. However, following the Project partner's recommendation, it was better to conduct the FGD with the FYB beneficiaries in AlSharkeya, the FGD was relocated to this city due to logistic reasons.
- In Lebanon, as the FYB workshop beneficiaries were held with predominantly women in both the cities of Akkar and Chouf, the FGDs were held with female participants exclusively.
- In the OPT, since several SIYB beneficiaries were unable to join on the first day of the online group interview, they therefore requested an additional session. The online group interview was therefore held over two consecutive days.

FGD ethics

The discussions were conducted in the manner that is aligned with the ethical considerations mentioned under Section 4.3, ensuring that the evaluation methodology was participatory - reflecting tripartite constituents and beneficiaries' diverse perspectives—and feminist, explicitly integrating gender equality. More specifically:

- Wherever logistically possible for the Evaluation Team, the FGDs were held in person to foster trust and create a supportive environment, allowing participants to feel empowered in sharing their perspectives. In several cases, participants' transportation costs to/from interviews and/or focus groups was also covered to ensure minimal inconvenience.

- To explore elements of gender in the evaluation, several of the FGDs were held with only women that were reached by the SOLIFEM project being evaluated. This segmentation aimed at ensuring that the groups could engage in open dialogue without the potential influence of hierarchical power dynamics.
- Ethical standards were clearly outlined at the beginning of the interviews and FGDs. Respondents were also informed about the purpose, confidentiality, interview time before the interview. Respondents were provided a right to refuse and consent.
- The Evaluation Team provided a brief training for national experts to support their approach in implementing the discussions. The national experts conducted all discussions in the participants' mother tongue, ensuring that they experience no difficulty in expressing themselves.

4.2. Data analysis and reporting

The evaluation and analysis of the collected data aligned with the Intervention Logic and evaluation matrix. The evaluation highlights the most visible and triangulated data trends, providing conclusions, recommendations, good practices and lessons learned.

Qualitative data was collected from desk research, interviews, and FGDs. Interviews and FGDs were summarised in writing and anonymised. The data from documents, interviews, and FGD summaries was reviewed and coded using a Word document coding template prepared in accordance with the evaluation matrix in Annex five.

To present reliable findings, enhance their validity, and address any potentially existing information gaps across data sources, the evaluation team carefully **triangulated** the information gathered from sources. This means that multiple different sources were used when answering the evaluation questions presented in Annex five. This approach was used when writing the **Final Evaluation Report, Evaluation Summary, and preparing the subsequent Presentation for the Dissemination Workshop**.

The evaluation findings were subsequently presented for validation to the tripartite constituents and stakeholders in an online dissemination workshop. To ensure accessibility, interpretation was provided in English, Arabic and French. This participatory approach to the evaluation aimed to foster shared ownership of the findings and inform future programming.

4.3. Ethical consideration and quality assurance process

To ensure that the evaluation is ethical and integrates gender equality and human rights principles into its design, data collection, and reporting, it closely followed the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), UNEG [Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#), UNEG [Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#) and was guided by the ILO Evaluation policy.

Meanwhile to ensure the quality of the final evaluation, the evaluation team relied on [ILO's Evaluation Quality Assurance and Guidance](#); and the ILO EVAL Policy Guidelines Checklist 4.8 "Preparing the inception report"; Checklist 4 "Validating methodologies"; and Checklist 4.2 "Preparing the evaluation report".

4.4. Limitations and mitigation strategy

1. The evaluation had a limited time scope, which required the Evaluation Team to rely for certain cases (like in Egypt in AlSharkeya) on convenient sampling of beneficiaries, rather than a randomised sample, which would have increased the representativeness of the responses. This potential bias was considered in the analysis, but the content of the interviews/FGDs did not indicate that the sampled beneficiaries had a disproportionate positive or negative view, as compared with the desk research.
2. The initially scheduled FGD with the RPL workshops participants in Algeria did not take place, which required the Evaluation Team to rely on the desk review and interviews to assess the extent to which Outcome 2 was achieved in Algeria.

3. The Project is still under implementation and a second extension was confirmed at the time of the evaluation. This hinders the Evaluation Team's ability to address the project's outcomes and longer-term impact.

5. Evaluation Findings

5.1. Relevance

According to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, relevance indicates the extent to which an intervention addresses the needs of beneficiaries and stakeholders and responds to the country and regional contexts. As this was assessed in the MTE, the current evaluation assesses how the project has responded to the findings and recommendations from the MTE and remained relevant.

To what extent are the results from the midterm evaluation still relevant to the project?

Since the completion of the MTE in December 2023, the project's priorities and objectives remained relevant and some key concerns were addressed. The changes in country contexts in the OPT and Lebanon affected the project relevance, as the increase in unemployment enhanced the importance of job creation (before formalisation).

Overall, interviewees confirmed that most **regional findings of the MTE** remain applicable at the final evaluation stage, particularly in terms of relevance and coherence towards national and international strategies and priorities and the importance of continued capacity-building. The focus on social dialogue and capacity-building remains highly relevant to addressing informality in the project countries.³³

Some of the MTE's concerns about the ambitious nature of the Project and the delays in implementation across the four countries have been addressed through revisions in the targets and the NCEs (see the next section), so they are no longer applicable in the final evaluation.³⁴

While the MTE pointed out that the Project was relevant to national strategies and priorities, interviews conducted for the final evaluation also indicated that, in applying a regional project framework, there may not have been sufficient attention to each national context and priorities.³⁵ Some stakeholders also felt that the project did not have sufficient focus on the policy level (*"implementation surpasses the project's or stakeholders' capacities and requires government intervention"*³⁶). One stakeholder noted that *"the project seems to have various trainings, but no strategy to take the training results forward to the policy-level"*³⁷.

The main **changes in the project countries and context** since the MTE took place in the OPT and Lebanon. The MTE was completed shortly after the escalated situation in the OPT. Since the MTE, Lebanon also experienced significant changes in its security situation. Interviewed stakeholders from both countries emphasised that, to some extent, these contextual changes *enhanced* the needs of stakeholders for the project activities.

"The war in Gaza significantly impacted the labour market and had a negative impact on union activities [in the OPT]".³⁸

"The worsening economic and financial conditions, alongside the government's instability and the lack of security, further impacted the work of trade unions [in Lebanon]".³⁹

"Since the mid-term evaluation, the absence of the [Lebanese] state has deepened, and the informal sector has expanded. The needs of both workers and employers have increased".⁴⁰

One Lebanese stakeholder noted that:

³³ Interviews with stakeholders

³⁴ Comparison of targets in the SOLIFEM First Annual Report (before MTE) and the Third Annual Report (after MTE) with interview with ILO staff.

³⁵ Interviews with stakeholders

³⁶ Interview with a stakeholder

³⁷ Interview with a stakeholder

³⁸ Interview with a stakeholder

³⁹ Interview with a stakeholder

⁴⁰ Interview with a stakeholder

“Before the war, we focused on training workers and building their knowledge on how to address their needs, providing them with guidance booklets. When the war broke out, workers started reaching out to us, demanding the implementation of what they had learned. This indicates that, before the war, our efforts were theoretical and intangible, and workers did not fully engage with them. However, during and after the war, we moved to practical application, as informal workers were the first to lose their jobs due to their vulnerability”.⁴¹

However, several stakeholders also expressed concerns as to the effect of the changes in the country contexts for the Project’s relevance. In the **OPT**, for example, one stakeholder noted that the diagnostic study focused on the situation before the outbreak of the war: *“When the study was presented to us, the war had already started, making it difficult to implement initiatives at that time”*.⁴² Two stakeholders also considered that the activities may not have been fully relevant to the current context in the OPT. They perceived that, since unemployment and loss of jobs are a key result of the on-going war, formalisation is less of a priority compared to job creation and protection.⁴³ According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the OPT faced a major increase in unemployment in 2024 (51%), compared to 2023 (31%), and a sharp decline of economic activities in the West Bank and full collapse in Gaza.⁴⁴ These figures underline how restoration of employment and economic activities should be prioritised, while formalisation would be a next step in these project countries.

An important issue noted by stakeholders in the OPT is the absence of a social protection law: *“The main challenge in formalising work is the absence of a social protection law, which the ILO should help us address. This law is critical for formalising work because, without it, there is no stability, no salary structure, etc.”*⁴⁵ This is also confirmed by the ILO, stating that *“The OPT is the only country among the Arab States without social security mechanisms covering private-sector workers”*.⁴⁶ A similar concern was voiced in Lebanon where due to structural and socioeconomic issues in the country it was noted that *“there is no incentive to formalise and there is no benefit, not even for the workers because they don’t have access to pensions and medical insurance”*.⁴⁷ As the primary aim of formalisation is ultimately to enhance the protection of workers under labour or social protection laws, the absence of such a law would indeed hinder the effectiveness of formalisation as a tool to enhance workers’ rights and protection.

Job security also became an important concern in **Lebanon** for the same reason. UNDP research noted that the 2024 conflict was projected to lead to a 9,2% decline in Lebanon’s GDP, and an increase in unemployment of 2,3 basis point, warning that the conflict severely impacted SMEs: *“SMEs across the country have now been forced to close or suspend their businesses, in addition to decreased demand. These MSMEs are likely to suffer indebtedness, inability to pay salaries, low production, business downsizing, and failure to meet financial obligations”*. Eventually, this would enhance unemployment even further.⁴⁸

Three interviewees from Lebanon also expressed concern that the war may influence the sustainability of the results (as compared to the time of the MTE).⁴⁹ Additionally, the war limited the ILO’s capacity to implement policy-level activities, which were subsequently postponed (e.g. the adoption of the roadmap) (see Section 5.6)⁵⁰.

⁴¹ Interview with a stakeholder

⁴² Interview with a stakeholder

⁴³ Interview with a stakeholder

⁴⁴ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2024, December). Press release on forecasting report 2025. Available [here](#)

⁴⁵ Interview with a stakeholder

⁴⁶ ILO (2024). The Troubled Road to Rights-Based Life Cycle Social Protection in Occupied Palestinian Territories. Available [here](#)

⁴⁷ Interview with ILO staff

⁴⁸ UNDP (2024). Economic and social consequences of the escalating hostilities in Lebanon. Rapid Appraisal. Available [here](#)

⁴⁹ Interviews with stakeholders

⁵⁰ Interview with ILO and stakeholders

On the other hand, interviews with stakeholders in **Egypt and Algeria** noted that no crucial changes in the national context took place that affected the relevance of the project since December 2023. The project remained relevant in 2024.⁵¹

Have there been updates to the project approach at national and regional levels?

The project team responded to the key recommendations of the MTE with regards to the project scope, timeline and engagement of women.

The MTE provided 14 recommendations, of which two were focused on future programmes (R11 and R12). Recommendations requiring a significant change in the SOLIFEM project included the revision of the outcomes and targets (R4 and R5), the request for a no-cost extension (R10), and the increase of women's participation (R7), capacity building for project staff (R9) and social partners (R2) and enhanced attention to sustainability (R14).

The most important update made to the **SOLIFEM project approach** since the MTE, has been the re-adjustment and down-scaling of Outcome 2 and its subsequent outputs and activities. The MTE's found that the "*project logframe and Results Framework (RF) may appear overly ambitious given the project's duration*". It was therefore recommended that the project staff and tripartite stakeholders re-adjust Outcome 2, focusing on specific aspects of skills development that can be effectively addressed within the project's timeframe and resources (R4 and R5).

Many interviewees agreed that the Project was over-ambitious, and the subsequent reduced scope allowed for better targeting. However, some interviewed ILO staff were against this re-adjustment, emphasising that skills development was central to the Project's design, particularly due to the overlaps between social dialogue, informality, and skills systems⁵².

As part of this downscaling and reprioritisation, some of the targets for different indicators were re-adjusted as well. However, most of the reprioritisation was executed through the reallocation of the budget, as described in Section 5.5.

Table 3 Adjustment of targets after the MTE

Indicator	Before the MTE	After the MTE
Impact level indicators		
Number of informal economic units registered	Algeria: 100	Algeria: 1000
Access of women and youth in the informal economy to skills training and skills recognition services (<i>i.e. number of women and youth</i>)	ALG: 40 000 EGY: 200 LEB: 500 OPT: 100	ALG: 200 EGY: 200 LEB: 500 OPT: 0
Outcome 1 indicators		
Total number of key policy issues addressed in strategies adopted	ALG 4 EGY 3 LEB 4	ALG 3 EGY 3 LEB 4
Outcome 2 indicators		
Number of RPL frameworks developed	ALG 1 EGY 1 LEB 1 OPT 1	ALG 1 EGY 0 LEB 1 OPT 0

Source: comparison of the first and third annual reports.

Next, the Project complied with the MTE recommendation to request a no-cost extension (NCE) and, at the time of this final evaluation, also requested a second NCE.

⁵¹ Interviews with stakeholders

⁵² Interview with ILO staff

The MTE also emphasised, as pertains to gender equality, that “*SOLIFEM’s expected impact on women is at risk unless specific measures are taken before the end of the project’s implementation*”. It was therefore recommended that the project staff and national tripartite stakeholders develop targeted strategies to increase women’s participation in project activities, including under Outcome 2 (R7).

Interviewed ILO staff and stakeholders noted that their activities put emphasis on the equal participation of women, and some were able to note the specific challenges faced by women in the labour market or in entrepreneurship.⁵³ Female participants of FGD discussions across the four countries agreed that the trainings/activities aligned with their needs.⁵⁴ ILO staff noted that, after the MTE, more consultations with its Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch took place.⁵⁵ However, the final evaluation still concludes that gender was insufficiently mainstreamed throughout the project (elaborated under 5.4. in the effectiveness section).

Many stakeholders across the four countries were not aware of the specific recommendations of the MTE and could, therefore, not comment on the extent to which the recommendations were considered. However, various interviewees also noted that they were more engaged in the project after 2023, demonstrating progress towards the second recommendation (R2: “*continue enhancing the capacity of social partners, for example through support to strengthen their ability to engage in meaningful dialogue*”).⁵⁶

5.2. Coherence

According to the OECD/DAC criteria, this evaluation examines the project’s internal and external coherence. It considers the extent to which this project created synergies and linkages with other interventions implemented in similar thematic areas and by other organisations in the regions covered by the project.

To what extent was SOLIFEM externally coherent with other ILO and/or EU-funded interventions in the region, including the SOLiD II project and to what extent did the Project align with ILO’s organisational and country strategies?

While the Project lacked holistic alignment with SOLiD II, it managed to align itself with other national projects focusing on formalisation of employment and businesses, and/or skills development.

In 2019, the European Commission adopted the “SOLiD” programme promoting social dialogue in the Southern Mediterranean, which was operationalised in two complementary regional projects: 1) SOLiD II focused on supporting inclusive and structured social dialogue, implemented by a consortium led by ITUC, with ATUC, BusinessMed and ANND across the Southern Mediterranean region including Algeria, Lebanon and the OPT; and 2) SOLIFEM focused on social dialogue for employability and formalisation, implemented by the ILO in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and the OPT. Both projects were initially designed to work in complementarity, and both are mentioned in the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour of 2022⁵⁷.

The SOLIFEM project’s MTE found that both projects strived to share their activities and keep information about the projects’ development, which resulted in several Joint Steering Committees meetings held in 2022 and 2024 with DG NEAR, DG EMPL, the ILO project staff and tripartite stakeholders⁵⁸.

As per the first SOLIFEM technical report, “*the [SOLIFEM] project design calls for a close collaboration between the SOLIFEM and SOLiD-2 projects on project implementation, so as to maximise available*

⁵³ Interviews with ILO staff and stakeholders

⁵⁴ FGDs conducted in all four countries

⁵⁵ Interview with ILO staff

⁵⁶ SOLIFEM project MTE and interviews with stakeholders

⁵⁷ Union for the Mediterranean. (2022, May). Ministerial Declaration of the Union for the Mediterranean Ministers in charge of Employment and Labour. Available [here](#). p. 3

⁵⁸ SOLIFEM project MTE

resources and to generate greater momentum toward the fulfilment of the principles of the Social Dialogue Charter. However, there are a few important strategic differences in approach that make this alignment more challenging to realise than was originally assumed"⁵⁹. **The fact that there are important philosophical and strategic differences between the two projects is also corroborated by interviewed EU Delegations staff, SOLiD staff and ILO staff across the four countries**⁶⁰. While the Project committed to "coordinate as far as possible with SOLiD on national and regional gatherings, to identify opportunities to share information and to attempt to align strategies"⁶¹, the two projects' very different approaches, objectives and intended results in promoting formalisation meant that complementarity and coordination could only be limited, even with a shared regional implementation framework and national partners.

SOLiD staff interviewees emphasised that the lack of coordination between the two projects led to confusion for their shared in-country project partners. Due to the distinct implementation phases, activities would sometimes overlap and/or create scheduling conflicts⁶². Interviewees pointed out that one of the main shortcomings of both the current and previous phases of the SOLIFEM and SOLiD II projects was their "lack of meaningful interaction," which ultimately limited their effectiveness in addressing the overarching issue of informal labour in the South Mediterranean region⁶³. They stressed that any future project iterations would benefit from greater coordination between the SOLiD and SOLIFEM project staff and their partners, including for example joint activities and/or lessons learnt exchanges.

However, **multiple examples of complementary between SOLIFEM and other national projects which focused on improved access to decent work through formalisation, and/or skills development were identified.**

In **Lebanon**, the ILO SOLIFEM staff sought to maximise synergies with the ILO's initiative [PROSPECTS](#) focused on decent work, skills development, and youth employment. For example, the findings from the SOLIFEM project's upcoming regional study on assessment of skills recognition value⁶⁴ were reported to have been utilised by PROSPECTS to inform its on-going WBL programme in Lebanon⁶⁵.

Moreover, also in Lebanon, the EU-funded project [ENABLE](#), an ILO initiative focused on employment generation through skills development, was highlighted as a major example of synergy with the SOLIFEM project under Outcome 2⁶⁶. The ENABLE project staff was reported to work closely with the SOLIFEM project staff, particularly in the area of work-based learning (WBL). This collaboration primarily focused on linking SOLIFEM's work on formalisation with ENABLE's skills development efforts to reinforce the two projects' goals. Both projects used similar methodologies to target youth and the unemployed in contributing to their access to formal employment opportunities.

Similarly, in Lebanon, as pertains to skills development, SOLIFEM was also reported as complementary to the ILO's multi-country [Global Programme on Skills and Lifelong Learning](#) framework funded by NORAD, with whom the SOLIFEM project staff was reported to work alongside with⁶⁷.

In **Algeria**, the ILO and IFAD [ProAgro YOUTH](#) project, which worked on agriculture, helped in the implementation of the RPL workshop held in 2024 in Algiers, by bringing in relevant stakeholders from Algeria's agricultural sector⁶⁸. This synergy allowed the SOLIFEM project to incorporate lessons learned from the ProAgro project and address skills development specific to agriculture, an important sector for

⁵⁹ First Annual Report SOLIFEM

⁶⁰ Interviews with ILO staff and stakeholders

⁶¹ First Annual Report SOLIFEM

⁶² Interviews with SOLiD staff

⁶³ Quote from an interviewed SOLiD staff

⁶⁴ Product under validation by the project partners and was therefore not reviewed by the Evaluation Team.

⁶⁵ Interview with ILO staff

⁶⁶ Interview with EU staff

⁶⁷ Interview with EU staff

⁶⁸ Interviews with ILO staff and stakeholders

Algeria's economy. The collaboration was aimed at using the synergies between both projects to address skills development in the agriculture sector.

However, the lack of endorsement from the **Egyptian** government meant that there was little coordination with other projects focused on the promotion of decent work in Egypt, for example the joint [OECD-ILO-UNDP Framework](#) for measuring the impact of economic and social policies on informality in Egypt, Iraq and Jordan. In its development, this instrument was reported to have benefited from the active collaboration and support of the Egyptian government⁶⁹, which represents a missed opportunity for collaboration and creates a risk of duplication.

The Project showed strong coherence at organisational and national levels. In general, the Project aligned with the three P&B documents. Similarly, linkages were found with Country Programme Outcomes (CPO), showing that the Project was relevant towards implementing ILO's strategic aims at the organisational and country level.

The Project is implemented between March 2021 to March 2025, spanning three P&Bs - 2020/2021, 2022/2023 and 2024/2025. The 2020/2021, 2022/2023 P&Bs share the same eight outcomes, and the 2024/2025 P&B also contains eight outcomes. The table below shows the alignment of the Project with the relevant P&Bs as noted in the Project's annual technical documentation.

Table 4 Alignment between P&B 2020/2021 - 2022/2023 and the Project

P&B	Envisioned Outcomes
<i>P&B 2020/2021 and P&B 2022/2023</i>	Outcome 1: Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue; Outcome 3: Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all; Outcome 4.3 Increased capacity of member States to implement measures to facilitate the transition of enterprises to formality; Outcome 5: Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market; Outcome 7.4: Support for the transition to formality of informal workers in formal enterprises or in households; Outcome A: Improved knowledge and influence for promoting decent work ⁷⁰ .

The Project's technical report covering March 2023 and January 2024 also aligns with the P&Bs presented above. However, as the Project was envisioned to run until August 2024, the linkages with the P&B 2024/2025 are not listed as there is no technical report that covers the period from January 2024 to August 2024. Nevertheless, the Evaluation Team identified a significant degree of alignment between the Project and the P&B.

Table 5 Identified alignment between P&B 2024-2025 and the Project

P&B	Envisioned Outcomes
<i>P&B 2024/2025</i>	Outcome 2 - Strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents and effective social dialogue; Outcome 3.1 - adopt conventions relevant to addressing decent work; Outcome 3.2 - develop and implement skills transitions that would include workers in the informal economy, Outcome 3.5 - focus on youth informal employment, Outcome 4.4 - support informal operators and their support systems to help them transition to formality, Outcome 6.1 - extend OSH protections to informal micro businesses, Outcome 6.2 - ensure adequate protection of workers in informal employment, Outcome 7.1 - seeks to develop and implement policies to extend social protection to those in informal employment, Outcome 8.2 – seeks to develop statistics and data on informality, and Outcome A.1 . ⁷¹

⁶⁹ Interview with ILO staff

⁷⁰ ILO. (2020). Programme and budget for the biennium 2020–21. Available [here](#); and ILO. (2021). Programme and budget for the biennium 2022–23. Available [here](#).

⁷¹ ILO. (2023). Programme and budget for 2024-2025. Available [here](#)

The Project also aligned with multiple CPOs, as highlighted in the three annual technical progress reports. The table below presents the Project's links with the CPOs.

Table 6 Project alignment with CPOs.

Country	CPO
<i>Algeria</i>	DZA 105: Capacity of constituents strengthened to develop and implement strategies and measures in relation to employment of youth and to facilitate formalisation; DZA 102: Capacity of constituents and training providers is strengthened in relation to anticipation of skills and improved access to the labour market.
<i>Egypt</i>	EGY 101: Increased capacity of constituents to develop labour market services and support transitions to decent work, particularly for youth and women; EGY 103 Increased capacity of national stakeholders to improve access to lifelong learning and inclusive skills development and support labour market transitions particularly for vulnerable groups; EGY106: Employment for young men and women through entrepreneurship, Value Chain Development, green enterprises, social enterprises and cooperatives and business development programmes promoted; EGY 801: Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organisations; EGY 802: Strengthened institutional capacity of workers' organisations; EGY 828: Capacity of Egyptian government, workers and employers' organisations strengthened to combat Child Labour.
<i>Lebanon</i>	LBN103: Improved employability of Syrian Refugees and Lebanese citizens to access Decent Work; LBN 104: Enhanced capacity of the government and social partners to develop a national labour policy, and mainstream SDGs relating to employment and DW into national development and crisis response frameworks; LBN 801: strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organisations; LBN 802: Strengthened institutional capacity of workers' organisations.
<i>OPT</i>	PSE 126: Enhanced national employment policy in the OPT.

How and to what extent did the Project outputs contribute to EU priorities (Agenda for the Mediterranean, GAP III and the UfM policy agenda under the Ministerial Declaration on Employment of 2022) and national strategies and objectives on employment, gender and formalisation?

The Project aimed to align with the EU's Agenda for the Mediterranean, the EU Gender Action Plan III, and the UfM declaration on Employment of 2022. It achieved a notable degree of alignment with these documents, including through SOLIFEM's regional dimension. Interviews with EU staff support these findings.

The EU's Agenda for the Mediterranean of 2021 refers to the importance of social dialogue in promoting inclusive economies and underlines the need to support formalisation and the key aspect of skills development, with which the Project aligns with ⁷². The Project is also in line with the EU's Gender Action Plan III (GAP III), which notably focuses on promoting female economic empowerment and calls for the EU to promote "decent work, equal pay and labour rights, and women's transition to the formal economy" by enabling women to participate in economic and household decision-making and social dialogue. Meanwhile, while not presenting explicit steps to tackle the informal labour market, the Agenda for the Mediterranean notes the need to support formalisation.

Besides, the UfM policy agenda is significantly aligned with the Project, the notably the [Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour of 2022](#), where SOLIFEM is explicitly referred to. The Declaration recognises the importance of social dialogue to help address economic challenges in the region, the need to promote the transition to formal employment for informal workers, especially women, and the systemic issues present in TVET, and the difficulties faced by women in obtaining a formal

⁷² European Commission. (2021). *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean*. Available [here](#).

employment status in the Mediterranean region⁷³. The Project thereby aligns with the UfM agenda through its contributions to improved vocational education systems and promotion of the transition of informal workers, particularly women, into formal employment.⁷⁴ SOLIFEM implementation has also contributed to concretise aspects of the UfM Ministerial Declaration, notably through the Project's regional format which helped strengthen regional cooperation between social partners in addressing shared employment and social challenges and supporting social dialogue.

The SOLIFEM project thereby provides added value by aligning with and advancing the EU's policy priorities in the Agenda for the Mediterranean, GAP II, and the UfM agenda, with its regional dimension strengthening collective action through Mediterranean partners to address shared employment and social challenges.

Furthermore, interviewed EU staff in HQ and in the in-country delegations agree that the Project aligned with the EU's priorities in the region. In particular, they noted that SOLIFEM helped pursue the EU's priorities regarding the labour market and encouraged a discussion around the topic of informal labour.⁷⁵

Across the four project countries, desk research on national strategies did not reveal systemic approaches to addressing workers' transition from the informal to the formal markets. When mentions of formalisation were present, they applied generally to the presence of informality or, in the case of Egypt, did not align with the Project's strategy. Furthermore, when formalisation was mentioned, the national strategies did not develop the issue of gender or referred to it only when considering those already employed in the formal sector, as in the case of Lebanon.

The Project foresaw the establishment of a tripartite Project Advisory Committee in each focus country, so as to embed its results into existing governance frameworks. While in practice certain adjustments were made considering the national context, these tripartite bodies helped lay the ground for a regular and collaborative dialogue process with SOLIFEM to embed the Project's capacity-building on formalisation, informality and RPL into the national dialogue structure⁷⁶.

Lebanon's National Social Protection Strategy dedicates a section to economic inclusion and labour market activation policies. The initiatives making up this section emphasise matching labour supply and demand among disadvantaged groups, promoting employment opportunities for the vulnerable, improving labour rights and decent work access regulatory frameworks and employment mechanisms, and strengthening inspection, compliance and bargaining mechanisms.⁷⁷ Unemployed youth are classified as a priority group for social protection measures and labour market activation in Lebanon's national strategy. However, the informal labour market or worker transition into formal work is not mentioned in these initiatives. Instead, the measures presented to support the initiatives' implementation could support formalisation indirectly by, for example strengthening linkages between educational institutions and the labour market or providing access to free or subsidised childcare.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, this section does not focus on the role that tripartism could play in the worker formalisation process or holistically develop how skills improvement of young people and women can contribute to formalisation of workers.

The Project lacked alignment with the Egyptian national development strategy presented in **Vision of Egypt 2030**. This strategy does not holistically look at informal employment, with only a few envisioned tools to address the topic. It seeks to encourage and motivate enterprises to formalise from when they are started.⁷⁹ The strategy also aims to provide training for workers in SMEs, even if they work in the informal sector. However, it does not mention whether this is done to address informality in general as

⁷³ Union for the Mediterranean. (2022, May). Ministerial Declaration of the Union for the Mediterranean Ministers in charge of Employment and Labour. Available [here](#). p. 3

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 6

⁷⁵ Interviews with EU Delegations based in Project countries

⁷⁶ Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the SOLIFEM project (2024).

⁷⁷ Government of Lebanon. (2023). National Social Protection Strategy, Towards a Rights-Based, Shock-Responsive and Sustainable System. Available [here](#) pp. 55-58.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Government of Egypt. (2023). The National Agenda for Sustainable Development Egypt's Updated Vision 2030. Available [here](#). p.132

the stated goal only mentions support to enterprises, productivity enhancements and improving working conditions.⁸⁰ The vision also aims to reduce the informal economy by, among other things, improving the tax management system and simplifying the tax base to increase SMEs' contribution to tax revenues.⁸¹ Therefore, while the Project promotes social dialogue and systems that would help upskill workers, particularly the youth and women, the Egyptian government emphasises tax and non-tax incentives and a top-down approach to addressing informality.⁸²

An analysis of the **OPT's National Development Plan 2021-2023**, reveals policies related to cluster development which would seek to leverage the competitive advantages of the various OPT governates. However, there is almost no mention of the formalisation of the labour market, with the only exception being that *"the government also pays attention to regulating and governing informal markets and cooperatives"*, attaching particular importance to creating a supportive legislative and administrative environment in support of its business environment.⁸³

The **National Action Plan of the Government to implement the Republic's President's Programme of Algeria** published in 2021, contains a section on consolidating the levers of economic recovery, which features a section on integrating the informal economy into the legal one. Within this section, the government outlines a variety of methods to tackle the informal economy, including *"supporting youth employment and the creation of micro-enterprises"*.⁸⁴ The creation of the auto-entrepreneur status as outlined in Algeria's National Action Plan, and approved by the government in 2022⁸⁵, was emphasised by one interviewee as a key mechanism which SOLIFEM sought to build on in enabling Algerian informal workers' access to formal employment opportunities⁸⁶. However, Algeria's National Action Plan does not develop the role that could be played by tripartite organisations towards supporting formalisation or which specific tools could be used to upskill workers allowing them to enter the formal labour market.

5.3. Effectiveness

According to the OECD/DAC criteria, the evaluation of effectiveness reports on whether the intervention achieved its intended objectives. The following section examines the progress made to achieve the two main outcomes of the project, and the extent to which major factors influenced the achievement of the project's expected outcomes. It also considers the extent to which the beneficiaries of the project were satisfied with the services provided through the Project's activities and outputs.

To what extent was the project able to ensure the achievement of Outputs and Outcomes?

To what extent has the project made progress towards enabling national policy frameworks to facilitate the transition of informal economy workers and economic units to formality, through dialogue among the tripartite constituents (Outcome 1)?

The first Outcome aimed to create a policy environment conducive to enhancing the formality of employment and businesses. The participation of the tripartite partners is a crucial vehicle for achieving this outcome. To achieve this outcome, the SOLIFEM project aimed to contribute to constituents' capacity building through transferable tools such as the FYB handbook and trainings, the development of national roadmaps and strategic documents, and the introduction of gender-sensitive monitoring systems.

Overall, important steps were taken towards the outcome, as related to enhanced awareness and capacity of constituents and beneficiaries. Delays and external factors, such as the war in the OPT, hindered the Project from achieving the intended change of policy in the four countries.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 133

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 135

⁸² Ibid. p. 131

⁸³ Government of Palestine. (2021). National Development Plan 2021-2023, Available [here](#) p.85

⁸⁴ Government of Algeria. (2022, April). Plan d'action du gouvernement pour la mise en œuvre du programme du président de la république. Available [here](#). (In French) p. 29.

⁸⁵ ILO (2022). DZA-2022-L-114274. Loi n° 22-23 du 18 décembre 2022 portant Statut de l'auto-entrepreneur. Available [here](#).

⁸⁶ Interview with a stakeholder.

Interviewed stakeholders firstly underscored the contribution of SOLIFEM to **enhancing awareness** of informality and its risks, both at national level and among employees and business owners themselves.⁸⁷

*“We now understand what the formal and informal economies entail, the risks of remaining in the informal sector, and the severe socioeconomic consequences. The technical incentives and training provided were excellent and sufficient”.*⁸⁸

*“SOLIFEM’s mapping of skill systems and gaps in the agri-food sector helped businesses understand barriers and next steps for formal employment, especially during [the] FYB training sessions”.*⁸⁹

The Project trained constituents to **enhance their capacity** to address the risks of informality through social dialogue. Enhanced capacity was already identified under the MTE, particularly the ability of social partners to expand their services to workers and businesses in the informal economy.⁹⁰

*“Now, with the capacity built within the Ministry through social dialogue, I believe we are in a better position to prepare for the modification and implementation of the law when the time is right.”*⁹¹

*“There have been some successes, particularly in organising workers, with efforts rooted in social dialogue”.*⁹²

*“We have developed negotiation skills, a better understanding of the requirements of all stakeholders, and how to reach effective outcomes through social dialogue.”*⁹³

One trade union was critical of the social dialogue processes: *“Effective social dialogue requires collaboration with the private sector and government, along with clear agreements, which were lacking in the project”.*⁹⁴ While only one stakeholder explicitly stated this, interviews with employer representatives and ministry representatives indicated that social dialogue encountered disagreements and occasionally lacked structure or effective engagement.⁹⁵ This is not a weakness of the Project but demonstrates the complex environment of social dialogue in the four countries (e.g. the MENA region was ranked lowest in the 2023 ITUC Global Rights index, including on collective bargaining rights).⁹⁶

Several examples were found of social dialogue already taking some steps towards achieving Outcome 1, namely improving **policy frameworks**.

The SOLIFEM workshops saw active participation from the representatives of the tripartite constituents, who contributed to the formulation of strategic recommendations to effectively address the issue of informality in Algeria.⁹⁷ ILO staff and stakeholders confirmed that a *“roadmap towards formalisation”* was still under development in the last months of the project and during the time of the evaluation.⁹⁸

In Egypt, the process of the development of the national strategy on formalisation was launched in February 2024 by MSMEDA. The strategy builds on the findings and the recommendations of the Diagnostic Study of SOLIFEM.⁹⁹

⁸⁷ Interviews with stakeholders

⁸⁸ Interview with a stakeholder

⁸⁹ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹⁰ SOLIFEM MTE

⁹¹ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹² Interview with a stakeholder

⁹³ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹⁴ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹⁵ Interviews with stakeholders

⁹⁶ ITUC. (2023). ITUC Global Rights Index 2023: The Arab Region Sadly Continues to Hold Worst Region in the World Position. Available [here](#)

⁹⁷ SOLIFEM Third Annual Report

⁹⁸ Interviews with ILO staff and stakeholders

⁹⁹ SOLIFEM Third Annual Report

“The fact that the tripartite constituents are actively engaged in developing action plans, even if these plans are not yet finalised, is encouraging.”¹⁰⁰

However, the Outcome's achievements faced multiple barriers. In the OPT, plans for national employment strategies commenced in 2023 but were disrupted due to the escalation of the security situation. The absence of the Egyptian government in the project hindered the Project from contributing to policy change.¹⁰¹ The escalated conflict in Lebanon caused a governmental vacuum in 2024¹⁰². A stakeholder noted that the Project created important results for vulnerable workers and businesses in Akkar and Chouf but not at the national level.¹⁰³

Furthermore, the ToC does not clearly elaborate on how training/capacity would contribute to improved policy frameworks, and changes at the policy level require vastly more time and resources. Therefore, policy change is more likely to be the impact of extensive project activities and outcomes, rather than an outcome of several activities and outputs. Namely, it is not realistic to expect that several trainings and workshops would result in sufficient capacity of social partners to achieve the adoption of roadmaps and strategies, and their implementation, without, for example, additional technical support. One stakeholder explicitly stated that *“implementation surpasses the project's or stakeholders' capacities and requires government intervention”*¹⁰⁴.

In parallel, the capacity building of social partners aimed to enhance their ability to support **individual workers and businesses with the process to formalisation**. Trainings provided directly to beneficiaries also enhanced their knowledge and decision-making capacity regarding the steps towards formalisation. FGDs with training recipients showed high satisfaction of beneficiaries of the different trainings regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of these trainings:

Most of the participants [with informal Lebanese businesses] previously believed that transitioning to the formal sector was extremely costly. However, after the training, seven out of nine participants acknowledged learning about much less expensive procedures, particularly regarding the laws related to small enterprises.¹⁰⁵

The workshops [in the OPT] significantly improved awareness of labour rights, the benefits of organised labour, and collective bargaining. Participants reported an improved understanding of labour laws and gained valuable skills for advocating for workers' rights.¹⁰⁶

In **Egypt**, one interviewee noted that *“93 out of 105 informal business owners that attended the workshops successfully regularised their status”*.¹⁰⁷ The FGD with informal business owners in **Lebanon** found that all 10 (female) participants wished to formalise their business after receiving the Formalise Your Business (FYB) training (*“informality is a barrier for developing our business”*).¹⁰⁸

In the **OPT**, the Training of Trainers for Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) had just taken place at the time of the current final evaluation. Therefore, the training of beneficiaries still had to take place. However, the SIYB trainers were satisfied with the content of the Training of Trainers event: *“The training enhanced personal skills and confidence, providing a structured approach to developing business plans and tackling complex tasks. Overall, it was a transformative journey, equipping us with the knowledge and tools needed to excel in our roles”*¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁰¹ Interviews with stakeholders, SOLIFEM Third Annual Report.

¹⁰² Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁰³ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁰⁴ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁰⁵ FGD with informal business owners that participated in the FYB training in Lebanon (all female)

¹⁰⁶ FGD with participants of workshops on unionisation (mixed gender)

¹⁰⁷ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁰⁸ FGD with participants of the FYB training in Lebanon (all female)

¹⁰⁹ FGD with participants of the SYIB training of trainers in the OPT (mixed gender)

Some participants of different FYB trainings noted that the duration of the workshops were too short: *“The trainers were going faster to cope with the time, and they have squeezed the materials and made the sessions very bulky”*.¹¹⁰ Some logistical challenges were reported as well that seemed to be isolated events and not reflections on the overall project tools’ design or quality.

To what extent has the project made progress towards strengthening skills systems enabling access to formal employment, in particular for women & youth (Outcome 2)?

The second Outcome focused on addressing informality through strengthening skills systems. The hypothesis is that adequate qualifications and recognition of learning can help a person obtain better (formal) employment. Activities under this Outcome included the mapping of existing skills and training delivery mechanisms and policies, and the introduction of programmes to enhance access of people (particularly women and youth) in the informal economy to skills and lifelong learning opportunities. Lastly, the Outcome includes the development of Frameworks for National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) systems. *This Outcome was not implemented in the OPT, and after the MTE, the development of the RPL system in Egypt was downscaled.*

At the time of this evaluation, some activities were implemented and targets achieved, but no concrete frameworks for RPL systems were introduced.

After the MTE, Outcome 2 was deprioritised and funding for this Outcome was reallocated to Outcome 1 (see Section 5.5.). At the time of the MTE, many activities under Outcome 2 were delayed and only partially, or not at all, implemented. Most progress was made in Algeria.¹¹¹

The mapping activities were completed in all three countries, and a regional study was conducted on the role of recognition of qualifications for formalisation.¹¹² One stakeholder noted that they had already applied the knowledge in other activities: *“We collaborated with the ‘heavy equipment’ training centres and trained several fresh graduates on essential skills required in the labour market. As a result, these young workers had better opportunities to secure formal jobs in the private sector”*¹¹³.

In **Algeria**, progress was made regarding the strengthening of its RPL system. Two workshops, held together with the European Training Foundation in May and August 2024 in Algiers, were organised to strengthen the national system for this Recognition, with participation from a wide range of national stakeholders in Algeria.¹¹⁴ Interviewees reported that these two workshops helped foster an interministerial dialogue involving Algeria’s social partners. While more work was still to be done, interviewees reported that the awareness and understanding of the skills systems among different national stakeholders improved¹¹⁵. Nonetheless, interviewees reported that this is still a *“experimentation phase”*, and that it remains too early to assess any project results¹¹⁶.

In **Lebanon**, awareness raising was a significant part of the Project, especially in helping workers understand the existence of RPL systems and the benefits of certification. Interviewees emphasised that workers, particularly in the informal economy, often do not know that such systems existed, and thus, the project focused on promoting these systems through workshops and dialogues with employers and workers alike¹¹⁷.

Efforts in Lebanon were closely linked to the ENABLE project, which provided targeted support for skills development and employment generation.¹¹⁸ The collaboration with ALI was highlighted as a key component in connecting these skills systems to actual employment opportunities. By using the tripartite

¹¹⁰ FGD with informal business owners in Lebanon and Egypt (mixed gender)

¹¹¹ MTE SOLIFEM

¹¹² SOLIFEM Third Annual Report

¹¹³ Interview with a stakeholder

¹¹⁴ SOLIFEM Third Annual Report; SOLIFEM RPL Workshops participants lists, agenda and activity report

¹¹⁵ Interview with ILO staff

¹¹⁶ Interviews with stakeholders in Algeria

¹¹⁷ Interview with stakeholders in Lebanon

¹¹⁸ Interview with a stakeholder

dialogue framework, SOLIFEM was able to promote WBL and help create formal employment pathways for youth and women.¹¹⁹

In Egypt, a needs assessment for the capacity-building of Egyptian workers and organisations on skills development and lifelong learning was finalised in August 2024¹²⁰, which helped inform SOLIFEM's subsequent skills development and employability activities for women and youth in Egypt. Correspondingly, a call for proposals was launched to design and implement this training programme in September 2024, and at the time of this evaluation, offers were being evaluated to select a service provider¹²¹.

Regarding the regional study on qualifications, one stakeholder noted that *"we still need to benefit from the findings of these studies and implement them on the ground"*.¹²²

To what extent did the Project's regional nature contribute to the project objectives' achievements?

According to interviewed ILO staff, the objective of the regional activities was to share lessons learned and experiences, both within the four countries but also with the rest of the region. This was a requirement from the donor.¹²³

The MTE noted that SOLIFEM organised its first regional meeting in Algiers in November 2022, which (according to the MTE) was highly relevant to stakeholders' interests, needs, and objectives, as stakeholders voiced interest in more peer learning activities. The subsequent visit of OPT stakeholders to Algeria for exchange and peer learning was perceived as a good practice of the Project.¹²⁴ These in-person prevents demonstrated the potential and value add of bringing tripartite stakeholders together, providing exchanges space and cross-border networks.

Subsequently, other regional or bilateral activities have taken place, such as the Second Regional Meeting in December 2023, the completion of a regional study on how recognition of qualifications supports formalisation and a joint FYB training for Egyptian and Lebanese trainers.¹²⁵

Examples of the effectiveness of the regional dimension mostly regarded capacity building and exchange, in line with the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment of 2022:

*"Stakeholder representatives travelled to the ITC Training Center in Turin for four days, and they had exchanges on the different aspects of formalisation. Each country made a presentation based on the diagnostic study of their country and elaborated a national action plan on how to address identified challenges."*¹²⁶

*"External interventions provided valuable knowledge transfer opportunities. For instance, a conference in Algeria allowed for participation and the presentation of the Palestinian experience. There was a virtual conference in December 2023 involving the four project countries and Jordan. Furthermore, a regional meeting was held in Turin, enhancing collaboration and knowledge sharing."*¹²⁷

Some interviewees questioned the added value of the regional dimension. One stakeholder pointed out that the four countries, covering two regions, are too different to apply one project concept. It also hinders the more comprehensive embedding of the project in specific processes in a country.¹²⁸ ILO staff noted that *"regional meetings are hard because there are different countries with different*

¹¹⁹ Interview with a stakeholder

¹²⁰ Policy Advocacy Unit (2024). Skills Mapping in Egypt. Opportunity scouting and skills mapping analysis.

¹²¹ SOLIFEM Flash Monthly Reports. September 2024

¹²² Interview with a stakeholder

¹²³ Interview with ILO staff

¹²⁴ MTE SOLIFEM

¹²⁵ SOLIFEM Third Annual Report

¹²⁶ Interview with ILO staff

¹²⁷ Interview with a stakeholder

¹²⁸ Interview with a stakeholder

*circumstances and levels of governmental flexibility.”*¹²⁹ Other ILO staff considered that it may have been too early for proper regional exchange since not enough was achieved at the national level to facilitate lessons learned and exchange of experiences: *“This could be done in a Phase II”*.¹³⁰

In conclusion, while stakeholders valued the exchanges and obtained ideas from their counterparts, and that the regional meetings were useful, including for SOLIFEM’s visibility and communication efforts, there was no immediately identifiable contribution of the regional component to the specific outcomes or that the regional meetings really spread results to other countries in the region as well.

Which external and/or internal factors affected the achievements of the project?

The Project benefited from multiple enabling factors, mainly the notable buy-in from constituents and beneficiaries who were interested in formalising the informal labour sector. However, the Project had to contend with multiple barriers to progress. These included an overambitious logframe, a lack of buy-in from some stakeholders, and national and regional contexts that were subject to change.

Enabling factors

ILO staff commended the buy-in and commitment from the national project partners, including the employers’ organisations and trade unions, including through their communication and outreach efforts on the topic of formalisation. This helped push the agenda forward and contributed to the Project’s overall awareness-raising on the importance of formalisation and its benefits for workers and employers. This was especially notable in **Algeria**, where the topic of formalisation has become more discussed publicly.¹³¹

The Project also benefited from workers’ interest in formalisation across the four countries. Informal employees/employers participating in formalisation workshops were interested in starting a business in the future, wanted to formalise their businesses, or wanted to benefit from new opportunities by working with government or international organisations.¹³² This interest in formalisation among beneficiaries allowed the Project to support its aim of increasing participation in the formal labour market.

Challenges

A key challenge was that the **Project log frame was over-ambitious** for what was planned and budgeted for. This resulted in the adjustment of the budget to prioritise the activities under Outcome 1. Given that initially the Project’s logframe was over-ambitious, it meant that prior to reprioritisation, its resources were spread too thin, leading to less support provided for the Project’s activities.¹³³ While this issue was resolved following the MTE, this meant that initially more progress could have been achieved if the log-frame had been more realistic in the beginning.

Another factor hindering the implementation of the Project was the lack of endorsement from the Egyptian government. The Project focused on formalisation through social dialogue by involving tripartite actors. The Egyptian government, as noted in Section 5.2, does not envision the participation of tripartite actors in working towards greater formalisation of the labour market, and independent trade unions continue to face persistent bureaucratic difficulties, including limited collective bargaining power, preventing them from effectively representing the interests of workers. Without the participation of the Government, the Project could not fully implement its envisaged objectives for social dialogue in Egypt, nor use social dialogue as tool to achieve its other objectives, such as creating a roadmap for formalisation through social dialogue.

Another challenge was tied to the **evolving and challenging country contexts**, especially in Lebanon and OPT, which hindered not only the immediate project activities’ implementation, but also the longer-term impact of SOLIFEM. This issue was flagged early on by ILO, as reflected in the project’s first

¹²⁹ Interview with ILO staff

¹³⁰ Interview with ILO staff

¹³¹ Interview with a stakeholder

¹³² FGD with beneficiaries

¹³³ Interview with ILO staff

technical report: “*The SOLIFEM Chief Technical Advisor faces considerable risk of operational delays with the project in Lebanon and OPT, due to the overall political tensions associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the political and economic crisis in Lebanon*”.¹³⁴ These difficulties became even more exacerbated by the start of the war in Gaza when many Palestinians lost their right to work in Israel. Combined with the economic fallout in the OPT, this made it difficult to pursue formalisation of the labour market given the variety of challenges faced.¹³⁵

Alongside the conflict in Gaza which also affected Lebanon, interviewees emphasised that the political vacuum in the country complicated the implementation of reforms and had created a situation where progress on economic reforms, such as those related to informality and employment, has been slower than expected¹³⁶. Interviewees also emphasised that the context in Lebanon requires a more innovative approach. For example, although the Project widely aligns with EU priorities on employment formalisation and economic development, Lebanon’s current political situation calls for new strategies to navigate around the lack of formal support for these reforms. This political context is a significant obstacle to creating momentum for formalising the economy.¹³⁷

To what extent did the project contribute to the ILO’s strategies for gender equality, persons with disabilities, environmental sustainability, social dialogue and labour standards?

The evaluation of the Project’s contribution to crosscutting issues of the ILO comprises an analysis of whether each topic was considered in the project background and design, in the overall implementation approach, and was monitored and reported.

The Project contributed to the cross-cutting concerns of social dialogue and International Labour Standards (specifically Recommendation 204) as social dialogue was effectively used as both method and objective in the Project. While the Project focused extensively on the inclusion of women, the project documentation did not include measures beyond equal participation and disaggregated monitoring. The Project did not include actions targeting persons with disability or addressing environmental sustainability.

A **gender** analysis of employment, particularly among youth, was presented in the background of the project document (ProDoc), including statistics and root causes of differences in labour force participation between genders and countries.¹³⁸ The ProDoc identified youth and women as the predominant target beneficiaries of the project and included seven measures to be taken by the Project to ensure that the Project was gender-sensitive and gender-responsive. These include engagement in consultations, gender-disaggregated indicators, gender analyses in all research, gender mainstreaming in workshop/training content, gender balance in activities, reporting on gender mainstreaming, and integration of gender in the MTE and final evaluations.¹³⁹

The annual reports reflect on women’s participation in activities and mention the gender balance of activities, but they do not reflect on what measures were taken to implement the above measures and mainstream gender (beyond equal participation).¹⁴⁰ The same applies to the monthly SOLIFEM flash reports in 2024.¹⁴¹ The *Mapping study on the Assessment of the value and recognition of qualifications as a driver of transitions to formality in the MENA region* was part of Outcome 2 (aimed at women and youth), but the study itself refers to women only with regards to sampling. No analysis of women’s situation, challenges, or needs was conducted in this study.¹⁴²

¹³⁴ 1st Technical Report SOLIFEM

¹³⁵ Interviews with stakeholders

¹³⁶ Interviews with stakeholders

¹³⁷ Interview with ILO staff

¹³⁸ Project document

¹³⁹ Project document

¹⁴⁰ SOLIFEM First, Second, and Third annual reports.

¹⁴¹ SOLIFEM Monthly flash reports ranging from February 2024 to September 2024.

¹⁴² SOLIFEM (2024) Mapping study: Assessment of the value and recognition of qualifications as a driver of transitions to formality in the MENA region.

Interviewed stakeholders across the countries confirmed that the ILO required and encouraged equal participation of women.¹⁴³

“ILO made considerable efforts to ensure women’s participation alongside men.”¹⁴⁴

“The SOLIFEM project actively ensured that the venues and timing of the workshops were suitable for women to guarantee their attendance and the continuity of their participation in project activities”.¹⁴⁵

“The project has provided invaluable tools and processes for formalisation in Lebanon. The help desk we’ve established is a cornerstone for legal advice and support, especially for women and youth.”¹⁴⁶

Female beneficiaries who participated in FGDs were satisfied with the content and methods of the trainings and found them suitable to their needs.¹⁴⁷ Interviews and FGDs showed that women were equally able to use the trainings to formalise their business.¹⁴⁸

None of the stakeholders perceived that activities were inaccessible or unsuitable for women. However, one stakeholder noted that, in general, their country “*has no issue with gender inclusion*”¹⁴⁹. This means that some stakeholders may lack a deeper understanding of gender trends in the country (as compared to the statistics and research presented in the ProDoc) or what issues women may face in accessing activities.

In the log frame and reporting against targets, the Project indeed disaggregates by gender where relevant, both for Outcome 1 and 2. However, no qualitative monitoring was conducted to understand how training/involved women experienced the project activities.¹⁵⁰

The Project did not explicitly focus on **persons with disabilities**. No reference to their participation was made in annual reports, and their participation was not monitored in the log frame. Similarly, no reference to **environmental sustainability** was made. One interviewee noted that with an eye on the future, skills analysis and development efforts should follow just transition principles to ensure people are ready for future green jobs.¹⁵¹ The skills recognition report noted climate change only once as an obstacle for the agricultural sector in Lebanon.¹⁵²

The Project mainstreamed **social dialogue** through a dual approach: improving social dialogue as a goal and using social dialogue as a method to achieve the project outcomes. The ProDoc highlights the importance of social dialogue as a tool to support formalisation procedures and as an important right and mechanism that informal workers have no access to. The ProDoc emphasises that the four project countries were selected because they all face institutional constraints to effective social dialogue.¹⁵³

Social dialogue is, therefore, at the heart of the project strategy and ToC, which comprises a comprehensive focus on the capacity building of social partners and social dialogue support as the foundation for achieving the two Outcomes. Furthermore, Tripartite Working Groups on Formalisation in each country were established to guide all activities under Outcome 1.¹⁵⁴ Various meetings and workshops were organised in a tripartite format in all four countries, including awareness-raising on

¹⁴³ Interviews with stakeholders

¹⁴⁴ Quote from one stakeholder interview, but similar sentiments were voices by multiple stakeholders.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁴⁶ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁴⁷ FGDs with female project beneficiaries

¹⁴⁸ Interviews with stakeholders and FGDs with female beneficiaries

¹⁴⁹ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁵⁰ SOLIFEM First, Second and Third Annual Reports

¹⁵¹ Interview with ILO staff

¹⁵² SOLIFEM (2024) Mapping study: Assessment of the value and recognition of qualifications as a driver of transitions to formality in the MENA region.

¹⁵³ ProDoc

¹⁵⁴ ProDoc and SOLIFEM First, Second and Third Annual Reports.

informality and validation of project deliverables.¹⁵⁵ The previous section already indicated that various interviewed social partners noted an increased capacity to participate in social dialogue due to the project, which resulted in concrete plans or actions in some cases.

Achievements regarding social dialogue (both as an objective and as a method) were recorded in the project log frame. For social dialogue as a method/process, one indicator for Outcome 1 measures, for example, the number of roadmaps and strategies that should be developed through social dialogue as a method. Another indicator measures the number of studies validated by tripartite partners. Other indicators measure social dialogue as objective, for example, “a number of social dialogue meetings/sessions held, at different levels, that include *“substantive discussions, consultations and/or negotiations on the transition to the formal economy”*”.¹⁵⁶

Lastly, the Project was designed in line with the ILO’s **International Labour Standards (ILS)**, particularly the *Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015* (No. 204). Namely, this Recommendation outlines the use of social dialogue as a *process* to improve public policies but also highlights the importance of ensuring access to social dialogue for informal workers.¹⁵⁷ The ProDoc furthermore refers to the [Human Resources Development Convention, 1974 \(no. 142\)](#) which calls for social partners to cooperate in the field of vocational guidance and training (i.e. related to Outcome 2 in the SOLIFEM project).

Therefore, the above-described finding that the Project integrated social dialogue appropriately in its design, implementation, and monitoring means consequently that it contributed to, and aligned with, the above-mentioned Recommendations.

5.4. Efficiency

According to the OECD/DAC, the efficiency criterion considers the extent to which available resources (financial, human, time) can deliver expected activities, outputs, and outcomes in an economical and timely manner. Hence, this chapter will consider whether the Project was implemented in the most financial and time-efficient way possible in accordance with the MTE findings. It will also evaluate the extent to which communication was sufficient to ensure the efficient implementation of the Project.

Was the Project implemented in the most efficient way in terms of financial and time resources, in line with the MTE findings?

The adjustments to the budget and the prioritisation of Outcome 1 enhanced the Project's efficiency and ensured that the available resources were sufficient to implement quality activities. However, the approach to allocating country budgets was unclear to staff and stakeholders.

At the Project's design stage, ILO staff requested an **overall budget** of 4,000,000 EUR to implement the activities foreseen for the SOLIFEM project. The European Commission's DG NEAR was the project donor. The ILO itself would co-finance an additional 400,000 EUR (i.e., the total project budget amounted to 4,4 million EUR).¹⁵⁸ By February 2024, 3,325,383.45 EUR (76%) of the Project budget was spent or legally committed.¹⁵⁹

Throughout the Project's lifetime, the total budget of the Project did not change, but the allocation of the 4,4 million to the different activities was adjusted. As shown in Figure 3, the Project budget was adjusted based on the Project's progress. Close to ¼ of the initially budgeted resources from Outcome 2 in the ProDoc had been reallocated to increase the budget of Outcome 1 as per December 2024. Namely,

¹⁵⁵ SOLIFEM First, Second and Third Annual Reports.

¹⁵⁶ SOLIFEM First, Second and Third Annual reports

¹⁵⁷ ILO. (2015) Recommendation No. 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy. Available [here](#)

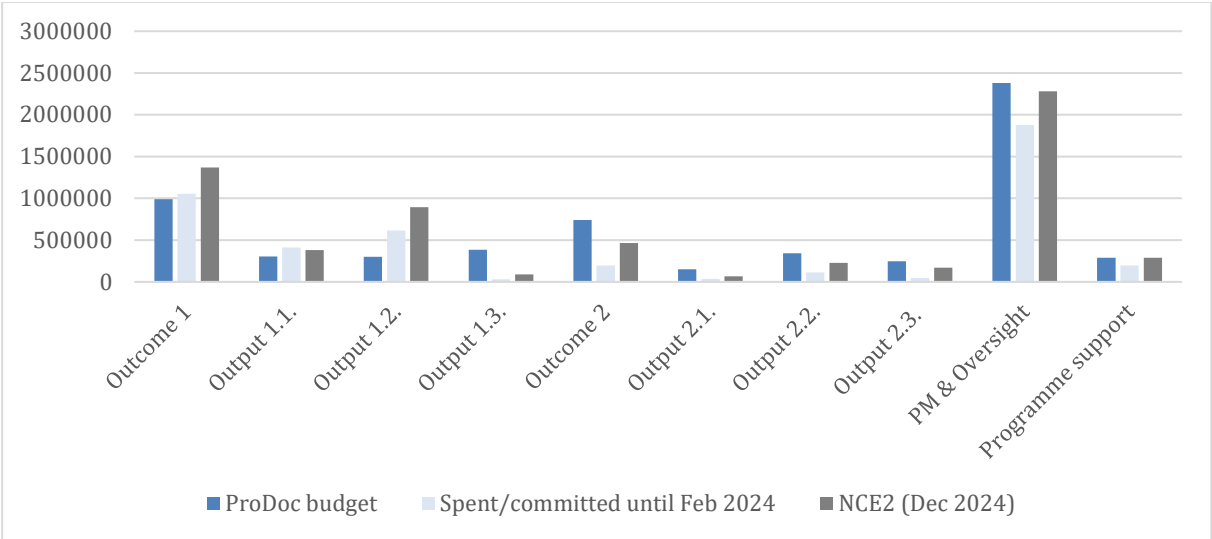
¹⁵⁸ Project Document

¹⁵⁹ Financial Statement for Income and Expenditure for the agreement ENI/2020/419-310 for the period 01 March 2021 - 28 February 2024 (Expressed in Euros)

various savings were made under Outcome 2 that could contribute to the increased needs under Outcome 1.

This aligned with the MTE recommendation to scale down Outcome 2 to ensure that the remaining activities could be implemented to sufficient quality and depth (see Section 5.2. on the adjustments of SOLIFEM after the MTE). In this regard, the Project’s flexible budgeting within the EU’s regional collaboration, facilitated the implementation of the Project, allowing for adjustments to the local context, and mitigated some of its weaknesses related to the ambitious expectations.

Figure 3. Evolution of the budget allocation (in EUR)



Source: Project Document, Financial Statement and SOLIFEM revised budget for the 2nd NCE (Oct 2024).

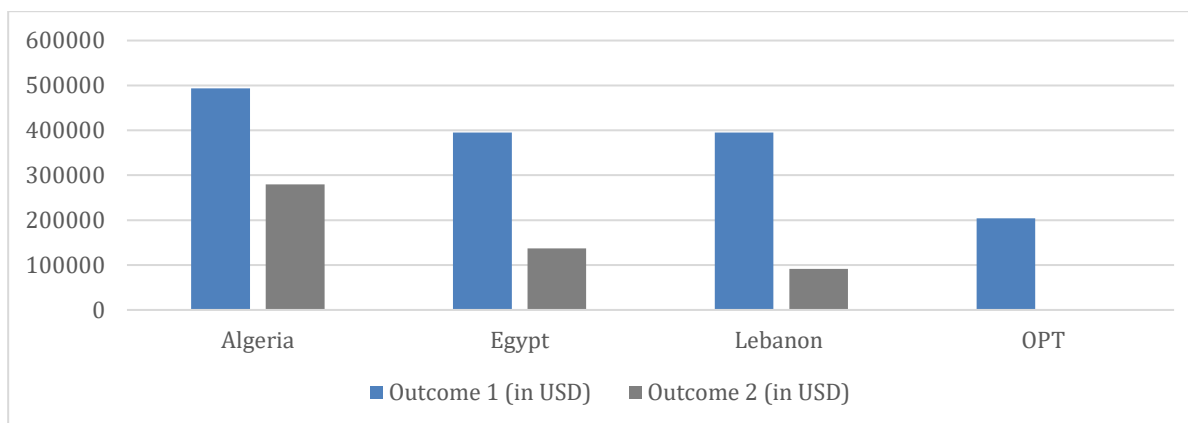
Interviewed ILO staff and stakeholders confirmed the MTE findings that the budgeted resources were limited given the ambitious scope of activities planned, which resulted in the project “*spreading resources too thin*” across the countries and activities¹⁶⁰. This issue was raised by ILO early on in the Project’s implementation as emphasised by interviewed ILO staff and the project documentation.

The ProDoc’s initial budget allocation did not include an **allocation of funds per country**. Interviewees pointed out that the budget was allocated to the field offices based on their request for funding under the Project. ILO staff felt that, in the beginning of the project, the budget per country was not immediately clear. This hindered their planning, as they would have preferred to plan based on the budget, instead of vice versa.¹⁶¹ By October 2024, the following budget was allocated per country, per outcome:

¹⁶⁰ Interviews with stakeholders and ILO staff

¹⁶¹ Interviews with ILO staff.

Figure 4. Budget per country, per October 2024



Source: SOLIFEM revised budget for the 2nd NCE (Oct 2024).

The first technical report acknowledges that “the budget for SOLIFEM as contained in the Contribution Agreement allocated approximately equal shares of staff and activity budgets to Algeria, Egypt and to Lebanon and the OPT (combined). Despite their smaller populations, the lower level of budget allocation to Lebanon and the OPT (individually) carries a risk of limited potential for project impact in those locations”.¹⁶²

Stakeholders generally did not complain or have opinions on the project budget. One stakeholder even praised the ILO’s flexibility to adjust the spending (e.g. allocating savings in one activity to expand participants in another).¹⁶³ The high level of women’s participation in training (balanced or female-only) demonstrated that sufficient resources were available to ensure that women could participate in all activities.

However, various interviewees noted that the regional (in-person) meetings took up a lot of resources without providing immediate or clear effects, thereby doubting whether this dimension brought value for money. While the in-person exchange between the OPT and Algeria, and the meeting in Turin demonstrated concrete results (e.g. development of recommendations), the other two regional meetings, held respectively in person in Algiers in November 2022, and in hybrid mode in December 2023, did not result in concrete or immediate outputs.¹⁶⁴

The original **timeline** of SOLIFEM comprised 42 months, covering March 2021 until August 2024. The commencement date of the Project was delayed to June 2021, mostly due to the COVID-19 related restrictions at the time.¹⁶⁵ Other delays at the inception stage included the delay in approval of the SOLIFEM project by the Egyptian government and delays due to government procedures and authorisations regarding the national targets. Other challenges occurred later during the project lifetime, including the escalating situation in the OPT and later in Lebanon.¹⁶⁶

Following the recommendations of the MTE, a No-Cost Extension was requested and granted, extending the timeline to December 2024.¹⁶⁷ Interviewed stakeholders overwhelmingly concurred that these extensions were needed to meet the project objectives¹⁶⁸. A second NCE was under validation with the donor at the time of the current evaluation (January 2025). The second NCE would extend the project duration to March 2025.

¹⁶² SOLIFEM First Annual Report

¹⁶³ Interviews with stakeholders

¹⁶⁴ Interview with ILO staff

¹⁶⁵ SOLIFEM First Annual Report

¹⁶⁶ SOLIFEM First, Second and Third Annual Reports and MTE.

¹⁶⁷ SOLIFEM Third Annual Report

¹⁶⁸ Interviews with stakeholders and ILO staff

The Project's progress and achievements were **monitored** through an overarching logframe with unified indicators across the four countries, and targets adapted for each country. Each outcome was measured through two indicators, which were mostly suitable to measure the Project's results and impact. However, the first indicator under Outcome 2 could have been phrased better as the meaning of "access" is not clear¹⁶⁹.

The output-level indicators are directly aligned with the activities and are mostly quantitative (measuring whether the expected project deliverables were indeed achieved). Therefore, the indicators provide a clear insight into the progress of the Project. However, there is less information on the quality of the results. For example, there is no information on what constitutes a "*gender-responsive monitoring system*" and if/how ILO measured whether the delivered monitoring system was indeed gender-responsive. The same applies to the development of policies, as the project M&E system does not provide criteria for the quality of a policy (i.e. the mere adoption of a policy does not mean it is of sufficient quality to achieve the higher-level objectives).

Lastly, there is a gap in the logframe concerning measuring output- and immediate outcome-level achievements. The achievement of policy change or roadmap development¹⁷⁰ is based on smaller outputs (dialogue, technical support meetings, revisions, adoptions) which are not measured. At the same time, complex outcome or even impact-level issues such as policy plans are presented at the same level as output-level indicators such as the "*number of meetings organised*" or "*number of partner organisations engaged*".

Each country maintained its own **database of beneficiaries** across the activities, differing between Excel and Word/PDF files, as well as between typed and handwritten lists. Particularly the PDF and handwritten documents used in Algeria influenced the sampling for the current evaluation as each FGD had to be sampled using different documents and subsequent strategies. Furthermore, the use of attendance lists would hinder the ability of ILO or implementing partners to conduct quick follow-ups, searches, or statistical analysis of the beneficiaries, which would be facilitated by a well-designed Excel template.

How effective was communication among the ILO project teams, the regional offices and the technical department responsible at ILO HQ? Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?

The Project was largely well-managed at regional and national level and received sufficient technical support. Challenges identified related to the nature of SOLIFEM as a regional project covering two ILO regions.

SOLIFEM was managed by a **regional** project manager Chief Technical Advisor out of the ILO Algiers office, as well as a Project Management and Coordination Team comprising the Chief Technical Advisor, country staff, and meeting on a quarterly basis. National ILO staff noted that they exchanged in monthly meetings. "*We have monthly meetings where we exchange what each of us has done, what are the challenges and if there is something we brainstorm together. It is quite collaborative*".¹⁷¹

Regular project management processes were supported by a project Steering Committee comprising ILO project and technical staff, DG NEAR and EU Delegations, and SOLiD project staff. The Steering Committee was planned to support strategic decision making through yearly meetings.¹⁷²

As the Project covered two regions of ILO (Africa and the Arab States), it received advice from Technical Specialists from both the Cairo (Decent Work Team for North Africa (DWT)) and the Beirut (DWT for the Arab States) regional offices. During the Project's design phase, it also received guidance from ILO HQ branches, such as DIALOGUE, SKILLS, and EMP/INVEST.¹⁷³ Interviewed ILO staff were satisfied with

¹⁶⁹ "Access of women and youth in the informal economy to skills training and skills recognition services".

¹⁷⁰ E.g. "Number of roadmaps, strategies or similar plans on the transition to the formal economy that have been developed and adopted through tripartite social dialogue"

¹⁷¹ Interview with ILO staff

¹⁷² ProDoc and interview with ILO staff

¹⁷³ ProDoc and interviews with ILO staff

and valued the technical support the DWTs and ILO HQ provided.¹⁷⁴ However, some ILO staff reported that the coordination of technical support during SOLIFEM's implementation could have been “smoother,” particularly through more regular coordination meetings.¹⁷⁵

The regional approach to the Project allowed for exchanges of lessons learned and ideas between the four countries. Some ILO staff noted that the difference between countries/regions and their progress did not always allow for useful exchange initially. Still, once progress was made, examples of useful exchanges were provided. One example includes the visit of Palestinian stakeholders to Algeria to exchange ideas and experiences after the regional launch of the Project.¹⁷⁶

The Project's setup created a few managerial/HR challenges as well. Firstly, while staff in the national offices worked solely on the SOLIFEM project and reported to the regional Chief Technical Advisor, their performance was still “officially” assessed and discussed by the Country Director.¹⁷⁷ Secondly, the involvement of the two DWT offices (though highly valuable) enhanced the coordination work and sometimes resulted in conflicting feedback.¹⁷⁸ In this regard, interviewed staff also provided examples of challenges with the participation of countries from one region in ILO events focused on the other region (e.g. a regional knowledge-sharing event) given that ILO regional division had to be followed.¹⁷⁹

In each of the **four countries**, the project was managed by a dedicated national officer and an admin and finance assistant (except in OPT).¹⁸⁰ Interviews with stakeholders demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with national-level management. Many stakeholders also praised the competence and expertise of ILO staff.¹⁸¹

*“The ILO project coordinator was very supportive and helpful, considering themselves part of our team”.*¹⁸²

*“[The ILO coordinator had] a proactive approach, ensuring smooth workshops by regularly checking on participants' progress and staying until sessions ended”.*¹⁸³

*“The experts who worked with us were technically competent and fully aligned with the project's goals. They respected and implemented our ideas effectively and brought in specialised expertise when needed.”*¹⁸⁴

*“The project staff were very good and very professional and helpful and flexible, and my colleagues were satisfied”*¹⁸⁵

One challenge, related to Human Resources, was found in the OPT. Compared to the other countries, the ILO project coordinator and support staff were not working on full-time for the entire duration of the Project. While the ILO project coordinator was on full-time for some of the project duration, the staff was responsible for various interventions of the ILO, which resulted in a sense of understaffing.¹⁸⁶

5.5. Impact

According to the OECD/DAC criteria, impact focuses on the extent to which a project can create higher-level changes in terms of significance, transformative potential, scope, or timescale. Therefore, this section considers the extent to which the Project contributed to the formalisation and social dialogue in

¹⁷⁴ Interviews with ILO staff

¹⁷⁵ Interviews with ILO staff

¹⁷⁶ Interviews with ILO staff

¹⁷⁷ Interview with ILO staff.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with ILO staff

¹⁷⁹ Interview with ILO staff

¹⁸⁰ ProDoc and SOLIFEM revised budget NCE2 (October 2024).

¹⁸¹ Interviews with stakeholders.

¹⁸² Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁸³ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁸⁴ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁸⁵ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁸⁶ Interview with ILO staff

the countries. It also looks at how the Project benefitted female and young workers and contributed to furthering SDGs 5, 8, 10, 16.

What is the Project's likely contribution to formalisation and social dialogue in the four countries?

The Project has established a foundation to achieve impact. While the impact is still limited as some of the Project activities are ongoing, the Project's monitoring data shows that a limited number of workers were already able to formalise their businesses¹⁸⁷. A mentality shift has occurred regarding the narrative about informal work and the willingness to tackle the issues through social dialogue.

Acknowledging that SOLIFEM is a pilot project with an exploratory nature, its achievement of impact will also depend on its ability to facilitate the sharing of good practices among tripartite stakeholders.

As noted in the effectiveness chapter, in Egypt some stakeholders were already able to formalise their businesses. Moreover, other workers have received training on formalising their businesses. Combined with their interest in formalisation, the acquisition of skills and knowledge to formalise their businesses is likely going to enable the achievement of impact.

Interviews with a variety of stakeholders show that the Project was able to encourage a shift in mentality regarding informal work¹⁸⁸. In **Algeria**, a stakeholder noted that, in the past, the topic of informal labour was not discussed sufficiently in society. However, following the implementation of SOLIFEM, a change has taken place in how the issue of informal labour is perceived. This has not only led to a discussion of the topic, but also a better understanding of the drivers that affect the sector. The success of SOLIFEM's awareness-raising on the importance of addressing informality also lends strength to the Project's publication communication strategy, including its regular media outreach efforts on this topic¹⁸⁹.

"One of the major achievements of the SOLIFEM program has been successfully "breaking a taboo" by openly addressing the issue of the informal economy in Algeria. The informal economy is a sensitive and often avoided topic in public discussions in Algeria, as it operates outside official control and is viewed negatively by some segments of society. However, thanks to the SOLIFEM program, this issue has been brought to light, with surveys and diagnostic studies conducted to understand better why certain groups, particularly young people and women, choose to remain in informality."¹⁹⁰

A similar sentiment was found in **Lebanon**, where multiple stakeholders emphasised increased workers' increased awareness following SOLIFEM's capacity-building. It was noted that workers are now not only aware of their rights but due to their increased knowledge, can inform other workers, potentially leading to a cascading effect and increasing awareness in society. Lebanese stakeholders also noted that before the Project, workers, even in cases where they knew their rights would not always report violations, they had seen violations due to the fear of reprisals. However, following the Project's activities, workers have increased capacity and confidence to advocate for their rights and bring to light potential violations that are taking place.¹⁹¹

In the **OPT**, the Project has not created visible signs of impact. Nevertheless, multiple enablers of impact are present which could contribute to generating impact if sustained. These include a better understanding of the benefits of formal employment among workers and the development of "tools and process" which can facilitate collaboration between constituents towards tackling informal labour.¹⁹² Similarly, an interviewed stakeholder noted that due to the Project they became aware of the content of

¹⁸⁷ SOLIFEM First, Second, and Third annual reports

¹⁸⁸ Interviews with stakeholders in Algeria

¹⁸⁹ SOLIFEM First, Second, and Third annual reports, Visibility & Communication

¹⁹⁰ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁹¹ Interviews with stakeholders

¹⁹² FGD with beneficiaries and interview with a stakeholder

Recommendation 204, and the important role it can play towards improving the transition to formality within the context of other documents.¹⁹³

Another factor that can enable impact is the established understanding of the importance of social dialogue. For example, in **Lebanon** stakeholders have understood that tripartism is a key factor when tackling social issues. Having seen the importance of social dialogue towards tackling systemic issues, tripartite partners are now more willing to work together to drive change.

“The social dialogue has been instrumental in fostering collaboration. All stakeholders recognise that no single actor can achieve meaningful impact independently. (...) This experience reaffirmed that the tripartite constituents—workers, employers, and the government—understand the necessity of working together. The project clearly demonstrated that none of the parties can operate effectively in isolation.”¹⁹⁴

Similarly, in **Algeria** multiple constituents highlighted that the Government's interest in addressing informal employment will contribute to bolstering transition from informal to formal labour through social dialogue, underlining SOLIFEM's impact extends to policy level where measures have been taken to strengthen the formal economic activities of individuals transitioning from the informal economy.¹⁹⁵

However, **multiple barriers exist to generating impact.** In Lebanon, trade unions highlighted the lack of resources to continue implementing what they had learned during the Project. Similarly, unions in the MENA region face difficulties in organising freely.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, in **Egypt** workers engage directly with their employer, but this limits their bargaining power due to the lack of formal organisation.¹⁹⁷

What difference does the Project make for female and young workers in the target countries?

As some Project activities continue to be implemented, gathered data has not shown whether the activities have made a specific impact on female and young workers or on achieving SDGs 5, 8, 10, and 16 in target countries.

At the time of the evaluation, it is too early to tell whether the Project will impact the youth and women. Data gathered from interviews did not point to any benefits specifically for female and young workers in the target countries. Similarly, FGDs with training beneficiaries did not highlight any benefits that would be specific for females and young workers. Instead, the impact towards supporting female and young workers stemmed and is likely to stem from the general benefits of the Project. For example, if a female and/or a young worker formalised their business owing to participation in training on FYB, this activity where participation was not dependent on being female or a young person, would still make a difference for female and young workers in the target countries.

It also remains to be seen the extent to which the Project will have made an impact towards achieving SDG 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities) and 16 (peace justice and strong institutions). However, the extent of the impact will depend on regional dynamics, particularly in the OPT and Lebanon, where war had undermined the capacity of participating stakeholders to ensure improved formalisation. Therefore, any considerations of impact towards achieving these SDGs need to consider the damaging impact on the labour market that the war had, especially in the OPT. Meanwhile, in Lebanon and Egypt, efforts of the Project to generate impact

¹⁹³ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁹⁴ Interview with a stakeholder

¹⁹⁵ Interviews with stakeholders

¹⁹⁶ ITUC (2023). ITUC Global Rights Index 2023: The Arab Region Sadly Continues to Hold Worst Region in the World Position. Available [here](#)

¹⁹⁷ Interview with a stakeholder

towards SDG 10 and SDG 16 could be undermined by the presence of corruption in the countries, including in the formalisation of one's business.¹⁹⁸

5.6. Sustainability

According to OECD/DAC criteria, sustainability analyses the extent to which a project's achievements can be maintained in the future. This section will consider the extent to which relevant groups are involved in decision-making processes concerning the project's orientation and implementation. At the same time, it will seek to understand the extent to which factors can affect the sustainability of the project's achievements once the project is phased out, especially in the context of potential future project iterations.

Did the Project establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts?

The Project's ProDoc did not set out an exit strategy. As a result, the MTE recommended that the Project develop an exit strategy alongside continuing support for the project to ensure that impact is maintained after the Project's closure. Interviewed ILO staff noted that currently, modalities for an exit strategy for the Project are being discussed as part of the project's closing activities. However, these discussions were not reflected in the annual reports covering the implementation process and multiple interviewed EU delegations and ILO staff were not aware of an exit strategy.¹⁹⁹

Moreover, an interview with an ILO staff member highlighted that while progress has been made in raising awareness about informality in the labour market, another phase would be needed to consolidate the project's achievements.²⁰⁰

Which factors will affect the Project's continuity?

The constituents at the country/territory level expressed interest in continuing project activities and have already established a level of awareness and capacity that will safeguard the Project's achievements. However, multiple factors are likely to undermine this effort. Some are related to region-specific factors, such as armed conflict, while others, like the lack of resources or capacity, are present to varying extents in all Project countries.

Across the Project countries stakeholders noted an increased awareness of the benefits of social dialogue. Moreover, the Project also raised beneficiaries and constituents' awareness about how individuals can formalise in their respective countries and the importance of formalisation, leading to some workers obtaining formal status. Furthermore, various knowledge products were produced, such as diagnostic studies, skill mapping reports and others. The knowledge gained through the Project's activities, SIYB workshops, and piloted FYB tool designed for workers will contribute to sustaining the Project's results and will not likely be lost soon. This is especially true for the knowledge products that national governments could use to respond to the informal labour market or those regional/international organisations could rely on to facilitate their work for similar interventions in the future.

Finally, the **sustainability of the Project's results will be supported by its alignment with the EU's strategic goals in the wider region in the context of the UfM regional agenda centred around the promotion of social dialogue and informality.** In this vein, at regional level, the upcoming UfM Ministerial on Employment provides an opportunity to share SOLIFEM best practices and recommendations and to contribute to the next Ministerial declaration.

This also means that future initiatives in this thematic area will have opportunities to establish links between different projects in the region and be able to build on what has been accomplished ²⁰¹. This includes for example the EU-funded regional [Youth NEET programme](#) launched in the Southern

¹⁹⁸ Interviews with stakeholders; U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. (2023). Egypt: Corruption and anti-corruption – A focus on non-financial corruption risks. Available [here](#); U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. (2023). Lebanon: Overview of corruption and anti-corruption. Available [here](#); Transparency International. (2023). CPI 2023: Middle East and North Africa - A dysfunctional approach to fighting corruption. Available [here](#).

¹⁹⁹ Interviews with stakeholders

²⁰⁰ Interview with ILO staff

²⁰¹ Interviews with stakeholders

Neighbourhood region in January 2024, where SOLIFEM's mapping of existing skills and training delivery mechanisms and policies at country level can help inform this programme's design of subsequent employment strategies aimed at enhancing training, education and employment.

Moreover, the Project's regional dimension was highlighted as key to ensure the sustainability of social dialogue initiatives like SOLIFEM, as the involvement of social partners operating across the countries of implementation was key to ensure constituents' buy-in and alignment with national policy agendas.

However, the extent to which this can be developed will depend on the specific national contexts.

In **Algeria**, the Project increased people's willingness to talk about the issue of informal employment, which has made the topic less "*taboo*" and allowed data to be generated to understand it. This signals the presence of an increased capacity by relevant stakeholders to discuss the topic and rely on data that has been gathered in case similar projects are implemented in the future.²⁰²

In **Egypt**, it was noted that the government did not actively engage in the Project's implementation and did not provide needed security clearances. Therefore, policy work mainly relied on other social partners participating in the Project.²⁰³ Given the Egyptian government's low involvement throughout the Project, this could mean that if the Project came to an end, key policy implementations that would need to be implemented from the government's side could stall. Nonetheless, the ILO's support to the Egyptian Government through other resources outside the SOLIFEM project budget, for the development of an Egyptian national strategy on formalisation, launched in February 2024, represents an opportunity to sustain the momentum generated by the Project's informal economy diagnostic study. Indeed, the Project's diagnostic study's findings and recommendations form the basis of the national strategy's development, which is led by a national committee established and led by the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA)²⁰⁴.

In **Lebanon**, multiple constituents noted that they were willing to continue implementing the Project activities and supporting the formalisation of workers.²⁰⁵ However, many of the constituents involved in the project noted that they would have limited financial capacity to continue pursuing the Project's objectives if they did not receive financial support or see expanded support. FGDs with business owners revealed that despite an interest in formalising their businesses, many do not have the needed financial resources and require technical assistance to undertake the required formalisation efforts.²⁰⁶ On a larger scale, Lebanon will also face difficulties in supporting Project achievements due to a variety of structural issues, including governmental instability, a banking crisis, and the need for macroeconomic reforms.

In the **OPT**, the war in Gaza has had wide-reaching consequences on social and economic life. With the destruction of infrastructure, loss of human life in Gaza, as well as the economic and political effects of the war also being felt in the West Bank, unemployment has risen significantly.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, if the ceasefire agreement is not adhered to, a rebuilding process of Gaza is initiated and improvements in Israel-Palestine relations do not take place, it is likely that a further deterioration will be seen in terms of labour market conditions.

²⁰² Interviews with stakeholders in Algeria

²⁰³ Interviews with stakeholders; SOLIFEM Second Annual Report pp. 25-26

²⁰⁴ SOLIFEM Third Annual Report

²⁰⁵ Interviews with stakeholders

²⁰⁶ FGD with business owners who participated in the FYB trainings in Lebanon (all female)

²⁰⁷ ILO (2024), A Year of War in Gaza: Impacts on Employment and Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

6. Conclusions

The SOLIFEM project was designed to address critical issues regarding formalisation and employability of (female) workers and businesses in the Southern Neighbourhood region, founded on the principles of social dialogue and tripartism as presented in the Formal Economy Recommendation 204. The project objectives aligned closely with ILO P&B and DWCP priorities, as well as with EU priorities in the region and with countries' own strategies. These factors contributed to a high level of stakeholder participation and engagement, which subsequently supported the progress made by the Project, particularly under Outcome 1.

The regional project Theory of Change was applied to all four countries, allowing for the exchange of lessons learned and good practices among the national ILO staff and the tripartite partners. However, the coverage of two (ILO) regions and four quite different countries was sometimes perceived as unsuitable to do justice to the unique national contexts and needs. Due to delays and national differences, the Project did not (yet) create sufficient national-level results that could be exchanged regionally.

The adaptations responding to the MTE recommendations enhanced the project's relevance, focus and achievability by shifting budget resources from Outcome 2 to Outcome 1 to increase the focus on social dialogue and national policies regarding informality. The evaluation found various examples of progress towards Outcome 1 in the form of increased capacity of social partners to participate in social dialogue and increased capacity of beneficiaries to formalise their activities or to make informed decisions in this regard – particularly among women. In some countries, this led to initial steps towards new strategies, policies or other national documents on formalisation.

However, after the outbreak of the war in OPT and the escalation of this in Lebanon, the relevance of the focus on formalisation was put into question as the direct needs of both countries were job creation and protection due to the increased unemployment. While formalisation remained an important topic, the need for job creation and stability of economic activities was more urgent. In both countries, the security situation formed a crucial barrier to the implementation of activities and achievement of results (despite adaptations made by ILO and satisfaction with the project among stakeholders).

Important steps were taken as related to the enhanced awareness and capacity of constituents and beneficiaries to address the risks of informality through social dialogue in their respective countries. Importantly, a mentality shift has occurred regarding the narrative about informal work and the willingness to tackle the issues through social dialogue.

Furthermore, despite the increase in resources for Outcome 1, the expectation that several project activities ("Outputs") would be able to create an enabling policy environment ("Outcome") was too ambitious and optimistic, without additional intermediate steps, outcome-level expectations and a longer timeline to transform the outcomes into impact (policy change).

The focus on Outcome 2 was reduced after the MTE as the project activities were perceived too ambitious and resources were spread too thin across the two outcomes. Given the delays in Outcome 2 and more pronounced needs for Outcome 1, it was decided to enhance focus on Outcome 1. As a result, various activities under Outcome 2 were not yet implemented or achieved by the time of the final evaluation, beyond the implementation of the study and initial workshops which enhanced awareness on skills and qualifications.

The Project benefited from flexible budgeting that allowed for the reallocation of funding in line with spending patterns and needs, thereby enhancing the project's efficiency. Both stakeholders and ILO staff were satisfied with the management of the Project and the support provided by technical specialists. However, the two-region approach created some challenges for coordination. Furthermore, the budget allocation was unclear, particularly in the inception stage as it regarded budget allocation to the four countries.

As the Project was still ongoing during the time of the final evaluation and given that the two outcomes were not (yet) fully achieved, it was too early for the evaluation to detect concrete signs of impact. Some foundation for potential future impact was created through the enhanced awareness of stakeholders and beneficiaries, and enhanced capacity of social partners through the Project's pilot tools and training activities, which can support their ability to continue social dialogue and negotiation on the topic and

therefore contributes to both impact and sustainability. Besides that, as the project design closely followed the content of ILO Recommendation #204, it made progress towards the implementation of the Recommendation in the four countries.

Particularly, there is a lack of data on the potential effectiveness and impact of the project on women. Although the ProDoc emphasises the focus on gender mainstreaming in the Project, the Project reports and research do not describe or demonstrate how gender mainstreaming and sensitivity took place within concrete activities (beyond equal participation). The Project lacked, for example, an approach to monitoring how women experienced the activities and whether this experience differed from male participants. Similarly, the Project did not incorporate concrete actions to include persons with disabilities or environmental sustainability and, therefore, did not create such results.

Despite the increased capacity and awareness, various factors hinder project sustainability when the project ends. Social dialogue and the role of trade unions remain weak, and it is unclear whether the social partners can contribute to policy development without the explicit support of the ILO. The war and political instability in OPT and Lebanon were still ongoing at the time of this evaluation. They hindered the achievement of results that would support impact and sustainability (also in the future, depending on how long the conflict will continue).

Overall, the Project was of value for its target stakeholders and beneficiaries as it responded to important challenges in the region, in terms of informality, but also in terms of barriers to social dialogue and effective tripartism. Following the ILO Recommendation #204, the Project made important steps on enhancing capacity and awareness regarding informality. However, various challenges hindered the Project from achieving its expected outcomes fully and create a solid foundation for impact and sustainability.

7. Lessons Learned (LL) and Good Practices (GP)

Annexes one and two present the full lessons learned and good practices in the template of the ILO.

7.1. Lessons learned

LL 1. Country-level budget allocation should be agreed upon in the proposal or early inception stage to ensure that each national ILO office is aware of the resources available to them for the project.

Various interviewees pointed out that the project scope was unclear to them initially, as they did not have a defined budget for their country. This hindered them from planning and estimating feasible activities within their national context.

LL 2. Regional activities should be planned chronologically after initial national achievements are made.

The Project covered four countries that, while sharing common challenges, are quite different in terms of their government systems, flexibility, and social dialogue. Various interviewees, therefore, believed that the regional component would be most relevant only once concrete achievements with their lessons and good practices could be exchanged. Namely, as countries follow different processes, there would not be much to exchange without such concrete lessons and practices.

Interviewees believed that the regional component would have been more valuable as a second phase of the project or generally later in the project.

7.2. Good practices

GP 1. Flexibility of budget reallocation by the donor and ILO staff allows for a project to enhance its relevance and effectiveness based on its M&E activities.

The MTE pointed out that the Project was too ambitious and spread thin, which hindered it from achieving its objectives and could hinder its impact (as insufficient deep foundations for impact would be made). Adjusting the budget to allow for more substantial support under Outcome 1 aligned with the needs of the stakeholders and enhanced the project's focus and effectiveness.

Without reallocating the budget, the delays under Outcome 2 and the lack of dedicated focus on Outcome 1 could have further hindered the project's effectiveness.

GP 2. Close alignment with the ILO International Labour Standards proved effective and relevant for the design of the concrete intervention.

The Project was built in line with the objectives of the *Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015*, in terms of the use of social dialogue as a method in promoting formalisation and employment and tool to contribute to policy improvement, but also as tool to improve social dialogue (and the involvement of informal workers) as stand-alone goal. Therefore, SOLIFEM used social dialogue to achieve progress towards the ILS and used the ILS to inform progress on social dialogue. The results/approaches of SOLIFEM can subsequently provide lessons learned and good practices for other countries working towards the objectives of the Recommendation.

GP3. The organisation of peer-learning events with a small group of countries is effective for concrete exchange of lessons and practices.

The SOLIFEM project organised various regional events, of which the study visit of the OPT to Algeria was regularly praised as most effective. It allowed for close communication and exchange between a select number of stakeholders where many important topics were discussed, including employment, social security, and governance of the labour sector. This chosen format allowed discussions to go more in-depth, allowing tripartite stakeholders to engage with different contexts and thereby expedite progress towards formalisation.

8. Recommendations

Based on the evaluation's findings and conclusions, the Evaluation Team has developed the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1. Future projects should improve gender mainstreaming beyond the equal participation of women.

The Project document highlighted that measures would be taken to ensure the project's gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity. However, reporting and project deliverables do not indicate that this has occurred beyond the disaggregation of monitoring data and the equal participation of women in the project activities. Future projects should, for example:

- Consult with female stakeholders and beneficiaries and prepare a brief reflecting their specific perceptions of the project content.
- Discuss/pilot training activities with female beneficiaries and record how they perceive the suitability of the methods and content. Elaborate what adjustments were made to the materials to reflect the discussion results.
- Monitor activities and trace/follow up with beneficiaries (e.g., surveys or short interviews) to measure whether the activity created equal results and what barriers (if any) prevented women from taking the training/activity results forward.
- Report in annual reports what other measures were taken to mainstream gender.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
Future ILO project staff and M&E staff	Medium (for monitoring and consultations)	Future projects' inception stage	High (for future projects)

Recommendation 2. Enhance the link between the regional project concept and the national context.

Various interviewees expressed concern that the four countries of SOLIFEM were too different for one project concept, particularly after the escalation of the war in the OPT and Lebanon. While the overall outcomes can be targeted towards the same challenges (e.g. informality and weak social dialogue), the priorities, outputs and activities should be flexible to ensure that ILO staff and stakeholders can agree on what steps are needed and most relevant in their country.

In the case of SOLIFEM, the project design was grounded in background research, but some stakeholders felt insufficiently consulted in the design and felt that the activities did not reflect the main priorities (e.g. in OPT, especially after the escalation of the war).

Furthermore, the difference among countries, and their spread over two ILO regions, created certain challenges for coordination and regional cooperation. Therefore, future regional projects should:

- Ensure that key national stakeholders (ILO, Donor, constituents) can co-design the priorities and activities under a project, relying on the expertise of the key stakeholders and allowing them to set their priorities for the project.
- Explore in project design not only whether project countries face similar difficulties, but also whether the composition of countries facilitates efficient project coordination and technical backstopping (e.g. limiting the coverage of different ILO regions).

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
Future national and regional project staff, donor, constituents	Low	Future projects' inception stage	Medium (for future projects)

Recommendation 3. Enhance the achievability of future projects, by creating a Theory of Change with realistic Outcomes that can be achieved within the scope of one project.

The Theory of Change of the SOLIFEM project was highly ambitious by expecting policy change (i.e. enabling policy environments to facilitate formalisation, and frameworks for RPL systems) already at the outcome level. In fact, “*national strategies and roadmaps for formalisation developed, and their implementation initiated*” is presented at output level.

Policy change is dependent on numerous steps and forms of support, that go beyond the activities and time scope foreseen under one project. Given the complexity of policy and systems development/change, and the influence of political priorities and other external circumstances, these results are better expected at impact level. Similarly, some interviewees noted that the connection was unclear between the training (output) and the policy change (outcome in SOLIFEM). It seems that some steps were missing. The intermediate level should include discussions among stakeholders conducted, consensus on the causes of problems and their solutions developed, new legislation prepared for adoption, and new institutions developed or existing strengthened to increase capacity for policy implementation and monitoring.

Future projects should therefore avoid expecting high-level political achievements at outcome level, as the lack of achievement of policy change would give the impression that the project was not effective. More realistic ToC formulations can include the following:

- At *output level*, the project should note the very immediate effects of activities, such as “training implemented”, “beneficiaries trained”, “number of social partners participating in a meeting”, “reports disseminated” and other low-level, more factual achievements. The execution of the activities forms the foundation.
- At the *outcome level*, the short and medium-term effects should be noted, which are expected as a consequence of achieving the outputs. In the case of SOLIFEM, those outcomes can be related to increased capacity to conduct public policy negotiations and increased awareness of the barriers and dangers of informality. Separate indicators should measure whether the training and workshops increased capacity and awareness.
- At the *longer-term outcome or impact level*, the consequences of the outcomes should be noted. In the case of SOLIFEM, the expectation would be that the various outcomes on capacity and awareness would allow stakeholders to contribute to policy change.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
ILO HQ and Country offices conceiving new projects, donors	Low	Future projects' inception stage	High

Recommendation 4. Expand the M&E system of future projects to measure every step along the ToC and obtain different data to measure project achievements.

The SOLIFEM project progress was measured largely through quantitative, factual indicators that measured registration numbers, participation numbers, numbers of roadmaps developed, etc. While these indicators would be suitable to measure the implementation of activities, reach of the target groups, gender balance, and achievement of immediate outputs, those are less effective to measure quality or capacity.

The project progress relied largely on the increased awareness and capacity of social partners, as well as beneficiaries. However, the M&E framework did not include indicators measure such change, for example through pre-and post-training surveys/test, surveys of constituents. It also did not measure the quality of activities, for example through satisfaction surveys or through interviews/FGDs. Similarly, the M&E framework measures the number of training programmes and RPL frameworks developed but does not specify the criteria for the quality of those documents.

Furthermore, the M&E system should measure all steps from activity participation to impact. Through this approach, project staff can better identify bottlenecks. E.g. if constituents indicated they learned nothing, and there is no policy change under impact, the reason for the lack of change is clear. However, if constituents report increased capacity but there is policy change still, ILO would need to identify the factors hindering the translation of that capacity into results.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
ILO HQ and Country offices conceiving new projects, donors	Medium (more M&E resources)	Future projects' inception stage	Medium

Recommendation 5. Consider organising regional meetings towards the end of the project when there are concrete lessons to share. During the interim phases, exchange can take place through in-person study visits and peer-learning.

The evaluation found that the in-person study visit of the OPT to Algeria was a good practice and a clear example of exchange and lessons learned. The larger both hybrid and in-person regional meetings were perceived as interesting but brought fewer concrete results or space for informal exchange compared to the costs necessary to organise a regional event.

One barrier to the effectiveness of regional meetings was the lack of concrete results to present at national level. Therefore, several interviewees suggested that regional meetings would be more useful towards the end of the project, when lessons learned, and good practices could actually be presented and discussed.

Future projects could, therefore, focus resources at initial stages of the project more towards peer-learning and study visits with concrete learning purposes, while planning larger regional meetings towards the project conclusion.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
ILO HQ and Country offices conceiving new projects, donors	Low (less regional event costs)	Future projects' inception stage	Medium

Recommendation 6. Integrate follow-up on the roadmaps, strategies, policy recommendations and other strategic outputs of SOLIFEM in other projects and programmes of the ILO, the EU and in the UfM context.

The Project resulted in various recommendations and roadmaps for formalisation that were development but not always formally adopted for implementation. To ensure that the project can achieve its expected impact, the ILO, but also the EU, should ensure follow-up support to the four countries to implement the project recommendations.

Examples for follow-up include:

- The integration of technical and implementation support in follow-up projects of the ILO and DG NEAR/DG EMPL
- Support and follow-up to the constituents by technical specialists at HQ and DWTs through other interactions with constituents
- Include exchange and updates on the formalisation roadmap and recommendations as part of UfM activities and meetings.

Addressed to:	Resource investment	Timeline:	Priority-level:
ILO HQ and DWT, EU's DG NEAR and DG EMPL	Medium (new projects costly, integration in existing work less costly)	Throughout 2025	High

Annex 1. Lessons learned

LESSON LEARNED 1	In multi-country projects, the country-level budget allocation should be agreed upon in the proposal or in the early inception stage.
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Country-level budget allocation should be agreed upon in the proposal or early inception stage to ensure that each national ILO office involved in the project is aware of the resources available to them for the project and be able to plan efficiently subsequent project activities.
Context and any related preconditions	Various interviewees pointed out that the project scope was unclear to them initially, as they did not have a defined budget for their country. This hindered them from planning and estimating the feasibility of activities within their national context in the most efficient manner.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO and donor involved in the project design
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	A lack of clear information about the funding available for project activities prevents staff from planning activities transparently and efficiently.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	N/A
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	In the project's design, the project should made initial country-level funding allocations clearer.
LESSON LEARNED 2	In a multi-country project, regional activities should be planned chronologically after the initial in-country national achievements are made
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The Project covered four countries that, while sharing common contextual challenges, are very different in terms of their government systems, flexibility, and social dialogue structure.
Context and any related preconditions	Namely, as countries follow different processes, there would not be much to exchange without such concrete lessons and practices at an early project stage.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Donor, ILO and tripartite project stakeholders
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Various interviewees believed that the regional component would be most relevant only once concrete national achievements with their lessons and good practices were made to could be exchanged.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	N/A
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The design of a project's regional component should be emphasised at a latter stage of the project's implementation.

Annex 2. Emerging good practices

GOOD PRACTICE 1	Flexibility in the budget reallocation by the donor and ILO staff allows for a project to enhance its relevance and effectiveness based on its M&E activities.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The MTE pointed out that the Project's scope was too ambitious, and resources spread too thin, which hindered it from achieving its objectives and could hinder its impact (as insufficient deep foundations for impact would be made).
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Adjusting the budget to allow for more substantial support under Outcome 1 therefore aligned with the needs of the stakeholders and enhanced the project's focus and effectiveness.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Without reallocating the budget, the delays under Outcome 2 and the lack of dedicated focus on Outcome 1 could have further hindered the project's effectiveness.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Donor & ILO staff – improved effectiveness and potential impact.
Potential for replication and by whom	Other countries and projects with ambitious project scope and limited resources.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	N/A
GOOD PRACTICE 2	Close alignment with the ILO International Labour Standards proved effective and relevant for the design of the concrete interventions.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The Project was built in line with the objectives of the <i>Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015</i> , in terms of the use of social dialogue as a method and tool to contribute to policy improvement, but also as tool to improve social dialogue (and the involvement of informal workers) as stand-alone goal. Therefore, the Project used social dialogue to achieve progress towards the ILS and used the ILS to inform progress on social dialogue.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The results/approaches of the Project can subsequently provide lessons learned and good practices for other countries working towards the objectives of the Recommendation.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Social dialogue was at the heart of the project strategy and ToC, which comprised a comprehensive focus on the capacity building of social partners and social dialogue support as the foundation for achieving the two intended Outcomes.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	ILO and tripartite project partners

Potential for replication and by whom	ILO staff and specialist units
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	N/A
GOOD PRACTICE 3	The organisation of peer-learning events with a small group of stakeholders is effective for more concrete exchange of lessons and practices.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The SOLIFEM project organised various regional events, of which the study visit of the OPT stakeholders to Algeria was regularly praised as most effective by interviewees.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The larger regional meetings were perceived as interesting but brought fewer concrete results or space for informal exchange compared to the costs necessary to organise a regional event of this scale.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The visit allowed for close communication and exchange between a select number of tripartite stakeholders, thereby allowing discussions to go more in-depth.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	ILO and tripartite project stakeholders
Potential for replication and by whom	Future projects could focus resources at the initial project stage more towards peer-learning and study visits with concrete learning purposes, while planning larger regional meetings towards the project conclusion.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	N/A

Annex 3. Terms of Reference (ToR)



Co-funded by
the European Union

Final Independent Project Evaluation

Social dialogue for formalisation and employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM)

Terms of Reference (see below the call for EOI)

July 2024

► CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTERESTJ

ILO/ ROAS is searching for an evaluation firm to undertake the final independent evaluation.

The activities should take approximately 40 working days, with work expected to be undertaken during the period August - November 2024 in person and online. The current call is asking for expressions of interest from interested firms specialized in project evaluations.

Please see Background Information and draft TORs for further information.

Duration of the contract: August and ends in November 2024. Application deadline: August 5, 2024 (11pm Beirut time) Desired profile of the evaluation team:

- Master's Degree in social sciences, economics, development studies, evaluation or related fields, with demonstrated strong research experience;
 - A minimum of 7 years' experience in conducting projects and programme evaluations, with demonstrated experience in development related programmes.
 - Previous experience in evaluations for UN agencies is required.
 - Evaluation experience with the ILO and the EU cooperation projects, including regional programmes is a strong asset.
 - Relevant regional experience and familiarity with implementation of programmes and projects in the region.
 - Experience in the Egypt, Algeria, Lebanon and OPT is an asset.
 - Full proficiency in English.
 - Command of Arabic and French through a team member.
 - Knowledge of the ILO and its normative mandate, tripartite structure and technical cooperation activities is a strong asset
 - Excellent communication, interview and report writing skills;
 - Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines.
 - Facilitation skills and ability to manage diversity of views in different cultural contexts.
- All team members must have no previous involvement in the delivery of the project under evaluation.

Information	Details
Project title	Social dialogue for formalisation and employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM)
DC Symbol	INT/20/02/EUR
Type of Evaluation	Independent
Timing of Evaluation	Final
Countries	Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, and Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and other countries of the Southern Neighbourhood region
P&B outcomes	1, 2, 3, 5, 8, A
SDG (s)	5, 8, 10, 16
Start Date	March 2021
End Date	December 2024
Administrative	CO-Algiers, RO-Arab States/DWT-Beirut, DWT/CO-Cairo

unit	
Technical Backstopping Unit	DWT Beirut, DWT Cairo
Collaborating ILO Units	SKILLS, DIALOGUE, DEVINVEST, INWORK
Donor	European Commission, DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Neighbourhood
Evaluation Manager	Hiba Al Rifai
Budget	€4,400,000

Proposal submission

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

1. A cover letter describing how the personnel skills, qualifications and experience are relevant to the assignment.
2. The CV of all members highlighting previous evaluations that are relevant to the context and subject matter of this assignment.
3. A financial proposal with all fees and expenses expressed in US dollars.
4. Sample of similar work written by the lead evaluator.
5. At least two professional references.
6. The division of work and days among the team members.

Please send your application with relevant attachments to alrifai@ilo.org by the **5th of August 2024 (11:00 PM Beirut time)** with the subject heading: "ILO.SOLIFEM.YOURNAME".

Project background

The " Social Dialogue for Formalisation and Employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region" (SOLIFEM) project is a 42-month project (March 2021 to August 2024) co-funded by the European Union and the ILO. It supports the transition to the formal economy through coordinated action to strengthen the capacity of the ILO tripartite constituents in the region, with particular focus on Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and OPT, on two fronts – first, for the development of integrated strategies on formalisation and second, for the development of skills training and recognition systems, with a particular focus on women and youth.

The project strategy is built on the solid foundation of tripartism and social dialogue, in line with the ILO's overall mandate and with Recommendation No. 204 on the transition from the informal to the formal economy. This Recommendation emphasises the critical role of social dialogue in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes for the transition to formality. ILO experience confirms that social dialogue is an effective tool for promoting formalisation and building consensus on the necessary policy and legal reforms, as has been shown in many countries including Costa Rica, Greece, Senegal and Uruguay.

The project's interventions take place at two levels: at the national level, primarily in the four focus countries/territory and at the regional/inter-regional level, bringing together participants from across the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood region.

At the national level, the project aims to generate national strategies for formalisation, based notably on an improved understanding of the informal economy, strengthened capacity and enhanced policy dialogue and coordination among the tripartite constituents and other key stakeholders on promoting formalisation and boosting skills and employability for youth and women as key dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development. At the regional level, it aims to strengthen mechanisms for regional policy dialogue, allowing the participating countries to share the knowledge and experience they have gained, learn from each other, and

jointly devise recommendations and plans to carry their work forward at both national and regional levels. The project's outcomes will thus inform and support joint action and future initiatives built on social dialogue and through south-south and triangular cooperation across the Southern Neighbourhood in order to build sustainable solutions to common issues and challenges.

The following planned outputs contribute to achievement of the Project's Outcome 1: Enabling national policy frameworks to facilitate the transition of informal economy workers and economic units to the formal economy in place, developed through dialogue between the tripartite constituents.

- A diagnostic analysis of factors, characteristics, causes and circumstances of informality to inform the design and implementation of a national strategy on formalisation is established and validated by tripartite constituents.
- Social dialogue institutions or mechanisms at national and regional levels are stronger and better equipped to address the risks of informalisation and foster transition to the formal economy.
- National strategies or roadmaps for the progressive transition from the informal to the formal economy are developed, and their implementation initiated in selected focus countries/territory.
- The following planned outputs contribute to achievement of the Project's Outcome 2: Strengthened skills development systems that enable young people and women in the informal economy to access formal employment.
- A joint mapping by tripartite constituents and training institutions of skills, training delivery mechanisms and employability gaps among workers in the informal economy is conducted.
- Programmes that improve the access of women and youth in the informal economy to training and lifelong learning opportunities are designed or revised.
- Frameworks for national Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) systems are developed.

Project management arrangements

The project is implemented by ILO project staff present in the 4 focus countries/territory involved (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory). The team was headed by an internationally recruited Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) based in the ILO office in Algiers and as of December 2023, by an internationally recruited Project Technical Officer also based in ILO Office in Algiers. Each of the 3 countries has a national project coordinator (NPC) and a finance and administration assistant (FAA) while in OPT the only staff member is the project coordinator.

The project is supported by technical specialists from the Decent Work technical support teams (DWT) in Cairo and Beirut, as well as from INWORK, DIALOGUE, DEVINVEST and SKILLS in ILO HQ, and works in close collaboration with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) in the field and at HQ. Furthermore, the project has been receiving support from the newly established AP/Formalisation programme and joint initiatives/interventions are planned accordingly.

The project document foresaw the establishment of a tripartite project advisory committee (PAC) in each focus country/territory; in practice, certain adjustments were made considering the national context. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), the tripartite body is a sub-committee of the National Labour Policies Committee, the official tripartite social dialogue institution. In Lebanon, there is a smaller tripartite Reference Group established to guide the project strategy and implementation, with involvement only of the Ministry of Labour, given the limited government capacity in the context of the ongoing economic crisis. In Algeria, there is a large PAC that includes many government ministries and national institutions, in addition to the social partners. In Algeria the project is also supported by two technical working groups on formalisation and on skills, a structure initially foreseen for all focus countries. In Egypt, the project works with social partners.

SOLIFEM coordinates with the partners responsible for the implementation of the EU project SOLiD II "Towards an inclusive and structured social dialogue in the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood", in order to maximise synergies and ensure the continuous sharing of knowledge and experience. Also, on a yearly basis, a joint steering committee is held bringing together the EU DG NEAR, SOLiD II and SOLIFEM teams.

Project Main Stakeholders:

Lebanon	CGTL (General Confederation of Lebanese Workers)
	FENASOL (The National Federation of Worker and Employee Trade Unions in Lebanon)
	ALI (Association of Lebanese Industrialists)
	MoL (Ministry of Labour)
OPT	MoL (Ministry of Labour)
	FPCCIA (Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture)
	PGFTU (Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions)
Egypt	FEI (Federation Of Egyptian Industries)
	ETUF (Egyptian Trade Union Federation)
	EDLC (Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress)
	Small farmers TU
	Small farmers TU
Algeria	UGTA (Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens)
	CGEA (Confédération Générale des Entreprises Algériennes)
	MTESS (Ministère du Travail, de l'emploi et de la Sécurité Sociale)
	MFEP (Ministère de la formation et l'Enseignement Professionnels)
SOLiD II Teams and stakeholders	

Project alignment with the ILO P&B, DWCPs, national policy frameworks and the SDGs

SOLIFEM contributes to the following global policy outcomes in the ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) 2022-2023:

- Outcome 1: Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue, and especially to output 1.4, on strengthening social dialogue and labour relations laws, processes and institutions;
- Outcome 2: International labour standards and authoritative and effective supervision, in particular output 2.2 on increased capacity of member States to apply international labour standards;
- Outcome 3: Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all, and especially to work to support member states to develop integrated strategies towards formalisation in line with Recommendation No. 204;
- Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work, in particular output 4.3 on increased capacity of member States to implement measures to facilitate the transition of enterprises to formality;
- Outcome 5: Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market including output 5.3 on enhancing constituents' capacity to design and deliver innovative, flexible and inclusive learning options; and
- Outcome 7: Adequate and effective protection at work for all, in particular output 7.4 which includes support for the transition to formality of informal workers in formal enterprises or in households.

At national level, in Algeria, the project is linked to two CPOs, namely (i) CPO DZA102: Increased capacity of principals and training providers to anticipate skill needs and improve access to the labour market, and (ii) CPO DZA105: Strengthened Constituency Capacities to Develop and Implement Strategies and Measures for Youth Employment and Facilitate Formalisation.

In Egypt, the project is linked to CPO EGY 101 Increased capacity of constituents to develop labour market services and support transitions to decent work, particularly for youth and women, 801 Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organisations, 802 Strengthened institutional capacity of workers' organisations and 103 Increased capacity of national stakeholders to improve access to lifelong learning and inclusive skills development and support labour market transitions.

In Lebanon, the project is linked to LBN103: Improved employability of Syrian Refugees and Lebanese citizens to

access Decent Work, LBN 104: Enhanced capacity of the government and social partners to develop a national labour policy, and mainstream SDGs relating to employment and DW into national development and crisis response frameworks, LBN 801: Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organisations, LBN 802: Strengthened institutional capacity of workers'

In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the project is linked to CPO 126 on Enhanced employment policy in the OPT.

In the focus countries/territory, the project is aligned with the following national development plans/policy frameworks:

- In Algeria, the 2020 Government plan of action for the implementation of the programme of the President of the Republic.
- In Egypt, the Country Strategy Paper 2017-20 and the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt's Vision 2030.
- In Lebanon, the United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF) 2017-2020 focusing on promoting social dialogue and fundamental principles and rights at work as well as productive employment opportunities for Lebanese women and youth.
- In the OPT, the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 and the Labour Sector sectoral strategy, and the Palestinian Decent Work Programme 2018–2022 (concerning the need for strengthening social dialogue and freedom of association, skills and entrepreneurship, youth and women's empowerment and labour market participation).

With regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the project contributes to SDG 8 to 'promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all', specifically its target 8.3 to 'promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services' and 8.5 to 'achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value'. The project contributes as well to SDG 1: No Poverty; SDG 4: Quality Education; SDG 10: Reducing Inequality, and SDG 16: Promoting Peaceful and Inclusive Societies. The right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is captured by SDG indicator 8.8.2, while the effectiveness and transparency of institutions, and responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making by targets 16.6 and 16.7 respectively.

At the level of the EU, the project is aligned with the 2017 European Consensus on Development and the 2015 revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) that call for a focus on achieving sustainable development and increasing the resilience and stabilization of the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood. The Declaration of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) ministerial conference on Employment and Labour adopted in 2019 underlined the crucial role of effective social dialogue to address the challenges of growth, democracy and social justice. In addition, the project is aligned with the 2021 Agenda for the Mediterranean and the 2022 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and Labour.

Finally, the project was originally intended to make an important contribution to implementation of the One UN effort to tackle the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in the Southern Neighbourhood countries, although this is of less relevance at this point in the project implementation, given other economic and political developments in the region that are more profound. In particular, the project's planned interventions are fully in line with the third pillar of the UN framework which addresses the economic response and recovery by protecting jobs, small and medium- sized enterprises, and informal economy workers. The framework's fifth pillar on social cohesion and community resilience emphasises the importance of inclusive social dialogue in developing and implementing all crisis response and recovery measures.

Evaluation Background

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of development cooperation activities. Systematic and timely evaluation of its programmes and activities is also an established priority of the European Commission. Provision is made in the project 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. An internal midterm evaluation was done in 2023 and as the project is coming to an end and in line with the evaluation policy, a final independent evaluation is due.

The final evaluation aims to assess the overall performance of the project, the achievement and quality of the results, with emphasis on results-oriented approaches and the contribution towards achievement of the SDGs. It will also assess the potential impact of the programme for the targeted populations, and formulate lessons learned and practical recommendations to improve future similar programmes.

Objectives

The main objectives of this evaluation are to provide an overall independent assessment of the performance of the project, paying particular attention to its different levels of results measured against its expected objectives, and to provide key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations. It also aims at assessing the added-value and the challenges of the regional / multi-country nature of the project. This evaluation will provide a comprehensive independent assessment of the project through the six OECD-DAC criteria: Relevance, coherence and with special focus on effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and potential impact of the project. The evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation policy, and the UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed.

Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will assess the project's overall performance in line with its planned outcomes and outputs. It will cover all aspects of the project's implementation highlighting the main challenges and good practices. The evaluation will build on the findings from the midterm evaluation with more targeted focus on the period from August 2023 to August 2024 which was not covered by the midterm evaluation. It will integrate ILO's cross-cutting issues, including norms and social dialogue, gender equality, disability inclusion, and other non-discrimination concerns throughout its methodology and all deliverables. The geographical coverage will align with that of the project in each of the four countries/ territory; the regional multi-country dimension of the SOLIFEM project will be of particular focus across the analysis.

Clients of the Evaluation

The primary clients of this evaluation are the relevant constituents, the Governments, the Employers and Workers' Organisations, in Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt and OPT. In addition to the above, the ILO CO-Algiers, the project team, the ILO DWT in Cairo and Beirut, the ILO Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), the ILO Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) and the relevant technical units in ILO Headquarters, and the donor, represented by the European Commission in Brussels and its delegations in the four focus countries/territories. Secondary users include other project stakeholders and units within the ILO that may indirectly benefit from the knowledge generated by the evaluation.

A participatory approach involving key stakeholders will be ensured to the extent possible.

Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation utilizes the standard ILO evaluation framework and follows the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria with emphasis on integrating gender.

Relevance:

- To what extent are the results from the midterm evaluation still relevant? Has there been any updates to the project approach?

Coherence:

- To what extent is the project coherent with other interventions of the ILO and the EU in the region, especially the SOLiD 2 project? To what extent is the project consistent with the policies and goals of the countries under study including work on gender?

Effectiveness:

- To what extent did the project achieve its outcomes and outputs?
- How did the project's outputs and outcomes contribute to ILO's mainstreamed strategies including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?
- How and to what extent did the project contribute to the ILO's Implementation Report on the Programme & Budget and Country Programme Outcomes?
- To what extent the project is contributing to the EU priorities under the Agenda for the Mediterranean and to the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III), to the UfM policy agenda under the Ministerial declaration on employment of 2022 and to the partners' national policy frameworks.
- How effective was communication among the project teams, the regional offices and the responsible technical department at ILO headquarters? Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?
- To what extent did the project ensure the implementation of the recommendations, lessons learned and good practices extracted from the midterm evaluation?

Efficiency

- To what extent were the project activities cost-efficient? Were the resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) allocated strategically to achieve outcomes, especially in line with the findings of the midterm evaluation?
- How did the project's governance structure facilitate good results and efficient delivery? And if not, why not?
- How have the stakeholders been involved in the project? Are some stakeholders more involved than others and why? How efficient were the coordination efforts and dialogue with the SOLiD 2 project?
- To what extent did the project consider and address potential gender disparities or biases to ensure efficient utilization of resources and equitable outcomes?

Impact orientation

- How likely are the project achievements to contribute to the formalisation of the informal economy in the four countries? What positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects can be linked to the project? What is the project's expected impact on female and youth workers?
- How has the project contributed to reinforce social dialogue in the region?
- How is the project contributing to the relevant SDGs? Can any specific achievement be directly linked to the SDG indicators?

Sustainability

- Did the project establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts? What measures have been considered to ensure that the key components of the project are sustainable beyond the life of the project at both country and regional levels? Did the project consider gender in planning its sustainable measures? Can future projects be built upon the results of this project, ensuring sustainability and optimal use of results?

Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out by an external independent Evaluation Team (ET). The evaluation will follow a mixed methods approach using both available and as necessary primary quantitative and qualitative data.

Triangulation is expected to ensure the reliability and validity of findings. Gender will be mainstreamed throughout the evaluation process.

Any changes to the methodology should be discussed with and approved by the Evaluation Manager. The ET is expected to follow the below approach:

Briefing and inception report drafting

The ET will have initial consultations with the Evaluation Manager, the relevant ILO staff managing the project, the EU, and some key stakeholders. The objective of the consultations is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final evaluation report. The following topics will be covered: status of logistical arrangements, project background and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, outline of the inception and final report.

Document review and analysis

The ET is expected to review and analyze the project-related documents. These include but not limited to project documents or concept notes with logical framework, work plans, progress and technical reports, financial reports, any materials/ studies/ events proceedings prepared or undertaken within the framework of the project

Individual Interviews

Following the desk review and after the initial consultations as well as the approval of the inception report, the ET will hold virtual and in-person meetings with the identified key stakeholders including the ILO staff, the EU, and constituents/stakeholders. Individual or group interviews will be conducted based on the provided list of stakeholders.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The ET is expected to organize FGDs with the different groups of end-beneficiaries. The FGDs should consider gender, nationality, geographical coverage, and the thematic area. The ET is expected to lead on all logistics related to the FGDs; the project teams can play a facilitation role (on logistics) only.

Drafting the evaluation report

The ET will draft the evaluation report based on the outline agreed upon in the inception report. The evaluation manager will share the draft report with relevant ILO staffs, partners and stakeholders will consolidate their feedback. The evaluator will thereafter, amend the evaluation report and submit a final version to the evaluation manager.

Presentation of findings

The ET will convene a workshop to present the evaluation findings and validate the interpretations. Details on the timing and scope of the workshop will be decided with the EM throughout the process.

Evaluation Timeframe

The evaluation is to commence in August and end in November 2024. The following table describes the tentative number of days:

Tasks	No. of Working days
Inception phase: inception consultations, desk review, drafting and submitting an inception report	8
Revise and resubmit inception report	2
Data collection	20
Drafting and submission of the evaluation report	10
Revising the draft final report	3
Integration of all comments and finalization of the report	2
Workshop	1
Total	46

Total estimated payable working days: 46 Days

Deliverables

The main outputs of the evaluation consist of the following (all in English):

- Deliverable 1: Inception Report along its comments log
- Deliverable 2: Draft evaluation report
- Deliverable 3: Draft 2 of the evaluation report along its comments log
- Deliverable 4: PowerPoint Presentation
- Deliverable 5: Final evaluation report with separate template for executive summary and templates for lessons learned and good practices duly filled in (as per ILO's standard procedure, the report will be considered final after EVAL's approval)

Payment Terms

- 10 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 1 above approved by the evaluation manager
- 30 per cent of the total fee against deliverable 2 above
- 60 per cent of the total fee against deliverables 3, 4 and 5 above, approved by the ILO Regional Evaluation Officer.

Management Arrangement

The ET will report to the ILO's evaluation manager and should discuss any technical and methodological matters with her. The ILO ROAS, DWT/ Cairo, and CO Algiers will provide administrative and logistical support during the data collection. The Evaluation Office will approve and sign off the final evaluation report.

The ET is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the terms of reference (ToR):

- Review the ToR and propose any refinements to evaluation questions and methodology during the inception phase
- Review project background materials (e.g., project document and progress reports).
- Prepare an inception report
- Develop and implement the evaluation methodology (i.e., conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the evaluation questions
- Lead on all logistics and coordination for the data collection
- Conduct preparatory consultations with the evaluation manager prior to the evaluation mission
- Conduct key informant interviews and collect information
- Conduct focus group discussions
- Analyse findings from key informant interviews and focus group discussions
- Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report with input from ILO specialists and constituents/stakeholders
- Prepare and conduct a workshop on evaluation findings
- Prepare the final report based on the ILO, donor and other stakeholders' feedback obtained on the draft report.

The ILO Evaluation Manager is responsible for:

- Drafting the ToR
- Finalizing the ToR with input from ILO colleagues and other stakeholders
- Hiring the evaluator
- Providing the evaluator with the project background materials
- Reviewing the inception report and the initial draft final report, circulating them for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the ET on the inception report and the final report
- Reviewing the final report
- Coordinating with the Regional Evaluation Officer for the Evaluation Office's clearance of the final report
- Disseminating the final report to stakeholders
- Coordinating follow-up as necessary.

The ILO Regional Evaluation Officer²⁰⁸:

- Provides support to the planning of the evaluation;
- Approves selection of the evaluation consultant and final versions of the TOR;
- Reviews the draft and final evaluation report and submits it to the ILO Evaluation Office;
- Disseminates the report as appropriate.

The Project team is responsible for:

- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input
- Providing project background materials, including studies, analytical papers, reports, tools, publications produced, and any relevant background notes
- Providing a proposed list of stakeholders
- Participating in the preparatory briefing prior to the assessment missions
- Support in logistical arrangements for the missions
- Reviewing and providing comments on the initial draft report
- Participating in the debriefing on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations

Legal and Ethical Matters

- This evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation guidelines and UN Norms and Standards.
- The ToRs is accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out the evaluation “Code of conduct for evaluation in the ILO”⁴. The selected consultant will sign the Code of Conduct form along with the contract.
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the evaluation.
- The consultant will not have any links to project management or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.

²⁰⁸ For this evaluation, the Regional Evaluation Officer is the evaluation manager.

Annex 4. List of persons interviewed

Table 7 Stakeholder interviews

#	Name	Gender	Organisation
Global & regional			
1	Nawia Rawel	Female	EEAS, Algiers
2	Leila Emerson	Female	EEAS, Beirut
3	Ahlam Farouk	Female	EEAS, Cairo
4	Mitia Gorguinpour	Male	EEAS, East Jerusalem
5	Anne-France Wittmann	Female	DG NEAR
6	Stefano Dotto	Male	DG NEAR
7	Emmanuelle Roure	Female	DG EMPL
8	Benjamin Van Zeveren	Male	DG EMPL
9	Hind Benammar	Female	ATUC
10	Zied Dabbebi	Male	BussinessMed
11	Hichem Hachica	Male	BussinessMed
12	Jihen Boutiba	Female	BusinessMed
Lebanon			
13	Rita Bejjani	Female	MoL (of Lebanon)
14	Alissar Chaiya	Female	CGTL
15	Abed el Latif Teryaki	Male	CGTL
16	Ghassan Hejazi	Male	FENASOL
17	Farah Abdallah	Female	FENASOL
18	Hani Azar	Male	ALI
19	Ahmad Jaber	Male	ALI
OPT			
20	Abeer Al Moghraby	Female	MoL (of the OPT)
21	Nazeeh Mardawy	Male	FPCCIA
22	Abdel Hamid Shebani	Male	PGFTU
23	Saher Sarsour	Male	PGFTU
24	Waseem Kalboneh	Male	PGFTU
25	Khaled Barakat	Male	PGFTU
Egypt			
26	Sayed Turkey	Male	FEI
27	Abd Al-Menem El-Gamal	Male	ETUF
28	Eid Morsal	Male	ETUF
29	Osama Abu Al-Hadid	Male	EDL

30	Abdel Fattah Abdel Aziz	Male	Small Farmers' Trade Union
Algeria			
31	Louati Tayeb	Male	UGTA
32	Meguateli Mahfoud	Male	CGEA
33	Attaylia Malek	Male	MTESS
34	Nacib Hamama	Female	MFEP
35	Ould Youcef Hamid	Male	MADR
36	Safi Karim	Male	MC
37	Zakia Kasbadji	Female	MTA

Table 8 ILO staff interviews

#	Name	Gender	Organisation
38	Samia Archella (2x)	Female	ILO SOLIFEM, Algeria
39	Rosa Benyounes	Female	ILO Country Office, Algeria
40	Mohamed Ouchene	Male	ILO SOLIFEM, Algeria
41	Montaser Hamdan	Male	ILO SOLIFEM, OPT
42	Iman Hakim	Female	ILO SOLIFEM, Egypt
43	Jaidaa Sakr	Female	ILO SOLIFEM, Egypt
44	Melissa Bader	Female	ILO SOLIFEM, Lebanon
45	Mustapha Said	Male	ILO Beirut DWT
46	Wafaa Abdel Kader	Female	ILO Cairo DWT
47	Vicky Leung	Female	ILO HQ EMP/INVEST Unit
48	Christine Hoffman	Female	ILO Regional Office Africa SKILLS Unit
49	Caroline O'Reilly	Female	ILO HQ SKILLS Unit (Retired)
50	Farid Hegazy	Male	ILO ACT/EMP Unit
51	Jose Manuel Medina Checa	Male	ILO ACT/EMP Unit

Annex 5. Evaluation questions matrix, including data collection instruments

5.1 Evaluation question matrix

Evaluation Criteria and Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods	Key informants
Relevance				
Main question 1: <i>To what extent are the results from the project's mid-term evaluation (MTE) still of relevance to the SOLIFEM project?</i>				
How do the current project conditions compare to those at the time of the MTE? Are there any significant changes in context, stakeholder needs, or project scope that impact the relevance of the MTE results?	Changes observed in the project context, stakeholder needs and/or project scope since the MTE. Extent to which respondents report changes in the project conditions as compared to the MTE's time.	- Project documentation.	-Desk research. -Interviews. -FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.
What insights from the MTE remain most applicable to current project activities? If nothing, what challenges and lessons from the MTE could be adapted to better suit the project's current state?	Extent to which respondents perceive that the MTE findings and recommendations remain of relevance now to the project context and activities. Extent to which the current evaluation finds the same conclusions and recommendations based on primary research.	- Project documentation.	-Desk research. -Interviews. -FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.
Main Question 2: <i>Has there been any updates to the project approach since the MTE, and if yes with what results?</i>				
How were the MTE's recommendations incorporated into the project approach?	Extent to which respondents report that the MTE lessons and recommendations were incorporated into the project at national/regional level. Challenges identified in implementing the MTE recommendations, as reported in the desk review, interviews and FGDs	-Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents.
How have these updates to the project approach affected the project's overall progress toward its objectives?	Extent to which the national & regional adjustments made to the project approach remains consistent with the project objectives related to the social issues of informality and informality, as reported in desk review, interviews and FGDs.	-Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.
What feedback have stakeholders provided on the updated project approach?	Feedback reported by respondents in response to the MTE's findings and subsequent project adjustments made.	-Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.
Coherence				
Main Question 1: <i>At the regional level, to what extent was the project coherent with other ILO and EU funded projects/programmes implemented in the same context, and with the needs of the project beneficiaries?</i>				
At regional level, how does the SOLIFEM project align with the priorities and objectives of other ILO & EU funded projects/programmes in the	Examples of similar ILO and/or EU funded projects and/or programmes working in the same context and targeting a similar group of beneficiaries. Extent to which respondents state that SOLIFEM's goals aligned or overlapped with similar projects working in the same context	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents

target countries, especially the SOLiD II project?	and targeting a similar group of beneficiaries, especially the SOLiD II project.			
At the regional level, what collaborative efforts or synergies were established with other ILO and EU-funded projects/programmes and how have these enhanced the SOLIFEM project's coherence?	Examples of partnerships, resource-sharing, joint activities, coordination meetings, joint monitoring etc. implemented to maximise alignment, coordination and avoid duplication between SOLIFEM and other projects/programmes in the region. Extent to which respondents report collaboration and synergies between SOLIFEM and other ILO & EU-funded projects in the region.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents
How, and to what extent, did the project contribute to ILO's implementation Report on the Programme & Budget (P&B) and Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs)?	Extent to which the project output targets and indicators contribute to progress on ILO's P&Bs and CPOs. Contextual factors identified in the desk review and interviews as enabling/hindering SOLIFEM's contribution to progress on the ILO's P&Bs and CPOs.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents
How, and to what extent did the project outputs contribute to the EU priorities under the Agenda for the Mediterranean, GAP III and the UfM policy agenda under the Ministerial declaration on Employment of 2022?	Extent to which the project output targets and indicators contribute to progress on the EU's priorities as identified in both its Agenda for the Mediterranean, GAP III and the UfM policy agenda. Contextual factors identified in the desk review, interviews as enabling/hindering SOLIFEM's contribution to the EU's priorities as identified in both its Agenda for the Mediterranean, GAP III and the UfM policy agenda.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents
Main Question 2: To what extent was the project coherent with the national policy frameworks of Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and the OPT on employment, gender and formalisation?				
How did the SOLIFEM project's objectives align with the target countries' national policies on employment, gender and formalisation?	Examples of target countries' national policies & initiatives on employment, gender & formalisation. Extent to which respondents state that SOLIFEM aligned or overlapped with the target countries' national policies on employment, gender & formalisation.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	ILO staff, constituents.
What country-specific adjustments were made to ensure SOLIFEM's alignment with the unique policy contexts of each country on employment, gender, and formalisation?	Examples of country-specific adjustments made to align the SOLIFEM project with national policies & priorities on employment, gender & formalisation. Extent to which respondents state that the project was adjusted to fit national policy agendas on employment, gender and formalisation.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
Effectiveness				
Main Question 1: To what extent has the project achieved their outputs and outcomes or are likely to achieve them? Were there any unexpected outcomes of the projects?				
To what extent have the established national policies and social dialogue mechanisms facilitated the formalisation of informal workers and economic units, and were these mechanisms	Extent to which output targets and other indicators towards achieving outcomes have been met. Extent to which stakeholders state the project's outcomes have been achieved during the implementation period.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.

developed through tripartite dialogue?				
To what extent have strengthened skills systems enabled young people and women in the informal economy to access formal employment?	Extent to which output targets and other indicators towards achieving outcomes have been met. Extent to which stakeholders state the project's outcomes have been achieved during the implementation period.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
To what extent has SOLIFEM achieved unexpected outcomes, if any?	Examples of unexpected outcomes. Extent to which unexpected outcomes supported or undermined the implementation of project's objectives.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
To what extent did the project's regional format, as compared to a country-based format, contribute to the achievement of the project objectives?	Examples of value-adds and/or achievements resulting from the project's regional format. Extent to which stakeholders report that the project's regional format contributed to the achievement of project objectives.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
Main Question 2: <i>What were the major factors (enabling or hindering) that influenced the achievement or non-the achievement of the project's outcomes?</i>				
To what extent were enablers present during the implementation of the SOLIFEM project?	Examples of factors enabling the implementation of SOLIFEM. Extent to which enabling factors were more pertinent than others. Extent to which efforts were made to scale enabling factors to support project implementation.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
To what extent were barriers present during the implementation of the SOLIFEM project?	Examples of factors impeding the implementation of SOLIFEM. Extent to which impeding factors were more pertinent than others. Extent to which mitigating measures, if any, were implemented to reduce the influence of impeding factors.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
Main Question 3: <i>How did the project's outputs and outcomes contribute to ILO's mainstreamed strategies including gender equality, social dialogue, and labour standards?</i>				
To what extent have gender equality and Persons with Disabilities principles been integrated into the design and implementation of project activities?	Evaluation of the project communication materials, activities and messages to assess the extent to which they incorporate gender-sensitive language and imagery, promoting inclusivity and non-discrimination. Perception of respondents on the extent to which the project integrated gender equality & Persons with Disabilities principles.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
What specific environmentally sustainable solutions, if any, have the project proposed or implemented to address environmental issues during and beyond the project duration?	Nr. of environmentally sustainable solutions included (i.e. training activities) mentioned in project documentation and interviews. % of the project budget allocated to implementing environmentally sustainable solutions. Examples/lack of environmental sustainability assessments of activities during the implementation. Examples/lack of documentation of monitoring mechanisms established to track the performance and effectiveness of environmental solutions post-project.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
To what extent does the project design include social dialogue and tripartism – both as a means to achieve	Examples of incorporating social dialogue and tripartism in the project design (include stakeholder workshops with constituents and steering committees involving constituents).	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.

objectives and as an objective in itself?	Nr. of tripartite communication activities planned for the implementation. Constituents' perception that social dialogue and tripartism were considered during the design in interviews.			
To what extent does the project design include the promotion of International Labour Standards (ILS)?	Examples/lack of the promotion of ILS in the project design and project documents (i.e., policy recommendations or awareness-raising activities for improving labour standards). Mentions of the promotion of ILS by stakeholders in interviews.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
Main Question 4: <i>To what extent did the project ensure the implementation of the recommendations, lessons learned, & good practices from the MTE?</i>				
How were the findings from the MTE integrated into project activities, in particular as regards Outcome 2 on skills systems?	Examples of findings from the MTE replicated in the project implementation across the target countries. Extent to which respondents state that the MTE findings were integrated into the project activities across the target countries.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
Which factors hindered or enabled the implementation of the MTE findings?	Examples of factors enabling or impeding the implementation of the MTE findings in the project. Extent to which enabling or impeding factors were more pertinent than others. Extent to which efforts were made to scale enabling factors to support project implementation. Extent to which mitigating measures, if any, were implemented to reduce the influence of impeding factors.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.
Efficiency				
Main question 1: <i>Was the project implemented in the most efficient way in terms of financial and human resources, especially in line with the MTE findings?</i>				
To what extent did the project benefit from planning which maximised the potential to use financial and human resources in a cost-efficient manner?	Extent to which planning identified the needed amount financial and human resources. Extent to which planning correctly identified potential enablers and barriers to cost efficiency during implementation. Extent to which potential synergies were identified to ensure cost-efficiency. Extent to which planning managed to ensure efficient project management mechanisms to ensure cost-efficiency.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff.
To what extent did the project manage to make cost-savings during the implementation period?	Examples of financial savings during the project' implementation period. Extent to which management and communication mechanisms contributed identifying and utilising savings opportunities.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents.
To what extent did monitoring mechanisms contribute to cost-efficiency and savings during the project' implementation?	Extent to which monitoring mechanisms were sufficient to identify opportunities for cost efficiency and savings opportunities. Extent to which monitoring findings were discussed to ensure cost-efficiency and identify savings opportunities. Extent to which monitoring findings supported the implementation of the projects.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff.
How were the MTE's recommendations integrated into the project's resource planning and allocation?	Examples of measures taken based on the MTE to minimise resource planning and usage.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents.

Main Question 2: *To what extent did the project consider stakeholder participatory processes? How efficient and inclusive were these processes, in particular vis-à-vis dialogue with the SOLiD II project?*

To what extent did the processes of engaging stakeholders, particularly from the SOLiD II project, help identify cost-efficient opportunities for providing feedback and guidance during SOLIFEM's implementation?	Examples of ways in which stakeholders could provide feedback during the project. Extent to which stakeholders believe that these methods of providing feedback were cost-efficient.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents.
To what extent was stakeholder input, in particular from the SOLiD II project, used to identify 1) cost-saving opportunities and 2) ensure cost-efficiency during the implementation of SOLIFEM?	Examples of stakeholder feedback being used for cost-savings and supporting cost-efficiency. Extent to which this feedback contributed to cost-savings and supporting cost-efficiency. Extent to which stakeholders state that their feedback was used for cost-savings and supporting cost-efficiency.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.

Main Question 3: *To what extent did the project consider and address potential gender disparities or biases to ensure efficient utilisation of resources and equitable outcomes?*

To what extent did the budget and activity lines specify outputs and inputs specific for women?	Examples of budget lines reflecting inclusion of women Examples of allocation of resources to enhance participation of women	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff.
How did the project design and implementation adapt its resource planning and allocation to meet both the specific needs of men and women across the local contexts?	Examples of project activities tailored to overcome gender-specific barriers. Extent to which respondents state that the project activities benefitted equally men and women. Examples of efforts taken to ensure that both men and women benefitted equally from the project activities.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff.

Main Question 4: *How effective was communication among the ILO project teams, the regional offices and the responsible technical department at ILO HQ? Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support/response from the ILO backstopping units?*

To what extent did communication between the ILO project teams, regional offices and ILO HQ result in a cost-efficient implementation of SOLIFEM?	Example of communication channels and dialogue created and/or used by the ILO project teams, regional offices & ILO HQ. Extent to which stakeholders state that these communication channels were used to maximise project efficiency.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff.
How timely and useful was the technical and administrative support received from the ILO backstopping units?	Extent to which the project received administrative and technical support within the required timeframes and addressed the SOLIFEM project's most pressing needs. Extent to which the administrative and support received was tailored to the project needs and the local context.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents.
To what extent did the project's regional format, as compared to a country-based format, contribute to improved resource allocation and usage?	Examples of optimised resource allocation and/or planning resulting from the project's regional format. Extent to which stakeholders report that the project's regional format contributed to improved resource planning and usage.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents, beneficiaries.

Impact

Main Question 1: *Considering the progress made in the project, what is the likelihood of contributing to the formalisation of the informal economy in the four target countries?*

To what extent did SOLIFEM enable national policy mechanisms to facilitate the transition to formal employment for workers & economic units, through social dialogue?	To what extent did SOLIFEM enable national policy mechanisms to facilitate the transition to formal employment for workers & economic units, through social dialogue?	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.
To what extent did SOLIFEM strengthen skills development systems that enable women & youth to access formal employment?	To what extent did SOLIFEM strengthen skills development systems that enable women & youth to access formal employment?	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.

Main Question 2: *How has the project contributed to reinforce social dialogue in the region?*

What changes & improvements in communication and collaboration among social partners can be attributed to the project?	What changes & improvements in communication and collaboration among social partners can be attributed to the project?	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.
To what extent has the project enhanced the capacity of tripartite stakeholders to engage in social dialogue at national and regional levels?	To what extent has the project enhanced the capacity of tripartite stakeholders to engage in social dialogue at national and regional levels?	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.

Main Question 3: *What difference does the project make for female and young workers in the target countries?*

To what extent have female and young workers in the target/countries gained access to decent formal work?	To what extent have female and young workers in the target/countries gained access to decent formal work?	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.
How has the project contributed to promoting SDGs 5, 8, 10 & 16 in the target countries?	How has the project contributed to promoting SDGs 5, 8, 10 & 16 in the target countries?	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.

Sustainability

Main question 1: *Did the project establish an exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of its efforts? What measures were considered to ensure that the project components are sustainable beyond the project lifecycle at country and regional levels?*

To what extent have project teams established best practices and institutionalised measures that increase the 1) ownership and 2) capacity of the tripartite stakeholders to continue pursuing a transition to formal employment,	Examples of institutionalised measures, best practices and/or success factors taken by the project teams at national and regional levels to ensure tripartite stakeholders' ownership and capacity . Extent to which stakeholders have the financial & human resources to continue pursuing the project objectives without ILO's financial support. Extent to which stakeholders state that they have the willingness and capacity to take over pursuing the project's objectives.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	Donor, ILO staff, constituents.
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without further ILO support?				
Did the project consider gender in planning its sustainability measures, and if so, how?	Examples of gender sensitive measures taken to ensure ownership and capacity from female stakeholders in pursuing the project's objectives at national and regional level. Extent to which female stakeholders have the financial & human resources to continue pursuing project objectives without ILO's support.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	ILO staff, constituents.
Main Question 2: <i>To what extent can future projects built upon the continuity of SOLIFEM and its results? What are the major factors that will affect continuity?</i>				
To what extent do tripartite stakeholders show 1) ownership and 2) the capacity to continue the projects' objectives after the project ends?	Examples of sustainability factors driving ownership of the projects' activities at local and regional level. Extent to which financial & human resources are available to continue implementing the project' objectives after it ends.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews.	ILO staff, constituents.
To what extent do enablers and barriers of continuity exist for SOLIFEM at regional and national levels?	Examples of factors enabling or impeding the sustainability of SOLIFEM. Extent to which enabling or impeding factors are more pertinent than others. Extent to which efforts are made to scale enabling factors to support the project's continuation. Extent to which mitigating measures, if any, are being implemented to support the project's continuation.	- Project documentation.	- Desk research. - Interviews. - FGDs.	Beneficiaries, donor, ILO staff, constituents.

5.2 Regional-level interview questionnaire

This annex details the interview questionnaires which were used to guide the Evaluation Team and the national experts when interacting with those involved in the SOLIFEM project. Prior to each interview, guidelines were given to each expert with key pointers, the project components and objectives. Interviews in Arabic and on-site were led by the national experts, while interviews that can be conducted online in French or English were led by the core Evaluation Team.

The initial desk research demonstrated that there are quite some differences in country contexts, country needs, and implemented activities. Therefore, the development of interview questionnaires took places in the following stages:

1. Development of questionnaire templates to ensure that all topics of the evaluation matrix are covered (presented in this report)
2. Identification of country-level areas of interest and specific activities conducted
3. Development of questionnaires per stakeholder reflecting on the country context and the activities that each stakeholder was involved in.
4. Translation of the questionnaires and review by the national expert.

The following two sections present the questionnaire templates of Step 1 above, that will be tailored.

This questionnaire will be used for ILO staff at HQ level, ILO specialists, SOLiD staff and the donor. These interviews are conducted online, in English (or French) by the core Evaluation Team.

Regional level Interview questionnaire

INTRODUCTION
Could you briefly introduce yourself and since when you were involved with SOLIFEM? What was your role in the project?

Relevance		Respondents
1	Which major changes have happened in SOLIFEM's project environment since the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was conducted in February 2024? Have the needs faced by workers and employers changed since the MTE in [country/region]? How have these needs changed? Prompt for interviewer: Briefly explain the recommendations & good practices identified in the MTE	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
2	Do these changes in [country/region] affect how useful the MTE's recommendations and good practices are for [country/region]?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
3	Which recommendations or good practices from the MTE are still useful for SOLIFEM's project activities in [country/region]? If some of these insights are no longer applicable, what challenges or lessons from the MTE should be adapted to meet the current needs of the project?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
4	How were the MTE's recommendations implemented in [country/region]? And with what results? Prompt for the interviewer: ask the subject to elaborate on lessons learned or good practices connected to changes due to the MTE's recommendations	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor

Coherence		Respondents
1	How did you coordinate your work with the activities of other ILO and EU funded projects in [country/region], including the SOLiD II project?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor, SOLiD staff
2	Did you and your colleagues take any measures to coordinate and avoid overlaps between the different ILO country teams, regional offices (ROAS and ROAF) and ILO HQ involved in SOLIFEM? Can you describe how this took place?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor, SOLiD staff
3	Have you noticed any overlaps or duplications of the work of SOLIFEM, including with the SOLiD II project? Have you noticed any synergies?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor SOLiD staff
4	Do you think that this project contributes to ILO's Programme & Budget (B&B) and Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs)?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, SOLiD staff
5	Do you think that this project contributes to the EU's priorities under the Agenda for the Mediterranean, GAP III and the UfM policy agenda under the Ministerial declaration on Employment of 2022?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
6	Do you think that this project contributes to the target countries national policies on employment, gender & formalisation? Prompt for the interviewer: if the subject stresses differences between the countries, ask them to elaborate.	HQ & specialist ILO staff

Effectiveness		Respondents
1	Were all activities and outputs foreseen in SOLIFEM implemented in [country/region]? If not, what hindered the implementation? What hindered the achievement of SOLIFEM's targets (if any were not reached)?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
2	Do you think that through the support of SOLIFEM, national policies and tripartite dialogue are in place to facilitate workers' transition to the formal economy? In particular for women and youth. Why/why not? Prompt for interviewer: if some constituents were generally not involved in the dialogue follow up on why, if there are differences between the countries, ask them to elaborate.	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor

3	Do you think that through the support of SOLIFEM, the target countries' skills system helped women and young people better access formal work? Why/why not?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
4	Which were the main supporting factors to achieve SOLIFEM's objectives? Which were the main hindering factors? Why?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
5	To what extent were gender equality concerns considered during the project design?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
6	How were representative bodies of employers and trade unions encouraged to participate in activities?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
7	How, if at all, was social dialogue utilised throughout the project? Were there any difficulties in including social dialogue and tripartism during the design phase and implementation?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
8	To what extent does the project design include the promotion of International Labour Standards?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
9	Did the project design or implementation identify any environmental issues, and if so, were sustainable solutions provided?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
10	How did the project adjust the project activities following the MTE in [country/region]? In particular activities under Outcome 2.	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
11	Which were the main supporting factors to adjust the project in line with the MTE? Which were the main hindering factors?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor

Efficiency		Respondents
1	Did that overall, the project had a good planning that also identified HR and financial resource needs, barriers to implementation, and considered gender differences for the beneficiary needs? If yes, how well could the implementation follow the planning?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
2	Do you think that enough time resources were available to achieve the objectives of the project? Were there any major delays in the implementation, and if so, what were the factors that contributed to them? Were they overcome, if yes, how?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
3	Do you think that enough financial and human resources were available to achieve the objectives? Why? Why not? Was there any difference between the countries?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
4	Do you think that resources (time, human and financial) were efficiently used in the implementation overall? Why? Why not?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
5	Were you able to make any savings on any of the activities? Were there any activities that were more costly than expected? Describe the circumstances for these activities!	HQ, regional & national level ILO staff, donor
6	How were the MTE's recommendations integrated into the project's resource planning and allocation?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
7	How were project stakeholders able to provide input on the project's resource planning and allocation?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
8	Were resources allocated to increase women's participation in the project activities? If so, were they used?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
9	Do you think that SOLIFEM's resources for monitoring and evaluation were sufficient? Did relevant staff, including national coordinators, possess the required technical capacities to deliver M&E data/input?	HQ, regional & national level ILO staff, donor
10	Has this monitoring, reporting and management information been used for decision-making at the national/regional/HQ coordination level? If not, why? <i>Prompt for examples.</i>	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor

11	To what extent were the management arrangements capable of supporting coordination between the ILO national, regional and HQ offices and stakeholders, addressing implementation issues, and facilitating the flow of lessons learned?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
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Impact		Respondents
1	Have you seen or do you believe that there will be improvements in the project countries' ability to facilitate workers' access to formal employment through tripartite dialogue due to the project? If so, why or why not? <i>Follow up if differences were mentioned in the countries.</i>	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
2	Have you seen or do you believe that there will be improvements in workers' ability to access formal employment through skills development and recognition due to the project the project countries? In particular female and young workers. <i>Follow up if differences were mentioned in the countries.</i>	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
3	Do you think that communication and collaboration has improved between tripartite stakeholders in the project countries due to the project? Can they better engage in dialogue on employment matters? <i>Follow up if differences were mentioned in the countries.</i>	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
4	To what extent did the project help give more female and young workers access to formal employment in the countries? Why/why not? <i>Follow up if differences were mentioned in the countries.</i>	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
5	Have you seen any unexpected effect of the project? If yes, what factors could have contributed to these? Was it something that was considered/known during design, and was the team prepared to mitigate?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
6	What actions were taken to address these unexpected effects of the project? Did these actions reduce or eliminate these effects?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
7	Do you think that the project contributed towards gender equality, decent work, inclusively and reduced inequality?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor

Sustainability		Respondents
1	To what extent do you think the tripartite constituents (workers, employers and government) can continue pursuing social dialogue in promoting formalisation? Do they have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to do so? Does this differ by country/region? <i>Follow up if differences were mentioned in the countries.</i>	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
2	Which measures were taken to ensure that women in particular would have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to continue to sustain the achievement of the project?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
3	Does the project have an exit strategy? Were stakeholders involved in its design? Do you think the key stakeholders sufficiently understand the project's exit strategy and if it envisions sufficient support to address any existing gaps? <i>Follow up if differences were mentioned in the countries.</i>	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor
4	Which factors do you think will support or undermine the sustainability of the project? Are any of the activities more vulnerable to challenges regarding sustainability?	HQ & specialist ILO staff, donor

5.3 National-level interview questionnaire

This questionnaire will be used for national-level ILO staff, as well as the tripartite constituents (workers, employers, government representatives) who benefited from the project activities. This national-level questionnaire will be tailored to the unique context of each country, taking into account the specific project activities carried out there and the particular role of each stakeholder.

Guidelines for national experts: The following questions will be posed to ILO staff at national levels, as well as constituents involved in the project activities. Before commencing an interview, please ensure you introduce yourself and the organisation (PPMI) for which you are gathering this data. It is crucial to clarify that you are not employed by or otherwise affiliated with the ILO and ensure that ILO staff are not present during the interview. Your presence is solely to conduct an anonymous interview, and the interviewee's name will not be used in any part of the report.

Before you begin recording the interview, please confirm that the interviewee gives explicit permission to be recorded and ensure that you have a laptop or notebook to take notes in case the respondent refuses to be recorded.

Additionally, remind them that they may request at any time to stop the recording if they feel uncomfortable. Emphasise that the details shared in the interview will be accessible only to the Evaluation Team responsible for this evaluation, and no interview notes will be circulated outside of this team, including to the ILO.

Table 9 National level interview questionnaire

INTRODUCTION		
Could you briefly introduce yourself and since when you were involved with SOLIFEM? What was your role in the project?		
Relevance		Respondents
1	Which major changes have happened in SOLIFEM's project environment since the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was conducted in February 2024? Have the needs faced by workers and employers changed since the MTE in [country/region]? How have these needs changed? <i>Prompt for interviewer: Briefly explain the recommendations & good practices identified in the MTE which were relevant for the country</i>	All
2	Do these changes in [country/region] affect how useful the MTE's recommendations and good practices are for [country/region]? Do you think that the – above listed – recommendations and good practices of the MTE were any in way affected by such changes? Why, why not?	ILO national staff Constituents
3	Which recommendations or good practices from the MTE are still useful for SOLIFEM's project activities in [country/region]? If some of these insights are no longer applicable, what challenges or lessons from the MTE should be adapted to meet the current needs of the project?	ILO national staff
4	How were the MTE's recommendations implemented in [country/region]? And with what results? If there were changes implemented due to the MTE recommendations in the project activities/approach, were you satisfied with them? <i>Prompt for the interviewer: ask the subject to elaborate on lessons learned or good practices connected to changes due to the MTE's recommendations</i>	ILO national staff Constituents
Coherence		Respondents
1	How did you coordinate your work with the activities of other ILO and EU funded projects in [country/region], including the ILO's SOLiD II project?	ILO national staff

2	Did you and your colleagues take any measures to coordinate and avoid overlaps between the different ILO country teams, regional offices (ROAS and ROAF) and ILO HQ involved in SOLIFEM? Can you describe how this took place?	ILO national staff
3	Are any other, similar projects, being implemented in your country? Did you interact with those efforts to avoid duplication? Particularly with the SOLiD project? Have you noticed any duplication of the SOLIFEM project activities with other development programme's work? Were there synergies?	ILO national staff Constituents
4	Do you think that this project contributes to ILO's Programme & Budget (B&B) and Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs)?	ILO national staff
5	Do you think that this project contributes to the target countries national policies on employment, gender & formalisation? How much, do you think, the project contributed to national policies on employment, gender and formalisation? Do you think there was alignment between national strategies and the ILO project?	ILO national staff Government representatives

Effectiveness		Respondents
1	Were all activities and outputs foreseen in SOLIFEM implemented in [country/region]? If not, what hindered the implementation? What hindered the achievement of SOLIFEM's targets (if any were not reached)? <i>The interviewer will receive the list of outputs and targets to be able to enquire about specific outputs and targets.</i>	ILO national staff
2	Do you think that through the support of SOLIFEM, national policies and tripartite dialogue are in place to facilitate workers' transition to the formal economy? In particular for women and youth. Why/why not? <i>Prompt for interviewer: if some constituents were not involved in the dialogue follow up on why</i>	All
3	Do you think that through the support of SOLIFEM, the target [country/region]'s skills system helps women and young people get better access formal work? Why/why not?	All
4	Which were the main supporting factors to achieve SOLIFEM's objectives? Which were the main hindering factors? Why?	ILO national staff
5	To what extent were gender equality concerns considered during the project design? Do you think the needs of female participants were given due consideration in the project activities?	ILO national staff Constituents
6	How were representative bodies of employers and trade unions encouraged to participate in activities? Were there any barriers to involve them, and how did you address those? Were there enough incentives for you to actively participate in the project activities ? If yes (or not), what were these, or what would you have liked them to be?	ILO national staff Constituents
7	How, if at all, was social dialogue utilised throughout the project? Were there any difficulties in including social dialogue and tripartism during the design phase and implementation? How were you encouraged to apply social dialogue practices? Were these incentives/encouragements suitable for you and your organisation (if not, why)?	ILO national staff Constituents
8	To what extent does the project design include the promotion of International Labour Standards?	ILO national staff

9	Did the project design or implementation identify any environmental issues, and if so, were sustainable solutions provided? Similarly, did the project take measures to engage persons with disabilities? How?	ILO national staff
10	How did the project adjust the project activities following the MTE in [country/region]? In particular activities under Outcome 2.	ILO national staff
11	Which were the main supporting factors to adjust the project in line with the MTE? Which were the main hindering factors?	ILO national staff

Efficiency		Respondents
1	Did the project have a good planning in [country/region] that also identified HR and financial resource needs, barriers to implementation, and considered gender differences for the beneficiary needs? If yes, how well could the implementation follow the planning?	ILO national staff
2	Do you think that enough time resources were available to achieve the objectives of the project in [country/region]? Were there any major delays in the implementation, and if so, what were the factors that contributed to them? Were they overcome, if yes, how?	ILO national staff
3	Do you think that enough financial and human resources were available to achieve the objectives in [country/region]? Why? Why not? Do you think that the technical expertise of the national staff was suitable to promote the objectives in [country/region]?	ILO national staff Constituents
4	Do you think that resources (time, human and financial) were efficiently used in the implementation in [country/region]? Why? Why not? What could have been done more efficiently?	ILO national staff
5	Were you able to make any savings on any of the activities implemented in [country/region]? Were there any activities that were more costly than expected? Please describe the circumstances for these activities. Were you able to provide ILO with suggestions on cost-saving activities, and if so, was your advice implemented? Please describe the circumstances.	ILO national staff Constituents
6	How were the MTE's recommendations integrated into the project's resource planning and allocation?	ILO national staff
7	How were project stakeholders able to provide input on the project's resource planning and allocation? Were you able to provide input on the project's resource planning and allocation? If so, was your input considered?	ILO national staff Constituents
8	Were resources allocated to increase women's participation in the project activities? If so, how were they used? Did you notice any extra efforts taken by the ILO to increase resources for engaging women (equally to men) in the project activities?	ILO national staff Constituents
9	Do you think that SOLIFEM's resources for monitoring and evaluation were sufficient in [country/region]? Did you lack anything to provide M&E data or updates?	ILO national staff
10	Has this monitoring, reporting and management information been used for decision-making at the national/regional/HQ coordination level? If not, why? Prompt for examples.	ILO national staff
11	To what extent were the management arrangements capable of supporting coordination between the ILO national, regional and HQ offices and stakeholders, addressing implementation issues, and facilitating the flow of lessons learned?	ILO national staff

12	Did you receive the necessary technical and administrative support from ILO HQ and specialists on how to coordinate and implement the project activities in [country/region]? Prompt for whether the support was timely and useful.	ILO national staff
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Impact		Respondents
1	Have you seen or do you believe that there will be improvements in [country/region]'s ability to facilitate workers' access to formal employment through tripartite dialogue due to the project? If so, why or why not?	All
2	Have you seen or do you believe that there will be improvements in [country/region]'s workers' ability to access formal employment through skills development and recognition due to the project? In particular female and young workers.	All
3	Do you think that communication and collaboration has improved between tripartite stakeholders in [country/region] due to the project? Can they better engage in dialogue on employment matters? Do you think you have more capacity to communicate and collaborate with other tripartite stakeholders in [country/region] due to the project, especially on employment matters? Why, why not?	ILO national staff Constituents
4	To what extent did the project help give more female and young workers access to formal employment in [country/region]? Why/why not?	All
5	Have you seen any unexpected effect of the project? If yes, what factors could have contributed to these? Was it something that the ILO considered during the design, and was prepared to mitigate? Have you seen any unexpected effect of the project? If yes, what factors could have contributed to these?	ILO national staff Constituents
6	What actions were taken to address these unexpected effects of the project? Did these actions reduce or eliminate these effects?	ILO national staff
7	Do you think that the project more generally contributed towards gender equality, decent work, inclusively and reduced inequality? Why, or why not?	All

Sustainability		Respondents
1	To what extent do you think the tripartite constituents (workers, employers and government) can continue pursuing social dialogue in promoting formalisation? Do they have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to do so? Does this differ by country/region? Do you think you can continue pursuing social dialogue to promote formalisation in [country/region]? Do you the capacity and resources to do so?	ILO national staff Constituents
2	Which measures were taken to ensure that women in particular would have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to continue to sustain the achievement of the project? Do you think that there were measures taken to ensure that women in particular would have sufficient ownership, capacity and resources to continue to sustain the achievement of the project?	ILO national staff Constituents
3	Does the project have an exit strategy? Were stakeholders involved in its design? Do you think the key stakeholders sufficiently understand the project's exit strategy and if it envisions sufficient support to address any existing gaps?	ILO national staff
4	Which factors do you think will support or undermine the sustainability of the project? Are any of the activities more vulnerable to challenges regarding sustainability?	All

5.4 FGD questionnaires by country

Table 10 FGD questionnaire with workers' representative bodies in Algeria

Provide an overview of the FGD's composition in terms of gender, the organisations they represent and their sectors.	
Main question asked by the interviewer	Topics to discuss during the FGD
<i>1. In this first part of this group discussion, we would like to hear about how you got involved in these project activities with the ILO in Algeria.</i>	
Which trainings led by UGTA did you participate in?	Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade union rights (May 2024) • Social dialogue and conflict management and resolution (July 2024) • Social security (Sep 2024) • Rôle d'un syndicaliste de l'UGTA administrateur des caisses d'assurances (Oct. 2024)
What did you know about formalisation before participating in these activities? How did informal work affect you and the workers in your sector? And for female UGTA members?	Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are the main differences between formal and informal work? • Why, do you think, do people work informally in your sector? • Did you try to become a formal employee before joining UGTA? • What were the challenges workers in your sector faced before, if any, when you wanted to have a contract? Were these challenges specific to your sector? Do you know of challenges that women face specifically ?
What led you and your organisation to be interested in employment formalisation and specifically these activities?	Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you find about the activities? • Do you think many people in your sector are interested in a formal contract? • Have you heard about ILO in Algeria before?
<i>2. We would now like to hear about your experience with these trainings on workers' and trade union's rights in Algeria.</i>	
Did the workshops align with your needs and goals as a trade union representative?	Guide the conversation to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you agree with the principles of the workshops? • Did the workshop change your thoughts on formalisation? In which ways? • Do you think that the workshops accurately described or discussed challenges informal workers face in your sector in Algeria? • Do you think that it accurately described the challenges faced by informal working women? • Was something missing from the approach of the workshops? Prompts for topics discussed during the workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algeria's labour and trade union's rights, freedom of association and the legal framework governing these. • Conflict management in labour relations, collective labour rights negotiations & tools. • The role of social dialogue in addressing inequality, poverty & informal employment • Algeria's social security system and its legal and administrative framework.
How were the workshops implemented?	Guide the conversation to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the workshops' length and detail level adequate? Could you follow it fully? Was it organized at a good time of the day? • Were the speakers engaging?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was there an option to ask and discuss the topics together? Did the workshops address and meet the needs of women and caregivers in terms of timing and facilities chosen? Do you have any specific feedback to the implementation of the workshop?
<i>3. Now, we would like to know more about how these workshops affected your organisation in the long term</i>	
In general, do you think that the trainings gave you and your organisation the knowledge and capacity to reduce barriers for formal employment in Algeria? Example?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you try to improve UGTA members' access to social security as a result of the trainings? Was this successful? Why, or why not? Do you feel more knowledgeable about trade union and freedom of association rights in Algeria? Did you receive sufficient support and information to get you started on engaging in collective labour rights negotiations and conflict management in your workplace and within UGTA? Have you experienced unforeseen challenges? Have you been promoting formal employment, trade union rights and access to social security rights to your colleagues and members of UGTA? If yes, did they try to seek these rights as well?
What kind of support, if any, would you need to keep raising awareness on access to formal employment, social security in Algeria?	<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support Capacity-building
Have you taken part in other projects/activities/initiatives related to formalisation and social dialogue in Algeria?	Guide the conversation to understand: If yes, what? How were they different from this workshop?
Do you have any other comments in relation to the trainings?	

Table 11 FGD questionnaire with FYB training beneficiaries in Egypt & Lebanon

Provide an overview of the FGD's composition in terms of gender, the organisations they represent and their sectors:	
Main question asked by the interviewer	Topics to discuss during the FGD
<i>In this first part of this group discussion, we would like to hear about how you got involved in this project activities with the ILO in Egypt.</i>	
What type of support did you receive from ILO to guide you in formalising the business you work for or own? How frequently and/or for how long were you supported (i.e., one time training or several activities)?	
How did you learn about this support?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did they find out about the activity? Why did they take part? Do they know what the activities were for?
What led you to seek out/accept this type of support? How much experience did you formally have with business formalisation?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do they know about the rights and benefits of formalising a business? Have they tried to formalize their business before and/or had problems doing so? Have they had any positive/negative opinion about formalisation before the support (i.e., formalisation is costly or too complex)? Do they know of any specific challenges for formalisation as a business? Do they know of specific challenges that female business owners face?

<i>2. We would like to hear about your experience with FYB manuals and/or connected trainings.</i>	
How well did the training and/or align with your needs and goals?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the FYB training/manual mentioning issues and challenges that are important for them as a business owner/female entrepreneur? Was the training/manual relevant to their business needs? Did it help to overcome/address challenges with formalisation? Which part(s) were the most relevant or interesting? Which part(s) were less relevant or interesting? Did they formalize their business after the training/having heard of the FYB manual?
How did you like the implementation of the training?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the training length and detail adequate? Was the trainer qualified? Were there follow-up activities? Did the training address and meet the needs of women and caregivers?
<i>3. We would like to know more about how the training/manual affected your business in the long term (if you had the training/received the manual more than a few months ago).</i>	
Was the training/manual beneficial for your long- or short-term economic success?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand and ask for examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are they still operating formally? Did they grow as a business since their formalisation? How did the training help their business succeed, if at all? Did they learn any valuable skills? Did formalising their business have any benefits or challenges? Do they want to keep their business formally operating? Are they facing any challenges in keeping your business formal? In particular for women.
Do you have any other comments ?	

Table 12 FGD questionnaire with trade union representatives in Cairo, Egypt

Provide an overview of the FGD's composition in terms of gender, the organisations they represent and their sectors:	
Main question asked by the interviewer	Topics to discuss during the FGD
<i>1. In this first part of this group discussion, we would like to hear about how you got involved in these project activities with ILO in Egypt.</i>	
Which trainings did you participate in?	<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Building Capacity & Experience Exchange for Trade Unions Extension of Social Protection to Informal Workers Social Dialogue for Formalisation Training for Trainers for Trade Unions
What did you know about formalisation before participating in these activities? How did informal work affect you and the informal workers in your sector? In particular women.	<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think are the main differences between formal and informal work? Why, do you think, do people work informally in your sector? Have workers in your sector try to become formal employees before? What were the challenges workers in your sector faced before, if any, when you wanted to have a contract? Were these challenges specific to your sector? Do you know of challenges that women face specifically ?
What led you to be interested in employment formalisation and specifically these activities?	<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you find out about the activities? Do you think many people in your sector are interested in a formal contract? Have you heard about ILO in Egypt before?

<i>2. We would now like to hear about your experience with these awareness raising workshops on workers' and trade union's rights in Egypt.</i>	
Did the workshops align with your needs and goals as a trade union representative for informal sector workers?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you agree with the principles of the workshops? • Did the workshops change your thoughts on formalisation? In which ways? • Do you think that the workshops accurately described or discussed challenges informal workers face in your sector? • Do you think that it accurately described the challenges faced by informal working women? • Was something missing from the approach of the workshops?
How were the workshops implemented?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the session length and detail level adequate? Could you follow it fully? Was it organised at a good time of the day? • Were the speakers engaging? • Was there an option to ask and discuss the topics together? • Did the workshop address and meet the needs of women and caregivers in terms of timing and facilities chosen? • Do you have any specific feedback to the implementation of the workshop?
<i>3. Now we would like to know more about how the workshops affected you and your working conditions on the long term.</i>	
In general, do you think that the workshops and trainings gave you and your organisation the knowledge and capacity to reduce barriers for formal employment in Egypt?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you receive sufficient support and information to get you started on raising awareness among workers in your sector on the benefits of formal employment? Have you experienced unforeseen challenges? • Have you seen changes in your numbers of trade union members following these workshops? • Did workers in your sector try to gain formal employment as a result of the trainings? Was this successful? Why, or why not? • If workers in your sector became formally employed, was that lasting? What do they experience as the most important benefits of formal employment in their lives? • If workers in your sector did not try to gain formal employment, what were the reasons for that? Would they require some support that was lacking to try?
Have you taken part in other projects/activities/initiatives related to formalisation and social dialogue in Egypt?	Guide the conversation to understand: If yes, what? How were they different from this workshop?
Do you have any other comments you would like to add?	

Table 13 Online group interview questionnaire with the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training of trainers' participants in the OPT

Provide an overview of the FGD's composition in terms of gender, the organisations they represent and their sectors:	
Main question asked by the interviewer	Topics to discuss during the FGD
<i>In this first part of this group discussion, we would like to hear about how you got involved in this training of trainer with the ILO in the OPT.</i>	
What makes self-employment more attractive for certain people than employment?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which groups of people might prefer self-employment over wage-employment?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What opportunities do you envisage that self-employment would give?
What kind of challenges do you think people are facing when it comes to establishing a business?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential challenges: start-up finance, knowledge about business, knowledge about regulations, support from family and peers, no business idea, etc. Are there any specific challenges people face to keep their business running from a female perspective?
What made you decide to take part in the SIYB Training of Trainers?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did they find out about the activities? Why did they take part? Do they know what the activities aimed to? Have you worked with ILO before?
<i>2. We would like to hear about your experience with the SIYB training of trainers you took part in</i>	
Do you think the training content and approach aligned with the main needs and challenges of people establishing a business in OPT?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the training/manual relevant to people's business needs? Which part(s) were the most relevant or interesting? Which part(s) were less relevant or interesting? Did the training include gender-specific considerations, e.g. related to timing and childcare? Were you able to influence the training content based on your ideas and experiences?
How was the SIYB training of trainers implemented?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you have prior knowledge on the topic of business development? Did you learn anything new? Were the session length and detail level adequate? Could you follow it fully? Was it organised at a good time of the day? Were the speakers engaging? Did the training address and meet the needs of women and caregivers in terms of timing and facilities chosen? Do you have any specific feedback to the implementation of the training?
Have you noticed any other organisations providing the same types of trainings?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand and ask for examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this work of ILO overlapping with other initiatives? Or is it unique?
<i>3. We would like to know more about how the training/manual affected you in the long term.</i>	
Do you feel sufficiently prepared to roll out the trainings by yourself or in your groups?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand and ask for examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you feel you are missing any knowledge or skills? If yes, which?
Do you feel you are missing any knowledge or skills? If yes, which?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand and ask for examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were there any elements missing in the training, that you think would have been relevant?
Is there anything you did not like about the training or something that ILO could improve?	
Do you have any other comments regarding business start-up and maintenance and the SIYB training, that you did not wish to voice in front of the other participants?	

Table 14 Online group interview questionnaire with participants from the awareness-raising workshops on unionisation in the OPT

Provide an overview of the FGD's composition in terms of gender, the organisations they represent and their sectors:	
Main question asked by the interviewer	Topics to discuss during the FGD

<i>In this first part of this group discussion, we would like to hear about how you got involved in this training with the ILO in the OPT.</i>	
Before this ILO workshop, were you aware of the differences between informal and formal employment? For you, what are the main differences?	If people are not aware at this stage, please explain the difference between informal vs. formal employment.
What do you think are the main reasons that people in the garment and textile, or in the kindergarten and nursery sectors work informally in the oPt?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think were the benefits of working informally? • Do you think this is gender-specific? Are more women working informally than men?
Do you think many people in your sector are interested in working on a formal contract?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you see as the main barriers for people such as yourself to be employed on a formal basis? • Are those barriers specific to your work, or do they apply to oPt more broadly?
What made you decide to participate in the ILO workshop? Did you hear about the ILO before? Did you see any promotions or invitations from ILO about this workshop?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they find out about the activities? • Why did they take part? • Do they know what the activities aimed to?
<i>2. We would like to hear about your experience with this workshop on unionisation</i>	
Did the workshops align with your needs and goals?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you agree with the principles of the workshops? • Did the workshops change your thoughts on the recognition of prior skills and learning? In which ways? • Do you think that the workshops accurately described or discussed challenges informal workers face in your sector? • Do you think that it accurately described the challenges faced by informal working women? • Was something missing from the approach of the workshops?
How were the workshops implemented?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you remember what parts of the training were most interesting or important for you? • Were the session length and detail level adequate? Could you follow it fully? Was it organised at a good time of the day? • Were the speakers engaging? • Was there an option to ask and discuss the topics together? • Did the workshop address and meet the needs of women and caregivers in terms of timing and facilities chosen? • Do you have any specific feedback to the implementation of the workshop?
<i>3. We would like to know more about how the workshop affected your perception of unionisation</i>	
How did the workshop affect your thoughts?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the workshop change your perceptions on unionisation? • Did you learn about the potential benefits of formal employment?

Have you taken any actions to change your employment status after the workshop?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why, why not? What did you do? • Do you think the benefits and ideas shared during the workshop reflected the specific challenges faced by women?
<i>If anyone attempted to gain formal employment but did not succeed: What factors hindered you from gaining formal employment?</i>	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What additional support do you need?
Did you promote the benefits of formal employees to any of your colleagues, friends, or family?	<p>Guide the conversation to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they react? • Did any of them decide to change their employment status?
Do you have any other feedback about the workshop of ILO that you participated in?	

Annex 6. Bibliography

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 - Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report.
 - Checklist 4.3: Data collection methods.
 - Checklist 4.4: Preparing the evaluation report summary
 - Checklist 4.8: Writing the inception report.
 - Checklist 4.9: Rating The Quality Of An Evaluation Report

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