



Quick Facts

► Final Independent Clustered Evaluation of ILO ROAF RBSA Interventions on Formalization

August 2025

► Description and purpose of the evaluation

This clustered evaluation covers four projects funded by the Supplementary Account of the Regular Budget (RBSA) and implemented in Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania and the Gambia. Designed to support the transition from informal to formal employment, these projects aim to improve working conditions, extend social protection, increase productivity, and contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The evaluation analyses the design, implementation and results of projects based on the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. It also focuses on highlighting cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, youth, social dialogue and social justice. The objective of this evaluation is to draw useful lessons, identify good practices and provide recommendations to strengthen the ILO's future interventions in the formalization of the informal economy, in Africa and beyond

► What are the RBSA Interventions on Formalization?

RBSA-funded projects in Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania and The Gambia aimed to facilitate the transition from informal to formal employment, to improve working conditions, expand social protection and promote inclusive and sustainable growth. The interventions combined three lines of action: strengthening regulatory and policy frameworks, expanding access to social protection and employment services, and promoting tripartite social dialogue. They targeted specific priorities: the digital inclusion of women entrepreneurs in Tanzania, the reduction of informality in agriculture in Chad, post-COVID-19 formalization in The Gambia, and support for vulnerable groups in Guinea-Bissau.

► Methodology

The evaluation adhered to ILO established evaluation protocols and applied a mixed-methods approach to ensure both the validity and reliability of the findings. Data was collected using the following methods:



Document Review



Field Visits



Interviews with 34 stakeholders



Stakeholders' workshop



Key Findings

1. Relevance and Coherence

- In all four countries, the projects addressed national priorities and the needs of informal economy actors, adapting interventions to local contexts while aligning with ILO standards (R204 and R202).
- The projects were generally well integrated with ILO initiatives and national and international development efforts, such as the Kigoma Joint Programme in Tanzania and UNDP/UNCTAD support in The Gambia, although coherence was more limited in Chad due to weak institutional linkages.

2. Effectiveness

- The projects have generated concrete results: more than 2,600 businesses formalized in Tanzania, 87 women's cooperatives created in Guinea-Bissau, better coordination in The Gambia, and institutional reforms initiated in Chad.
- These actions have improved access to services, promoted dialogue and raised awareness among actors in the informal economy, particularly women and young people.

3. Efficiency

- Tanzania and the Gambia, while Guinea-Bissau and Chad were hampered by delays and administrative and financial constraints, partially mitigated by additional support

4. Impact and Sustainability

- The projects have improved knowledge, policies and practices, with strong impacts in Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau, and fundamental results in Chad and The Gambia.
- Sustainability is better in Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau, while Chad and The Gambia remain constrained by institutional and financial gaps.

5. Cross-Cutting Issues

- The tripartite development of national strategies, including government, employers and workers, promotes ownership, legitimacy and adaptation to local realities, while strengthening consensus and inclusive governance.



Lessons Learned

Participation and relevance

Involving stakeholders early and inclusively makes the project more relevant and adapted to the local context, improving buy-in and sustainability.

Technical Support and Capacity

Remote support needs to be complemented by local managers and global strategies to be truly effective.

Tools, sustainability and inclusion

Digital tools and gender-responsive approaches are useful but require sufficient infrastructure and project durations to ensure impact and sustainability.



Key Recommendations

■ Recommendation 1: Relevance

For new formalization projects, focus on an integrated and context-specific approach, combining institutional support, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement. Priority: High.

■ Recommendation 2: Validity of project design

All RBSA-funded projects should benefit from a logframe containing baselines, SMART indicators and measurable targets to enhance their evaluability. Priority: high, for all new ILO RBSA projects.

■ Recommendation 3: Coherence

Systematically map and align with existing national and international initiatives to build synergies and avoid fragmentation. Priority: high, for all new ILO RBSA projects.

■ Recommendation 4: Effectiveness

Ensure basic administrative infrastructure and system access are in place before deployment of field staff. Priority: high, for all new ILO RBSA projects.

■ Recommendation 5: Impact

Promote behavioral change through peer-to-peer learning and role models from the informal economy. Priority : high, for all new ILO RBSA projects.

■ Recommendation 6: Sustainability

Embed project outputs within institutional frameworks and reinforce tripartite structures to support long-term ownership. Priority: high, for all new ILO RBSA projects.

► Areas of Impact

1. Economic Development

The projects have fostered economic inclusion by formalizing more than 2,600 businesses in Tanzania and establishing 87 women's cooperatives in Guinea-Bissau, while improving access to services and outreach to informal workers in Chad and The Gambia. These actions have contributed to national SME and employment development strategies, as well as to the ILO's global goals and SDGs 1 and 8.

2. Gender Equality

Interventions strengthened women's empowerment in the informal economy, through cooperatives and access to digital tools, which supported the promotion of gender equality and social inclusion in line with SDGs 5 and 10 and national social protection priorities.

3. Capacity Building

The projects developed local skills through the training of facilitators in Tanzania, the technical strengthening of cooperatives in Guinea-Bissau and the creation of pools of trainers in Chad, while improving the coordination and engagement of institutional actors in The Gambia. These efforts have contributed to the consolidation of institutional capacities.

4. Institutionalization

The interventions integrated ILO tools and methodologies into institutional practices in Tanzania, validated a national social protection strategy in Guinea-Bissau, restructured ONAPE in Chad and initiated institutional dialogue in The Gambia, thereby strengthening governance systems and the sustainability of actions while supporting national and regional objectives.

