



International
Labour
Organization

► Evaluation Office



i-eval Discovery



Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine (CSP-OPT) – Final independent evaluation

ILO DC/SYMBOL: PSE/19/01/ITA

Type of Evaluation: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Evaluation nature: Independent

Project countries: State of Palestine

P&B Outcome(s): 2022-23 Outcome 4: Sustainable Enterprises; 5: Rural employment; 6: Informal economy
2024-25 Outcome 4 (Enterprises) Output 4.4 (formalization), Outcome 3, Output 3.3 (Rural)

SDG(s): SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 28 February 2026

Date when evaluation was approved by EVAL: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

ILO Administrative Office: ILO Jerusalem Representative Office

ILO Technical Office(s): ILO ROAS (Cooperatives Unit – Beirut); ILO COOP Unit – Geneva

Joint evaluation agencies: Not relevant

Project duration: June 2021 – November 2025

Donor and budget: Government of Italy (AICS) – USD 1,774,370

Name of consultant(s): Faraj Ghunaim

Name of Evaluation Manager: Van Panhuys, Clara

Evaluation Office oversight: Hiba Al Rifai (ROAS)

Evaluation budget: 14210 USD

Key Words: Cooperative development. Decent work. Social and solidarity economy (SSE). Institutional capacity development. Governance and accountability. Policy dialogue. Gender

equality and women's economic empowerment. Social dialogue and tripartism. International Labour Standards (ILS)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of tables.....	v
List of figures:	v
Abbreviations	vi
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
BACKGROUND & CONTEXT.....	1
Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure	1
Present situation of the project	1
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	2
Methodology of evaluation	2
Conclusions.....	3
1. PROJECT BACKGROUND	6
1.1 Context: Economic, Political, Social, Cultural, and Historical	6
1.2 Project Purpose and Logic: Theory of Change, Intervention Strategy, and Expected Milestones	6
1.3 Geographic Coverage	8
1.4 Management Structure	8
1.5 Funding Arrangements.....	8
1.6 Current Status of Implementation	8
1.7 Roles of ILO, Partners, and Beneficiaries.....	9
2. EVALUATION BACKGROUND	9
2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation	9
2.2 Scope of the Evaluation.....	9
2.3 Clients and Intended Users of the Evaluation	10
2.4 Stakeholder Participation and Evaluation Governance.....	10
2.5 Evaluation Norms, Standards, and Ethical Framework	10
2.6 Operational Sequence of the Evaluation.....	11
3 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS.....	11
3.1 Evaluation Framework.....	11
3.2 Evaluation Questions.....	12

3.3	Cross-Cutting Evaluation Dimensions.....	13
3.4	Evaluation Matrix	13
4	METHODOLOGY.....	13
4.1	Evaluation Approach	13
4.2	Data Collection Methods.....	14
4.3	Sampling Strategy.....	15
4.4	Data Analysis	15
4.5	Triangulation	15
4.6	Ethical Considerations	16
4.7	Limitations and Mitigation Measures.....	16
5	FINDINGS	16
5.1	Relevance and Coherence	16
5.2	Design Validity	19
5.3	Efficiency	19
5.4	Effectiveness.....	20
5.5	Impact.....	22
5.6	Sustainability	24
5.7	Cross-Cutting Themes (international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination, and just transition to the environment)	26
6	CONCLUSIONS	29
6.1	Relevance and Coherence	29
6.2	Design Validity	30
6.3	Efficiency	30
6.4	Effectiveness.....	30
6.5	Impact.....	31
6.6	Sustainability	31
6.7	Cross-cutting Criteria.....	32
6.8	Validity and Reliability of Conclusions.....	33
7	LESSONS LEARNED.....	33
8	EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES	36
9	RECOMMENDATIONS	38
10	APPENDICES.....	1
	Annex 1: Lessons Learned	2

Annex 2: Emerging Good Practices.....	10
Annex 3: Terms of Reference	15
Annex 4: List of persons interviewed	30
Annex 5: Evaluation questions matrix, including data collection instruments	31
Bibliography.....	35

List of tables

Table 1 List of persons interviewed.....	30
Table 2 Evaluation questions matrix, including data collection instruments	31

List of figures:

Figure 1 Theory of Change Levels.....	7
Figure 2 Evaluation Methodology	14

Abbreviations

ACU	Agricultural Cooperative Union
AICS	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
CDF	Cooperative Development Fund
CDI	Cooperative Development Institute
CSP	Cooperative Support Programme
CSP-OPT	Cooperative Support Programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
CWA	Cooperative Work Agency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
DGCU	Directorate General of Cooperative Unions
DWP	Decent Work Programme
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESDC	Economic and Social Development Center
EVAL	Evaluation (used as shorthand label, for example “International Labour Organization Evaluation”)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GSU	General Service Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
KII	Key Informant Interview
LRC	Land Research Center
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
OXFAM	Oxfam
PARC	Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees

<i>PFU</i>	Palestinian Farmers Union
<i>PGFTU</i>	Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
<i>PSE/19/01/ITA</i>	Project code/reference (as written in the report)
<i>ROAS</i>	Regional Office for Arab States
<i>RWDS</i>	Rural Women’s Development Society
<i>SDG</i>	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
<i>SSE</i>	Social and Solidarity Economy
<i>UCASC</i>	Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit
<i>UN</i>	United Nations
<i>UNEG</i>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<i>UNSDCF</i>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<i>UPCCIA</i>	Union of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
<i>USD</i>	United States Dollar
<i>WFP</i>	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Cooperative Support Programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (CSP-OPT) was designed to strengthen the cooperative ecosystem through an integrated approach combining policy and institutional support with direct cooperative strengthening. The programme sought to improve cooperative performance and promote inclusive economic participation, consistent with decent work principles, by addressing structural constraints in the cooperative sector. It was structured around a three-level Theory of Change, addressing interlinked constraints at the macro (enabling environment and institutional capacities), meso (support ecosystem and standardized mechanisms and tools), and micro (primary cooperative capacity development and tailored support) levels.

The CSP-OPT was implemented in the West Bank, covering northern, central, and southern governorates. Activities were carried out in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, with attention to communities facing heightened vulnerability due to movement restrictions and limited access to markets and services. Geographically, the evaluation focuses on the West Bank, as programme activities in Gaza were suspended following the events of 7 October 2023 in line with UN security directives.

Implementation was managed by the ILO Jerusalem Representative Office, with technical support and oversight from the ILO Regional Office for Arab States and the ILO Cooperatives Unit in Geneva, in coordination with national institutions and partners and supported through donor funding arrangements.

Present situation of the project

Implemented from June 2021 to November 2025, the project is now formally concluded. During implementation, and particularly after October 2023, the programme operated under heightened volatility, movement and access constraints, and market disruptions. These conditions affected cooperative operations and reduced the feasibility of some planned economic outcomes, requiring adjustments to sequencing and delivery modalities. In response, the programme adopted adaptive management measures that prioritized continuity and resilience-oriented support where feasible.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	The evaluation assesses the project’s performance against the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee criteria to support accountability and learning and to inform future programming. It covers the full implementation period (2021–2025), with particular attention to the post-midterm phase and adaptations after October 2023. Primary clients and intended users include the International Labour Organization, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, and national partners, notably the Ministry of Labour and the Cooperative Work Agency.
Methodology of evaluation	The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach, combining a comprehensive desk review of project and contextual documentation with primary qualitative data collection. Evidence was drawn from: (i) document review; (ii) 24 key informant interviews (15 men and 9 women) representing diverse stakeholder groups; (iii) eight focus group discussions (FGDs) with CSP-supported primary cooperatives; and (iv) field visits and site observations across northern, central, and southern West Bank governorates. The FGDs were designed to capture collective perspectives on programme relevance, results, and sustainability, and enabled in-depth exploration of cooperative governance, productivity, market access, gender participation, and adaptation to contextual shocks. Each FGD involved two to three cooperative members, totaling 15 women and 7 men, and covered cooperatives in the governorates of Hebron, Bethlehem, and Salbit, as well as the Jerusalem periphery. All findings were systematically triangulated across data sources and stakeholder groups and analysed against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, with explicit attention to cross-cutting themes including gender equality and non-discrimination, social dialogue and tripartism, international labour standards, and environmental considerations where relevant.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main findings & Conclusions	Relevance: CSP-OPT remained highly aligned with national cooperative development priorities and the ILO Decent Work Agenda throughout implementation. Relevance was further reinforced through adaptive re-sequencing after October 2023 to prioritize cooperative resilience and continuity under deteriorating political, security, and economic conditions. Effectiveness: The programme’s strongest results and added value were achieved at cooperative level, particularly through capacity development, strengthened governance, improved procedures and documentation, and enhanced participation in decision-making. In
--	--

**Main lessons
learned and good
practices**

selected cases, these changes also contributed to safer and more functional work environments.

Coherence: At system level, CSP-OPT delivered technically credible groundwork and supported dialogue on cooperative development and reform. However, formal endorsement and operationalization of key mechanisms remained uneven due to institutional restructuring, limited institutionalization pathways, and uneven engagement of representative bodies. Internal coherence with ILO interventions was strong, while external coherence with other cooperative and livelihood initiatives remained largely informal.

Efficiency: Implementation demonstrated adaptive management and prudent use of resources, enabling continued delivery under volatile conditions. Nevertheless, access constraints, market disruptions, and administrative requirements increased transaction costs and affected timeliness.

Impact: Outcome-level impacts were most evident in strengthened cooperative governance, organizational practices, and participation, including increased voice of women within engaged cooperatives. Economic and employment impacts were modest and uneven, reflecting severe external constraints and differing levels of cooperative readiness.

Sustainability: Sustainability prospects are moderate and conditional. Continuation and scaling of results depend on institutional adoption and resourcing of key tools and mechanisms, structured follow-up support, and improved access to finance and markets.

Conclusions

- **Relevance & Adaptability:** CSP-OPT remained relevant and adaptive under volatile conditions, particularly after October 2023.
- **Results & Impact:** Strongest results were achieved at cooperative level (governance, capacity, women's participation), while system-level uptake and economic impacts were uneven.
- **Efficiency & Sustainability:** Adaptive implementation supported continuity, but efficiency and sustainability remain constrained by external shocks and the need for formal institutional adoption, follow-up support, and market access.

Lessons learned

- Multi-level programming that links institutional reform, support ecosystem strengthening, and cooperative-level support is more resilient and coherent in fragile contexts.
- Capacity development and governance strengthening deliver the most durable results when economic expansion is constrained by external shocks.

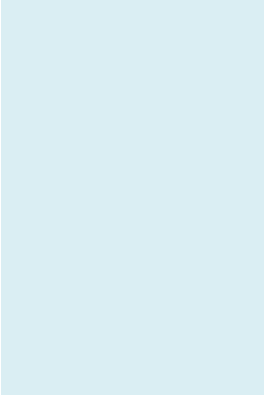
- Care-sensitive approaches that address unpaid care constraints are essential to achieve meaningful and sustained gender equality outcomes.
- Standardized diagnostic and support tools improve consistency and transparency, but must be proportionate to cooperative size and capacity to avoid administrative burden.
- Adaptive management and contingency planning are critical to sustain implementation quality under access restrictions and crisis conditions.
- Sustainability depends on institutional anchoring, ownership, and resourcing of tools and practices beyond the project cycle, supported by structured follow-up.

Emerging good practices

- Adaptive re-sequencing of activities after October 2023 to prioritize cooperative continuity and stabilization.
- Application of gender-sensitive delivery approaches that supported women's participation where enabling conditions were present.
- Use of localized and flexible delivery modalities to sustain cooperative engagement under access and security constraints.
- Hands-on governance coaching combined with practical tools to strengthen cooperative management and internal procedures.
- Sequenced support based on cooperative readiness, enabling differentiated assistance for smaller versus more established cooperatives.

Recommendations:

1. Institutionalize cooperative support tools within a clear governance arrangement, including defined responsibilities for staffing, financing, and custodianship.
2. Establish a feasible pathway for cooperatives to access finance, either through an operational financing mechanism or formal referral arrangements with existing financial institutions.
3. Implement tiered capacity development based on cooperative maturity and verified needs, distinguishing foundational support from specialized coaching.
4. Prioritize governorate-based training and coaching, with predictable schedules and follow-up, to reduce participation barriers and transaction costs.
5. Integrate market access and commercialization support as a defined results pathway linked to cooperative readiness and governance milestones.
6. Clarify and strengthen the role of representative bodies, including cooperative unions, in scaling, follow-up support, and dissemination of tools.

- 
7. Define a purposeful role for tripartite constituents, including the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, in cooperative-related programming and follow-up.
 8. Address gender-related participation barriers through accessible delivery modalities and, where relevant, feasibility-based care or childcare cooperative models.
 9. Streamline cooperative-facing administrative requirements while maintaining accountability safeguards, to improve uptake among smaller cooperatives.

The full set of nine recommendations is presented in Section 9.

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1 Context: Economic, Political, Social, Cultural, and Historical

The Cooperative Support Programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (CSP-OPT) was implemented in a complex and protracted context marked by political instability, economic fragmentation, and institutional fragility. The Palestinian economy is constrained by restrictions on movement and access, limited fiscal space, weak productive sectors, and recurrent political and security shocks. These structural conditions have contributed to high unemployment rates—particularly among youth and women—widespread informality, and limited opportunities for sustainable livelihood creation, especially in rural and marginalized areas of the West Bank.

Cooperatives have historically played an important role in Palestinian society as mechanisms for collective action, livelihood resilience, and community-based service provision, particularly in agriculture, women’s economic activities, and mutual support systems. Rooted in traditions of community self-help, the cooperative sector has evolved to include agricultural cooperatives, women’s production cooperatives, savings and credit groups, and emerging social-service models such as childcare cooperatives. Despite this diversity, the sector has remained underdeveloped and fragmented, with low membership levels compared to global averages and a high proportion of inactive or weakly performing cooperatives.

Institutional and governance challenges have further constrained the sector’s potential contribution to decent work and inclusive economic development. These challenges include limited managerial and financial capacity at cooperative level, weak representation and service delivery by unions, fragmented coordination among sector institutions, and insufficient integration of decent work principles and international labour standards within cooperative practices.

Policy reform efforts over the past decade, including the adoption of Cooperative Societies Law No. 20 of 2017 and the establishment of the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), have sought to address these structural weaknesses. These reforms aimed to modernize cooperative governance, strengthen institutional oversight, and improve coordination within the cooperative ecosystem. The CSP-OPT was designed and implemented within this broader reform trajectory.

The operating context shifted significantly following the events of 7 October 2023. Heightened movement restrictions, market disruptions, rising production and transportation costs, and increased insecurity further constrained cooperative operations across the West Bank, while economic activity in Gaza came to a halt. Women were disproportionately affected due to increased unpaid care burdens and reduced participation in economic activities. These developments placed additional strain on cooperatives and on national institutions responsible for sector oversight, reinforcing the importance of adaptive, resilience-oriented approaches.

1.2 Project Purpose and Logic: Theory of Change, Intervention Strategy, and Expected Milestones

The overall purpose of CSP-OPT was to strengthen the cooperative ecosystem in Palestine in order to promote decent work, inclusive economic participation, and social cohesion. The programme

was aligned with the ILO's mandate on decent work and the social and solidarity economy, as well as national cooperative development priorities.

CSP-OPT was structured around a three-level Theory of Change addressing interlinked constraints at the macro, meso, and micro levels. At the **macro level**, the programme aimed to strengthen the enabling environment through policy, legal, and institutional support, including engagement with the Ministry of Labour, the Directorate General of Cooperative Unions (DGPU), and the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA). At the **meso level**, it focused on enhancing sector-support systems, including cooperative unions and support institutions, through standardized tools and capacity-building mechanisms. At the **micro level**, it provided direct support to primary cooperatives through tailored capacity development, governance strengthening, and selected pilot interventions to improve operational viability and inclusiveness.

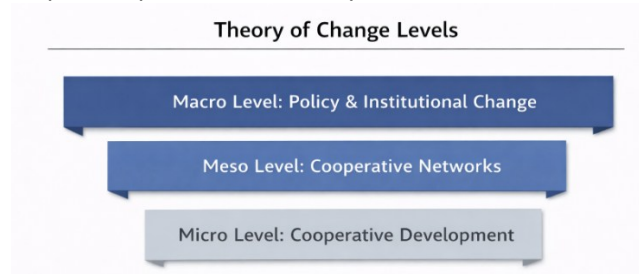


Figure 1 Theory of Change Levels

Across these levels, the programme applied several complementary strategies, including institutional capacity development, policy and legal review, training and knowledge transfer using ILO cooperative tools, and the piloting of selected cooperative models (e.g., childcare, youth-led, renewable energy, and service-oriented cooperatives). These interventions were implemented with adaptive adjustments in response to contextual constraints.

Expected milestones included strengthened institutional oversight frameworks, improved capacity of sector-support entities, enhanced resilience and performance of primary cooperatives, and greater integration of gender equality, social dialogue, and decent work principles within cooperative governance and practice.

The programme's Theory of Change assumes that strengthening the cooperative ecosystem requires coordinated action at three interrelated levels. At the macro level, improvements in the legal, policy, and institutional environment create enabling conditions for cooperative development and decent work outcomes. At the meso level, strengthened support institutions, tools, and sector coordination mechanisms enhance the quality and consistency of services provided to cooperatives. At the micro level, targeted capacity development and technical assistance support improvements in cooperative governance, operational practices, and economic resilience.

These levels are mutually reinforcing. Institutional reforms and sector-support mechanisms create the enabling conditions within which cooperatives operate, while improvements at cooperative level demonstrate the practical value of institutional support systems. The Theory of Change also assumes continued institutional engagement, access to markets and services, and a minimum degree of operational stability within the broader economic and political environment. As discussed later in the report, several of these assumptions were affected by contextual

developments after October 2023, which influenced the pace of institutional uptake and the economic performance of supported cooperatives.

1.3 Geographic Coverage

CSP-OPT was implemented across northern, central, and southern governorates of the West Bank, covering urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, including communities facing movement restrictions and limited market access. Although originally designed to operate in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, activities in Gaza were suspended after October 2023 in line with UN security guidance. Consequently, remaining implementation and this evaluation focus exclusively on the West Bank.

1.4 Management Structure

The programme was implemented by the ILO Jerusalem Representative Office, with technical oversight from the ILO Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) and the ILO Cooperatives Unit in Geneva, following standard ILO management and reporting procedures.

National counterparts included the Ministry of Labour, the Directorate General of Cooperative Unions, and the Cooperative Work Agency. Governance and coordination were supported through established consultation and steering mechanisms involving national stakeholders and the donor. Field-level implementation combined direct ILO engagement with partnerships involving national institutions, universities, cooperative unions, and selected implementing organizations.

1.5 Funding Arrangements

The CSP-OPT was funded by the Government of Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), with a total budget of USD 1,774,370. While CSP funding formed part of a broader Italian cooperation framework supporting economic development and resilience in Palestine, the programme operated under distinct governance, accountability, and reporting arrangements managed by the ILO.

Programme resources were allocated to institutional strengthening, capacity development, technical assistance, and selected cooperative-level interventions. Financial management and reporting adhered to ILO administrative and financial regulations, with periodic reporting to the donor.

1.6 Current Status of Implementation

The CSP-OPT was implemented from June 2021 to November 2025 and has formally concluded. Implementation occurred in phases, with a notable strategic adaptation following the Mid-Term Evaluation and the changing political and security context after October 2023. During the final phase, remaining resources and activities were reoriented toward supporting the resilience and continuity of primary cooperatives, in consultation with national counterparts and the donor.

At the time of this Final Independent Evaluation, all planned activities have been completed. Several policy and institutional outputs developed under the programme remain subject to formal adoption or continuation by national authorities beyond the project lifecycle.

1.7 Roles of ILO, Partners, and Beneficiaries

The International Labour Organization (ILO) served as the lead implementing and technical agency, responsible for programme design, management, coordination, and quality assurance. The ILO provided technical guidance on cooperative development, decent work, gender equality, social dialogue, and international labour standards, and ensured compliance with ILO evaluation and operational norms.

National partners, including the Ministry of Labour, the DGCU, the CWA, cooperative unions, universities, and civil society organizations, contributed to priority setting, implementation, training delivery, and field-level engagement. Implementing partners supported needs assessments, cooperative profiling, technical assistance, and follow-up at cooperative level.

Beneficiaries included cooperative members, cooperative leaders, union representatives, and institutional staff. Particular attention was given to women, youth, and marginalized groups. Beneficiaries participated in capacity-building activities, pilot initiatives, and cooperative-level interventions, and contributed to shaping needs-based support through participatory processes.

2. EVALUATION BACKGROUND

2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this Final Independent Evaluation is to assess CSP-OPT's performance against the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, in line with ILO Evaluation Guidelines and UNEG standards. The evaluation serves both accountability and learning objectives by providing an independent assessment of programme results, implementation quality, and adaptation to a volatile context, while identifying lessons and good practices for future cooperative development in Palestine and similar fragile settings.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the evaluation integrates cross-cutting issues, including gender equality and non-discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue, international labour standards, environmental sustainability (where applicable), and capacity development at individual, organizational, and system levels. It also considers contextual political, economic, and security constraints, and reviews alignment with relevant strategic frameworks, including the ILO Programme and Budget, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and the Decent Work Programme. Coordination with the 2025 Decent Work Programme evaluation ensured complementarity and avoided duplication.

The evaluation generates actionable insights by identifying strengths and weaknesses in design and implementation, lessons learned to enhance future interventions, and good practices with potential for replication or scaling.

2.2 Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation covers the full implementation period of the CSP-OPT, from June 2021 to November 2025, with a particular analytical focus on the period following the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE), i.e. from 16 December 2023 to 31 December 2025. Findings from earlier phases

of implementation and from the MTE are used as reference points to assess programme continuity, adaptation, and cumulative progress over time.

Geographically, the evaluation focuses on the West Bank, as programme activities in Gaza were suspended following the events of 7 October 2023 in line with UN security directives. The evaluation takes into account the political, economic, security, and institutional constraints that shaped programme delivery during the evaluation period.

Substantively, the evaluation assesses CSP interventions across the programme's three levels of intervention:

- **Macro level:** Policy, legal, and institutional support to the cooperative sector.
- **Meso level:** Sector-support systems, cooperative unions, and institutional tools.
- **Micro level:** Primary cooperatives and grassroots capacity development.

The scope includes both intended and unintended results, as well as differential effects across cooperative types, geographic areas, and beneficiary groups, where evidence allows.

2.3 Clients and Intended Users of the Evaluation

The primary users of this evaluation are the International Labour Organization (ILO), including the ILO representative Jerusalem and relevant ILO technical units, as well as national tripartite constituents and institutional partners directly engaged in cooperative development. These include the Ministry of Labour, the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), and other public institutions responsible for cooperative policy, oversight, and implementation. Primary users are expected to use the evaluation findings and recommendations for programme learning, decision-making, and the design of future cooperative support interventions.

Secondary users include implementing partners, cooperative unions and representative bodies, donors, development partners, and other stakeholders with an interest in cooperative development and decent work outcomes. These users may draw on the evaluation for information, learning, and reference purposes, but are not the principal decision-makers for programme design or institutional follow-up.

2.4 Stakeholder Participation and Evaluation Governance

The evaluation was conducted as an independent external exercise, led by an external evaluator, with stakeholder participation integrated throughout inception, data collection, validation, and reporting phases. Consulted stakeholders included ILO management and technical staff (Jerusalem, ROAS, Geneva), relevant government institutions, cooperative unions and labor union representatives, implementing partners, civil society organizations, and cooperative leaders and members.

Stakeholder engagement ensured inclusiveness, triangulation of perspectives, and contextual accuracy, while preserving evaluator independence. Evaluation governance followed ILO procedures, with the ILO facilitating access to documentation and stakeholders and conducting quality assurance reviews without influencing evaluative judgments.

2.5 Evaluation Norms, Standards, and Ethical Framework

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with ILO Evaluation Policy and Guidelines, UNEG Norms and Standards, OECD-DAC criteria, and the ILO Code of Conduct for Evaluators.

Ethical principles applied throughout included informed consent, confidentiality, impartiality, cultural sensitivity, gender responsiveness, and the “do no harm” principle. Given the sensitive and volatile context, particular attention was paid to protecting respondent anonymity and minimizing any potential risk to participants.

2.6 Operational Sequence of the Evaluation

The evaluation followed a structured and phased approach, consistent with the Terms of Reference:

1. Inception Phase
 - Desk review of programme documentation and contextual materials
 - Finalization of evaluation questions, methodology, and data collection tools
 - Submission and approval of the Inception Report
2. Data Collection Phase
 - Key informant interviews (KIIs) with institutional stakeholders
 - Focus group discussions (FGDs) and site visits to selected cooperatives
 - Remote interviews where in-person access was constrained
3. Analysis and Reporting Phase
 - Triangulation and synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data
 - Preparation of initial findings and validation workshop
 - Drafting of the Final Evaluation Report and incorporation of feedback

This phased approach ensured methodological rigor, transparency, and adherence to agreed timelines and quality standards.

3 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

3.1 Evaluation Framework

The evaluation applies the OECD-DAC criteria; relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, across CSP-OPT’s three intervention levels (macro, meso, micro) and over the full implementation period, with particular attention to the post-MTE phase.

It systematically integrates ILO cross-cutting themes: gender equality and non-discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue, international labour standards (ILS), and environmental sustainability (where applicable). Capacity development is treated as a core analytical focus, assessing changes at individual, organizational, and system levels rather than as a cross-cutting theme.

The framework captures intended and unintended results, examines adaptation to contextual shocks, and emphasizes contribution rather than attribution, given the complex and volatile operating environment.

3.2 Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions are drawn directly from the Terms of Reference and are structured to reflect the OECD-DAC criteria and the programme's Theory of Change. The questions guide data collection, analysis, and triangulation across qualitative and quantitative sources.

Relevance and Coherence

1. To what extent did CSP-OPT objectives and interventions remain aligned with national priorities for cooperative development and decent work, particularly following the Mid-Term Evaluation and the evolving political and economic context?
2. How well did CSP-OPT respond to the actual needs and priorities of cooperatives, cooperative members, unions, and other key constituents in the OPT?
3. To what extent were CSP-OPT strategies coherent with other ILO interventions, national policies, and initiatives supported by international partners?

Design Validity

4. To what extent did the programme's design and Theory of Change remain valid and appropriate in light of evolving political, legal, and economic conditions, including the institutional restructuring of the cooperative sector?
5. How appropriate were the programme's core strategies and tools (e.g. institutional support, CDI, CDF, cooperative models) for addressing identified constraints at macro, meso, and micro levels?

Effectiveness

6. To what extent did CSP-OPT achieve its intended results at institutional, sectoral, and cooperative levels, particularly during the post-MTE period?
7. What positive or negative changes—intended or unintended—were observed among cooperative members, unions, and partner institutions as a result of the programme?

Efficiency

8. To what extent were financial, human, and material resources used efficiently to deliver planned outputs and outcomes, taking into account contextual constraints and implementation adaptations?
9. How effective and timely were the programme's management, coordination, and operational arrangements in supporting implementation?

Impact

10. What observable changes at outcome level can be linked to CSP-OPT interventions, particularly in relation to employment, economic resilience, and cooperative performance?
11. To what extent did the programme contribute to secondary effects, such as job creation linked to cooperative services, infrastructure, or value-chain integration?

Sustainability

12. To what extent are the capacities, systems, and practices introduced by CSP-OPT likely to be sustained beyond the project's end at institutional, sectoral, and cooperative levels?
13. What key risks and enabling factors affect the sustainability of programme results in the current context?

3.3 Cross-Cutting Evaluation Dimensions

Across all evaluation criteria and questions, the analysis systematically examines the following cross-cutting dimensions:

- **Gender equality and non-discrimination:** the extent to which CSP-OPT promoted women's participation and voice within cooperatives, addressed structural participation barriers (including time poverty, access constraints, and administrative burdens), and integrated gender considerations into programme design and implementation, in line with ILO principles of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.
- **Tripartism and social dialogue:** the programme's contribution to consultation, representation, and engagement among cooperatives, unions, and relevant public institutions.
- **International Labour Standards (ILS):** the extent to which decent work principles were reflected in cooperative governance practices, operational arrangements, and support mechanisms.
- **Environmental sustainability:** consideration of resource efficiency, environmentally responsible practices, and climate-related aspects where relevant to cooperative activities.
- **Capacity development effects:** changes in capacities at individual, organizational, and system levels over the short, medium, and longer term.

3.4 Evaluation Matrix

A detailed Evaluation Questions Matrix, mapping each evaluation question to indicators, data sources, data collection methods, and triangulation approaches, is provided in Annex 5. This matrix guided the selection of tools, sampling, and analysis and ensured systematic coverage of all evaluation criteria and cross-cutting themes.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Evaluation Approach

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative data collection with available quantitative information derived from programme documentation and monitoring records. The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative evidence from KIIs, FGDs and site observations with available quantitative programme data. Triangulation across these sources supported the validation of findings.

The methodological approach was designed to:

- Capture perspectives across the macro, meso, and micro levels of intervention;
- Examine programme adaptation to contextual shocks, particularly post-October 2023;
- Integrate cross-cutting dimensions (gender equality, social dialogue, ILS, environment, and capacity development);
- Ensure triangulation across multiple data sources and stakeholder groups.

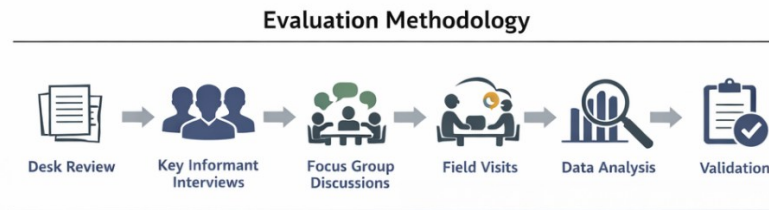


Figure 2 Evaluation Methodology

4.2 Data Collection Methods

Data collection combined four complementary methods; desk review, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Site Visit, implemented iteratively to allow continuous refinement and triangulation.

Desk Review

A desk review was conducted as an initial step of the evaluation to inform the evaluation framework, data collection tools, and triangulation of findings. The review covered key project documents, including the project design and logical framework, annual progress reports, the Mid-Term Evaluation, technical studies related to cooperative development, and relevant national and international policy frameworks. The full list of documents consulted is provided in the Bibliography.

It should be noted that different programme and cooperation documents referenced governance arrangements and advisory structures in slightly different ways. The evaluation does not attempt to interpret these contractual differences; rather, it focuses on the governance arrangements as implemented in practice and as described by stakeholders during the evaluation.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) constituted the primary qualitative data source. A total of 24 KIIs were conducted (15 male and 9 female participants). While senior institutional positions in the cooperative sector remain largely male-dominated, efforts were made to include women's perspectives where feasible.

Interviewees represented a range of stakeholder groups, including donor representatives (AICS), ILO programme staff (Jerusalem, Ramallah, regional and headquarters levels), government institutions responsible for cooperative oversight (including the Cooperative Work Agency), cooperative unions and trade union organizations, civil society partners, academic institutions, and leaders of CSP-supported cooperatives.

Interview guides were tailored by stakeholder category and aligned with the evaluation criteria and cross-cutting themes. Interviews were conducted in person or remotely depending on access conditions and followed standard ethical protocols regarding informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Eight Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with CSP-supported primary cooperatives to capture collective perspectives on programme relevance, results, and sustainability. Discussions explored experiences related to cooperative governance, productivity, market access, and gender participation, including adaptation to contextual shocks.

Each FGD included two to three cooperative members, with a total of 19 participants (12 female and 7 male). The discussions covered cooperatives across Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem periphery, and Salfit governorates.

FGDs were conducted in person during field visits using semi-structured discussion guides aligned with the evaluation framework. Ethical standards were followed, and no personal identifiers are attributed to individual participants.

Field Visits and Site Observations

Field visits were conducted to eight CSP-supported cooperatives across northern, central, and southern governorates of the West Bank. These visits enabled direct observation of cooperative operations, governance practices, and working environments, and facilitated discussions with cooperative members and leadership.

Site observations supported validation of reported changes in governance practices, productivity, and service delivery, and provided contextual understanding of operational constraints affecting cooperatives.

All fieldwork activities were recorded in a fieldwork log documenting dates, locations, stakeholder categories, gender distribution, and data collection modality to ensure transparency and traceability of the evidence base.

4.3 Sampling Strategy

Sampling followed a purposive approach designed to ensure representation across macro, meso, and micro intervention levels, cooperative types, and geographic areas. Adjustments were made during fieldwork to accommodate access constraints and stakeholder availability.

4.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data from KIIs, FGDs, and field visits were analyzed through thematic coding aligned with the OECD-DAC criteria, the programme's Theory of Change, and relevant cross-cutting themes. Patterns and divergences were examined across stakeholder groups and intervention levels. Where quantitative information was available (e.g. employment estimates or production indicators), it was used to complement and contextualize qualitative findings rather than as stand-alone measures.

4.5 Triangulation

Triangulation was applied as a central methodological principle. Findings were validated by cross-checking stakeholder testimonies against project documentation, comparing perspectives across institutional, union, and cooperative levels, and verifying reported outcomes through site observations where feasible. Evidence from the pre- and post-MTE periods was also examined to assess changes over time. This approach strengthened the internal validity of findings and reduced reliance on single-source or self-reported information.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the ILO Code of Conduct for Evaluators and UNEG ethical standards. Measures included obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymization of responses, applying gender-sensitive and culturally appropriate engagement approaches, and adhering to the do-no-harm principle, particularly in politically sensitive contexts.

4.7 Limitations and Mitigation Measures

The evaluation faced contextual and operational limitations, including movement restrictions after October 2023, institutional sensitivities, variability in cooperative data, and security-related time constraints. These were mitigated through remote interviews, substitution of accessible sites, strengthened triangulation, and cautious interpretation of self-reported data. While these limitations shaped the analysis, they do not invalidate the overall findings.

A contribution-based approach was applied, recognizing that higher-order impacts—such as income growth, employment generation, and sector transformation—require longer timeframes and depend on external conditions beyond the programme’s control. Accordingly, “impact” is primarily assessed at the outcome level (e.g., governance, organizational practices, institutional readiness).

Assessment of gender equality relied mainly on qualitative evidence, as routine monitoring data lacked consistently reported sex-disaggregated outcome indicators. Gender-related findings are therefore based on triangulated stakeholder perspectives and observed practice changes within the limits of available data.

5 FINDINGS

The findings presented in this section are structured against the final set of evaluation questions approved in the Inception Report. During inception, the evaluation questions set out in the Terms of Reference were refined and regrouped to improve analytical clarity, reduce overlap, and align more closely with the programme’s macro–meso–micro intervention logic, while maintaining full coverage of the OECD-DAC criteria and the original evaluation scope. The correspondence between the Terms of Reference questions and the final Inception Report questions is documented in the Evaluation Questions Matrix (Annex 5).

5.1 Relevance and Coherence

EQ1. Were there any changes since the MTE regarding the extent to which the project's objectives are aligned with national cooperative priorities and with the national priorities of Palestine?

Evidence base: Document review; KIIs with ILO, institutional stakeholders, and partners.

CSP-OPT remained highly relevant to national priorities for cooperative development and decent work throughout implementation. This alignment is reflected in the project's focus on strengthening the legal and institutional framework for cooperatives (in line with the Cooperative Societies Law No. 20 of 2017), building cooperative governance and management capacity, promoting participation and democratic decision-making, and supporting cooperatives as vehicles for decent work, inclusive economic participation, and social cohesion, consistent with the ILO Decent Work Agenda and Recommendation No. 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives.

Across institutions and partners, stakeholders consistently described CSP-OPT as addressing structural constraints in the cooperative ecosystem rather than short-term project needs. In this evaluation, "national priorities" refers primarily to cooperative sector reform and institutional strengthening, and to maintaining livelihoods and decent work outcomes under protracted instability.

Since the MTE, the main change was not in strategic alignment but in implementation emphasis and sequencing, particularly after October 2023 as conditions deteriorated. Stakeholders reported that CSP-OPT's relevance increased as the programme adapted by re-sequencing activities and prioritizing cooperative resilience and continuity rather than expansion. In practice, this meant prioritizing feasible cooperative-level governance and operational support and maintaining engagement modalities that could continue under access constraints, while system-level institutionalization processes progressed more slowly. This adjustment was widely viewed as appropriate in light of movement restrictions, market disruption, and heightened insecurity. KIIs and document review did not indicate any divergence in the programme's stated objectives from the cooperative reform direction during the post-MTE period; changes were primarily related to feasibility and sequencing rather than purpose.

EQ2. Were there any changes since the MTE regarding the extent to which the project responds to the actual needs and priorities of cooperative members, unions, and other constituents in the OPT?

Evidence base: KIIs; FGDs; site visits; document review.

Evidence from KIIs, FGDs, and site visits indicates that CSP-OPT remained broadly responsive to the needs of cooperatives and institutional stakeholders throughout the post-MTE period, and to a more limited extent to the needs and priorities of representative bodies. Since the MTE, the main change was not in the core needs addressed, but in the feasibility and emphasis of support, particularly after October 2023 as movement restrictions, market disruption, and insecurity increased. Stakeholders reported that implementation placed greater emphasis on maintaining cooperative functionality and continuity, while system-level processes requiring formal endorsement and multi-actor coordination progressed more slowly.

Regarding tripartite constituents, responsiveness to the needs of employers' and workers' representatives was more limited and uneven than responsiveness to cooperatives and public

institutions, with engagement occurring selectively rather than as a structured and continuous component of the intervention.

- **Micro level (cooperatives):** Cooperatives reported that training, coaching, and technical assistance responded to persistent operational needs, including weak internal governance, limited financial management skills, and the absence of standardized internal procedures. Reported benefits were most visible in improved role clarity, more structured meetings and decision-making practices, and improved documentation and record-keeping.
- **Meso level (support mechanisms/tools):** Stakeholders emphasized the relevance of CSP work on standardized approaches and tools intended to reduce fragmentation and improve consistency of cooperative support. However, wider sector effects remained constrained where formal institutional adoption, resourcing, and operationalization did not materialize within the project period.
- **Macro level (policy/institutional environment):** Institutional stakeholders reiterated that CSP support remained relevant to policy dialogue, role clarification, and technical groundwork during ongoing reform and institutional volatility. At the same time, institutional restructuring and evolving mandates affected the pace and continuity of system-level uptake.

Gender responsiveness and inclusiveness: Gender equality and women's economic participation were reflected in CSP-OPT's design intent. The intervention logic incorporated gender considerations through targeted capacity-building activities, support to women-led and service-oriented cooperatives, and the inclusion of pilot initiatives such as the care/childcare cooperative model, intended to respond to unpaid care constraints affecting women's participation.

The project design also acknowledged structural barriers to women's engagement; particularly in agricultural cooperatives, by promoting inclusive governance practices and participation norms. However, the design did not fully integrate differentiated delivery modalities or systematic mitigation measures to address persistent constraints such as time constraints, mobility, and administrative burden across all cooperative types. As a result, while gender considerations were embedded in the intervention logic, the extent to which the design anticipated and addressed variation in participation feasibility across contexts was uneven.

EQ(Coherence). To what extent was CSP-OPT coherent with other ILO interventions and external partners?

Evidence base: Document review; KIs with ILO, institutions, partners; stakeholder feedback on coordination.

CSP-OPT demonstrated strong **internal coherence** with other ILO programmes in Palestine, particularly under the Decent Work Country Programme. Alignment was ensured through shared strategic framing, adherence to ILO normative standards, and regular internal coordination, helping to avoid duplication while addressing complementary entry points such as governance, employment, and social dialogue.

External coherence with cooperative and livelihood initiatives implemented by other actors was more variable. While CSP-OPT approaches were generally complementary, coordination remained largely informal and relationship-based, with limited structured mechanisms for joint planning or referral. As a result, cooperatives supported under CSP-OPT were not systematically linked to complementary market access or financing interventions.

Overall, coherence constraints reflected broader coordination challenges in the West Bank context rather than weaknesses in CSP-OPT design or implementation.

5.2 Design Validity

EQ3. Are the project's strategies (e.g., support to the CWA, CDI, and CDF) still valid and appropriate given the evolving political, legal, and economic context?

Evidence base: Document review; KIIs with institutional stakeholders and ILO staff; FGDs with cooperative representatives.

CSP-OPT's core strategies; support to the Cooperative Work Agency, the proposed Cooperative Development Institute, and the proposed Cooperative Development Fund, remained conceptually valid and appropriate throughout implementation in terms of their underlying logic and continued relevance to strengthening the cooperative ecosystem. Stakeholders consistently confirmed that the focus on institutional coordination, capacity development, and system-level support mechanisms addressed persistent gaps in cooperative governance and support structures.

At the same time, the feasibility of fully operationalizing these strategies within the project lifecycle was constrained by the evolving political, legal, and economic context. Institutional restructuring, including the annexation of the Cooperative Work Agency under the Ministry of Labour and continuing uncertainty regarding its mandate and legal status, limited decision-making authority and delayed endorsement and operationalization of system-level outputs. As a result, key strategic components; particularly the Cooperative Development Institute and Cooperative Development Fund, remained at the level of technical design and conceptual development rather than becoming operational entities during the evaluation period.

Following the deterioration of conditions after October 2023, CSP-OPT adjusted sequencing and emphasis to prioritize cooperative resilience, continuity of operations, and institutional coping capacity. KIIs indicate that this adaptation was viewed as appropriate under restricted movement, market disruption, and heightened insecurity, although it also reduced the prospects for formal institutionalization of longer-term mechanisms within the project timeframe.

Overall, CSP-OPT's strategies remained strategically valid and responsive to identified system needs, but their operationalization was constrained by contextual and institutional factors beyond the project's control. The programme's contribution at this level is therefore best understood as laying technical groundwork and strengthening institutional readiness, rather than achieving full institutionalization of system-level mechanisms during the project period.

5.3 Efficiency

EQ4. To what extent have the project's resources (financial, human, material) been used efficiently since the MTE to produce planned outputs?

Evidence base: Document review; KIIs with project staff and institutional stakeholders; FGDs with cooperative members.

The efficiency assessment covers the full project implementation period, with particular attention to validating and updating the efficiency findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE). The MTE concluded that CSP-OPT demonstrated generally efficient use of resources, with efficiency shaped

primarily by contextual constraints and coordination demands rather than by weaknesses in project management. The present evaluation examines whether these efficiency patterns were sustained, adapted, or altered during the post-MTE period.

Stakeholders reported that resources continued to be concentrated primarily on capacity-building, technical assistance, and coordination activities. These modalities required relatively limited material inputs and could be adapted to evolving contextual constraints. This approach remained consistent with the efficiency patterns observed during the earlier implementation phase.

Following October 2023, the re-sequencing of activities supported continued delivery despite movement restrictions, security incidents, and market disruptions. Efficiency was strongest where delivery modalities were localized or governorate-based, enabling outputs to be produced with lower transaction and participation costs. For example, cooperatives reported that governance and management support delivered closer to their locations reduced travel time and effort, allowing activities to proceed despite access constraints. By contrast, activities requiring centralized participation, travel, or coordination across multiple institutions were associated with higher time and cost burdens, which reduced efficiency.

Gender-related constraints also influenced participation efficiency. Women participants noted that unpaid care responsibilities and time constraints limited their ability to attend centralized activities, while decentralized delivery modalities were perceived as more efficient and inclusive.

In terms of human resources, CSP-OPT operated with a lean project team and targeted technical inputs. While staffing arrangements were generally adequate for cooperative-level delivery, contextual volatility and coordination demands at system level placed pressure on available human resources and affected timeliness for some activities.

Overall, evidence from the post-MTE period confirms the efficiency conclusions of the MTE, while highlighting the increased importance of adaptive delivery modalities as contextual constraints intensified after October 2023.

It should be noted that the evaluation did not conduct a financial audit or a detailed financial efficiency analysis of project expenditures. The efficiency assessment therefore focuses primarily on the relationship between resources used and implementation results achieved within the operational constraints faced during implementation, including access restrictions, security conditions, and coordination requirements typical of fragile contexts.

5.4 Effectiveness

In this evaluation, improvements in cooperative performance refer primarily to changes in governance practices, internal management procedures, and organizational functioning rather than standardized financial performance indicators. Due to the absence of consistent financial and operational monitoring data across supported cooperatives, performance improvements were assessed through qualitative indicators such as clearer management roles, improved documentation and record-keeping, more structured meetings and decision-making processes, and increased participation of cooperative members in governance activities.

EQ5. How effective and timely were the project's management and operational arrangements in delivering planned activities?

Evidence base: Document review; KIIs with ILO staff, implementing partners, and national institutions.

Since the MTE, project management and operational arrangements were assessed by stakeholders as generally effective in enabling delivery of planned activities under increasingly constrained conditions. KIIs highlighted the programme's ability to adapt implementation plans, re-prioritize activities, and adjust sequencing, particularly after October 2023 as the operating environment deteriorated. Stakeholders considered these adaptive management practices important in sustaining delivery of core cooperative-level activities despite heightened uncertainty.

Timeliness was uneven. Activities that depended on institutional endorsement, multi-actor coordination, or physical access were more likely to face delays. Stakeholders consistently attributed these delays to external constraints—including movement restrictions, security incidents, and institutional restructuring affecting mandates and approval processes—rather than to weaknesses in project management.

Project management arrangements were most effective in enabling delivery at the cooperative (micro) level, where activities could be implemented directly with cooperatives and required fewer institutional approvals. Stakeholders noted that management flexibility and decentralized delivery modalities supported timely implementation of capacity development and governance support activities.

At the meso level, the project delivered technical outputs in the form of standardized tools, frameworks, and capacity-building approaches intended to strengthen sector-support systems and cooperative oversight. While these outputs were technically sound and aligned with the project design, their translation into operational outcomes was uneven due to institutional restructuring and limited formal adoption by relevant bodies during the project period.

At the macro level, CSP-OPT contributed to policy dialogue and institutional readiness for cooperative reform, including engagement with national counterparts on legal and institutional frameworks. However, outcomes at this level remained largely preparatory, as several reform-oriented mechanisms were not fully operationalized within the project lifecycle.

Overall, CSP-OPT was effective in generating outcome-level improvements in cooperative governance and organizational functioning. However, effectiveness in generating broader economic, employment, or system-level outcomes remained constrained by external shocks, market disruptions, and institutional factors beyond the project's control.

EQ6. How well did the project coordinate with national institutions (e.g., CWA, ministries) and international partners to support implementation?

Evidence base: KIIs with national institutions, ILO staff, and development partners; document review.

Coordination with national institutions, including the Cooperative Work Agency and relevant ministries, was assessed as functional but uneven. Stakeholders reported regular engagement

and dialogue to support implementation, particularly for capacity-building, technical assistance, and policy-related discussions. However, institutional restructuring, evolving mandates among relevant ministries and the Cooperative Work Agency, and unclear lines of authority between public institutions constrained continuity and reduced opportunities for structured joint planning and systematic follow-up, especially where activities depended on formal endorsement or inter-institutional coordination.

Coordination with international partners and other actors working on cooperatives, livelihoods, and value chains was described as largely informal and relationship-based. While CSP-OPT tools and approaches were generally perceived as complementary to parallel interventions, the absence of formal coordination mechanisms—such as shared workplans, systematic referral pathways, joint targeting, or coordinated sequencing—limited the extent to which CSP-supported cooperatives were systematically linked to complementary interventions addressing market access, commercialization, or financing. Stakeholders emphasized that these coordination limitations reflect broader systemic coordination constraints in the West Bank context rather than deficiencies in CSP-OPT design or implementation.

5.5 Impact

EQ7. What positive or negative changes (intended or unintended) has the project generated among cooperative members, unions, and partner institutions, especially in terms of employment and economic empowerment?

Evidence base: KIIs with cooperative members, institutional stakeholders, and partners; FGDs; site visits; document review.

Given the programme timeframe and the operating environment, this evaluation assesses impact primarily in terms of CSP-OPT's contribution to outcome-level changes observed during implementation and at endline, rather than long-term socio-economic transformation. Evidence indicates that CSP-OPT generated its most consistent impacts through strengthened cooperative governance, organizational practices, and operational functioning, which represent foundational conditions for employment and economic empowerment.

At cooperative level, reported positive changes were primarily attributed to CSP-OPT's structured capacity-building and governance support, including training, coaching, and the introduction of standardized governance tools. Cooperative members reported clearer internal roles and responsibilities, more structured meeting and decision-making processes, improved documentation and record-keeping, and increased awareness of cooperative principles and accountability requirements. These changes contributed to more predictable internal operations, reduced internal disputes, and improved coordination, which helped cooperatives maintain activities under difficult operating conditions.

In addition to governance strengthening, some cooperatives received targeted operational support, including improvements to working environments and production tools or equipment. Where such support addressed clearly identified operational bottlenecks, cooperatives reported practical gains such as improved workflow organization, better product handling and hygiene, reduced losses, and safer and more functional workspaces. Stakeholders described these improvements as contributing indirectly to working conditions and productivity; however, the

extent to which they translated into sustained income growth or employment expansion varied depending on cooperative maturity and external constraints.

Overall, economic and livelihood-related effects attributable to CSP-OPT were modest and uneven. Several cooperatives reported that CSP support helped stabilize operations and reduce losses, particularly during periods of market disruption. However, movement and access restrictions, market volatility, rising input costs, and heightened insecurity significantly constrained opportunities for income growth and job creation during the evaluation period. As a result, impacts on employment and economic empowerment were more evident in terms of maintaining activities and protecting existing livelihoods rather than generating new jobs or substantial income gains.

These results must also be interpreted within the broader structural constraints affecting markets in the West Bank. Cooperatives operate within a fragmented economic environment characterized by movement restrictions, market access limitations, high transportation costs, and dependence on intermediary traders in certain value chains. These structural factors affect the ability of small cooperatives to scale production, access wider markets, or secure stable supply chains. Consequently, improvements in governance and organizational practices observed under CSP-OPT did not always translate into immediate economic gains.

At institutional and system levels, CSP-OPT contributed primarily through technical groundwork, dialogue support, and structured approaches intended to strengthen the cooperative ecosystem. Stakeholders reported improved shared understanding of cooperative development approaches and clearer articulation of roles and reform priorities. System-level impacts remained incremental due to limited formal adoption and operationalization of key mechanisms within the project lifecycle, including the non-operationalization of the Cooperative Development Fund and the absence of a formally established Cooperative Development Institute. Institutional restructuring—particularly the annexation of the Cooperative Work Agency under the Ministry of Labour and ongoing uncertainty regarding mandates—further constrained system-level uptake.

Gender-related impacts were most visible in women's participation, confidence, and voice within engaged cooperatives. Women participants described increased willingness to engage in meetings and decision-making, particularly in women-led and service-oriented cooperatives. However, impacts were uneven across cooperative types. Women's participation remained more limited in some agricultural cooperatives due to structural and socio-cultural constraints, including unpaid care responsibilities, time limitations, and mobility restrictions that reduced the ability to participate consistently.

The childcare cooperative model was introduced as a potential response to unpaid care constraints; however, as it was not operational during the evaluation period, related impacts are treated as intended rather than demonstrated.

Unintended effects included both enabling and constraining dynamics. On the positive side, cooperatives reported increased visibility and legitimacy within their communities as organizational practices improved. On the constraining side, the programme's emphasis on formalization and documentation increased administrative demands for some smaller

cooperatives with limited staffing capacity, which in some cases affected the pace and ease of uptake. No significant negative social or environmental impacts directly attributable to CSP-OPT were identified.

EQ8. To what extent has the project contributed to secondary job creation through cooperative-linked infrastructure or services (e.g., markets, agriculture)?

Evidence base: KIs; FGDs; site visits; document review.

Available evidence indicates that CSP-OPT's contribution to secondary job creation through cooperative-linked infrastructure or services was limited during the evaluation period and was not systematically documented. The project did not include a dedicated mechanism or monitoring framework to track secondary employment effects linked to infrastructure development, market services, or value-chain expansion, and stakeholders did not report clear, attributable examples of sustained secondary job creation.

Where cooperatives received support related to production tools, workspace improvements, or service delivery, some stakeholders described short-term or localized effects, such as improved workflow organization, reduced losses, or temporary increases in activity levels. These effects were primarily associated with operational stabilization and efficiency gains, rather than with the creation of additional jobs beyond existing cooperative members or workers.

Cooperatives and institutional stakeholders consistently emphasized that movement and access restrictions, market disruption, limited demand, and lack of financing significantly constrained opportunities to expand production, infrastructure use, or service delivery in ways that could generate secondary employment. FGDs frequently highlighted the absence of strong market access and commercialization support; including marketing, branding and packaging, distribution channels, and participation in trade fairs, as a key barrier to scaling activities and creating additional employment opportunities.

Overall, CSP-OPT's contribution to secondary job creation is best understood as indirect and preparatory, through strengthening cooperative governance, organizational capacity, and operational readiness. While these changes may support future secondary job creation if enabling conditions improve and complementary market-facing and financing interventions are in place, the evaluation finds no robust evidence of significant secondary job creation attributable to CSP-OPT within the project lifecycle.

5.6 Sustainability

EQ9. To what extent have cooperative institutions (CWA, CDI, CDF) and unions built sustainable capacity and systems to continue supporting cooperatives beyond the project's end?

Evidence base: KIs with institutional stakeholders and union representatives; FGDs with cooperative members; document review.

Evidence indicates that CSP-OPT contributed to sustainability primarily through institutional capacity strengthening, technical groundwork, and the development of structured concepts and tools intended to support cooperative development beyond the project cycle. Institutional stakeholders reported improved understanding of cooperative development approaches, clearer

articulation of roles and responsibilities, and increased familiarity with structured tools and methodologies that could potentially be applied after project closure.

However, the sustainability of institutional-level support remains conditional and uneven. The Cooperative Development Fund was developed at the conceptual level but did not become operational during the project lifecycle. Stakeholder consultations indicate that this reflected not only contextual and institutional constraints but also differing views among sector stakeholders regarding the design, governance arrangements, and operational feasibility of the proposed financing mechanism.

Institutional restructuring within the cooperative governance architecture also affected sustainability. Most notably, the annexation of the Cooperative Work Agency under the Ministry of Labour and continued uncertainty regarding its legal status and mandate disrupted institutional continuity. KIIs indicated that these changes slowed decision-making processes and complicated ownership and accountability arrangements for CSP-supported outputs. Within these constraints, CSP-OPT's contribution is best understood as strengthening institutional readiness and technical foundations rather than establishing fully operational and sustainable systems during the project period.

Union engagement contributed to sustainability in a limited and uneven manner. While selected unions participated in dialogue and specific project activities, stakeholders reported that unions did not consistently develop the organizational capacity, resources, or structured roles required to sustain cooperative support functions beyond the project cycle. This uneven engagement represents a sustainability risk, as responsibility for ongoing cooperative support remains concentrated among public institutions and external actors.

EQ10. To what extent has the project promoted collaborative initiatives (as detailed in the MTE) that reinforce the interconnectedness of the cooperative sector and contribute to its resilience and sustainability?

Evidence base: KIIs; FGDs; document review.

CSP-OPT promoted collaboration primarily through dialogue facilitation, technical exchanges, and the introduction of structured approaches intended to improve coordination among cooperative actors. Stakeholders reported that the project created opportunities for interaction among cooperatives, institutions, and support organizations, contributing to increased awareness of complementary roles, shared challenges, and potential areas for cooperation within the cooperative ecosystem.

However, the extent to which these initiatives translated into durable and institutionalized collaboration remained limited. Coordination among actors was largely informal and relationship-based, and mechanisms such as joint workplans, formal referral systems, or standing coordination platforms were not systematically established or operationalized. As a result, collaborative efforts did not consistently evolve into sustained networks or functional coordination arrangements capable of reinforcing sector-wide resilience.

Stakeholders also noted that while some cooperatives benefited from exposure to peers and support organizations through CSP-OPT activities, these linkages were often activity-specific and not consistently maintained beyond individual interventions. Structural constraints—including

institutional restructuring, limited institutional resources, and the absence of formal coordination mandates—further limited the sustainability of these collaborative efforts.

Overall, CSP-OPT contributed to initial connectivity and shared understanding across parts of the cooperative sector. However, its contribution to long-term interconnectedness and collective resilience remained incremental rather than transformative within the project timeframe.

The sustainability of collaboration mechanisms also depends on the institutional absorption capacity of the entities expected to maintain them. This includes the availability of operational budgets, staffing capacity, and clearly defined institutional mandates. In contexts where institutional structures are evolving or administrative resources are constrained, sustaining coordination platforms and collaborative mechanisms may require additional phases of institutional strengthening and follow-up support beyond the duration of the project.

5.7 Cross-Cutting Themes (international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination, and just transition to the environment)

With regard to tripartism and social dialogue, CSP-OPT engagement focused primarily on government institutions and workers' organizations, particularly sectoral unions and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions. Engagement with employers' organizations was limited during the project period. Stakeholders noted that employers' organizations were not systematically integrated into cooperative-focused activities, reflecting both the cooperative-centric design of the programme and the absence of clearly defined roles for employers' organizations within cooperative development interventions. As a result, tripartite engagement remained partial, with social dialogue occurring mainly between public institutions and worker representatives rather than through fully institutionalized tripartite mechanisms.

EQ11. To what extent did the project's adherence to international labour standards (ILS) transcend the realm of mere principle and was this visibly reflected in practical implementation?

Evidence base: Document review; KIIs with ILO staff and institutional stakeholders; FGDs with cooperative members; site visits.

Evidence indicates that CSP-OPT's adherence to international labour standards was reflected through both explicit normative alignment and practical implementation.

At the normative level, project design and institutional engagement aligned with the ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193), which is referenced in sector strategies supported under CSP-OPT, including the Cooperative Work Agency Strategic Plan (2025–2027) and the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions Strategic Plan (2025–2029).

At the implementation level, ILS principles; such as democratic participation, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountable governance, were explicitly embedded in CSP-OPT training curricula, coaching approaches, and governance tools, rather than systematically cited as individual conventions. These principles were operationalized through capacity-building activities focused on cooperative governance and management. Cooperative members reported clearer internal roles and responsibilities, more regular and structured meetings, and improved documentation and record-keeping, supporting more transparent internal processes and more predictable organization of work.

In selected cooperatives, targeted support to improve working environments and production tools or equipment further aligned with decent work considerations. Stakeholders described safer and more functional workspaces, improved workflow organization, and better hygiene and handling practices, particularly where inputs addressed verified operational bottlenecks. These changes were reported primarily as improvements in working conditions and operational practice rather than as broader labour market outcomes.

At the same time, translation of these principles into wider labour outcomes; such as sustained employment growth or significant expansion of formalization beyond cooperative membership, was constrained during the evaluation period by contextual factors including movement restrictions, market disruption, and limited access to finance. Overall, ILS adherence was most visibly reflected in strengthened internal cooperative governance and improved working practices, while broader employment effects remained limited within the project timeframe.

EQ12. To what extent has the GCU and sectoral unions participated in strengthening cooperative institutions, and the other way round, taking into account the specific recommendations of the MTE?

Evidence base: KIIs with union representatives and institutional stakeholders; document review; FGDs.

Union participation in CSP-OPT was uneven and limited, despite the project's stated intent to strengthen social dialogue and tripartite engagement, including recommendations highlighted in the MTE. Engagement was most visible with the Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit (UCASC), which stakeholders described as responsive and actively engaged in project-related activities. Other sectoral unions were reported to be either not reachable or only intermittently engaged. Factors cited included internal governance challenges, constrained institutional capacity, and the absence of structured coordination mechanisms within parts of the union landscape.

Attempts were made to contact several sectoral unions during the evaluation period through multiple communication channels. However, some organizations were unavailable during the fieldwork period due to scheduling constraints, institutional workload, or limited availability of designated representatives. Where direct participation was not possible, complementary perspectives were obtained from other sector stakeholders and documentary sources.

The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) was not systematically embedded as a core programme actor in the original project design. Its engagement became more visible later in implementation, primarily through activities linked to the care/childcare cooperative pilot. While this represented a step toward involving unions in cooperative-related initiatives, it did not evolve into a sustained or programme-wide role in strengthening cooperative institutions, nor did it lead to systematic follow-up or joint planning arrangements.

As a result, reciprocal capacity strengthening between unions and cooperative institutions remained partial. Opportunities for unions to contribute to dissemination, ongoing support, advocacy, and sector-wide coordination were not fully realized. Conversely, cooperative

institutions did not consistently develop structured mechanisms to engage unions as partners in implementation or follow-up.

Engagement of employers' organizations was also limited, which constrained the realization of full tripartism. The absence of systematic involvement of all three constituent groups represents a sustainability and scaling risk for future cooperative development initiatives.

Overall, while CSP-OPT facilitated dialogue with selected union actors and contributed to increased awareness of cooperative-related issues, union participation did not reach a level sufficient to ensure sustainable tripartite engagement beyond the project cycle. Responsibility for ongoing cooperative support therefore remains concentrated among public institutions and external partners rather than being more evenly shared with representative organizations.

EQ13. How effectively did the project promote gender equality and non-discrimination, taking into account the specific recommendations formulated in the MTE?

Evidence base: KIIs; FGDs (including women participants); site visits; document review.

Gender equality and non-discrimination were reflected in CSP-OPT's design intent and implementation approach. Overall, evidence indicates moderate effectiveness in promoting women's participation and voice within engaged cooperatives, consistent with the direction of the MTE recommendations. Women participants reported increased confidence and willingness to engage in meetings and decision-making processes, particularly in women-led and service-oriented cooperatives. Many women described capacity-building activities as accessible and relevant, contributing to greater awareness of cooperative rights, responsibilities, and participation norms.

At the same time, gender-related outcomes were uneven across cooperative types and locations. Women's participation remained more limited in some agricultural cooperatives, reflecting structural and socio-cultural constraints, including time poverty and unpaid care responsibilities. Delivery modalities also influenced feasibility: centralized activities requiring travel increased time and cost burdens and could reduce continuity, while more localized delivery was perceived as more accessible for women.

The programme's emphasis on formalization and compliance supported standardization and governance improvements, but it also introduced administrative requirements that were easier for better-resourced cooperatives to manage. For smaller cooperatives—including those with women in leadership roles—these requirements could slow uptake and affect continuity of engagement.

In response to unpaid care constraints highlighted in the MTE, CSP-OPT engaged later in implementation with the care/childcare cooperative model. Stakeholders viewed this initiative as relevant; however, the childcare cooperative was not operational during the evaluation period, and related effects are therefore assessed as intended rather than demonstrated.

Unintended effects were also observed alongside the intended outcomes. Participation-related gains reported by women—particularly increased confidence and willingness to speak in meetings—may strengthen internal accountability within cooperatives beyond the immediate scope of project activities. Conversely, the administrative burden associated with compliance and

documentation processes may have disproportionately affected smaller cooperatives with limited staffing capacity, potentially influencing their ability to sustain engagement.

Overall, CSP-OPT made credible progress in promoting gender equality and non-discrimination at cooperative level, particularly in strengthening women's participation and voice where enabling conditions were present. However, outcomes were uneven across cooperative types. More consistent results would likely require sustained engagement and complementary measures addressing structural barriers to participation that extend beyond the project's direct scope.

Due to the absence of consistently reported sex-disaggregated economic indicators, the evaluation primarily assesses gender outcomes in terms of participation, voice in governance, and inclusion in cooperative decision-making processes rather than measurable changes in income, assets, or other economic empowerment indicators.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Relevance and Coherence

EQ1. Alignment with national cooperative priorities and national priorities of Palestine

CSP-OPT remained highly relevant and strategically aligned with national cooperative development priorities and the ILO mandate throughout implementation. The project's objectives were consistent with the Cooperative Societies Law No. 20 of 2017, the national cooperative reform agenda, and the ILO Decent Work Agenda, including Recommendation No. 193.

No substantive shift in strategic alignment occurred after the MTE. Rather, the project demonstrated adaptability by re-sequencing activities after October 2023 to prioritize cooperative resilience and continuity in response to deteriorating political, security, and economic conditions. Stakeholders did not report changes in strategic alignment since the MTE; adjustments related primarily to sequencing and emphasis rather than to the overall direction of the programme.

Overall, the Cooperative Support Programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (CSP-OPT) delivered its most tangible results at the cooperative level through improvements in governance practices, management procedures, and participation dynamics within supported cooperatives. These changes reflect meaningful progress in strengthening the organizational foundations of cooperatives operating under highly constrained economic and political conditions.

At the same time, system-level results were more uneven. While CSP-OPT contributed important technical groundwork for strengthening the cooperative ecosystem, the full institutionalization of several mechanisms remains dependent on continued institutional engagement, resource allocation, and policy alignment beyond the project lifecycle.

The evaluation therefore concludes that CSP-OPT made a credible contribution to strengthening cooperative capacities and institutional dialogue, while the sustainability and scaling of these results will depend on broader institutional and economic conditions.

EQ2. Responsiveness to the needs and priorities of cooperatives, unions, and other constituents

CSP-OPT remained broadly responsive to stakeholder needs, particularly at cooperative and institutional levels. Responsiveness was strongest in addressing governance, management capacity, and organizational functioning of cooperatives. At meso and macro levels, responsiveness was constrained by incomplete institutional adoption of system-level mechanisms and uneven engagement of representative bodies, particularly in the context of institutional restructuring. Adjustments after October 2023 reflected a shift toward maintaining cooperative functionality rather than expansion, which stakeholders viewed as appropriate given contextual constraints.

EQ(Coherence). Coherence with other ILO interventions and external partners

Internal coherence with other ILO programmes, particularly under the Decent Work Country Programme, was strong and consistent, reflected in aligned objectives and technical approaches. External coherence with other cooperative, livelihood, and value-chain interventions was more variable, as coordination remained largely informal. While CSP-OPT was complementary to parallel initiatives, the absence of structured coordination mechanisms limited sustained synergies and system-wide alignment. These limitations reflect broader coordination challenges in the West Bank context rather than weaknesses in project design.

6.2 Design Validity

EQ3. Validity and appropriateness of project strategies (CWA, CDI, CDF)

CSP-OPT's strategic focus on strengthening cooperative institutions and system-level support mechanisms remained conceptually valid and appropriate throughout implementation. However, the feasibility of fully operationalizing these strategies within the project lifecycle was constrained by institutional restructuring, evolving mandates, and political and economic instability. As a result, key mechanisms such as the CDI and CDF remained at the level of technical design rather than operational entities. The project's contribution is therefore best understood as laying technical groundwork and strengthening institutional readiness, rather than achieving full institutionalization during the evaluation period.

6.3 Efficiency

EQ4. Efficiency in the use of resources

CSP-OPT demonstrated generally efficient use of resources since the MTE, particularly through targeted capacity-building and technical assistance activities that required limited material inputs and could be adapted to contextual constraints. Efficiency was highest where activities were localized and lowest where centralized delivery or multi-institutional coordination was required. External factors; especially access restrictions, security conditions, and institutional volatility were the primary determinants of efficiency limitations rather than project design.

6.4 Effectiveness

EQ5. Effectiveness and timeliness of management and operations

Project management and operational arrangements were effective and adaptive, enabling continued delivery under volatile conditions. While delays occurred, particularly for activities requiring institutional endorsement or physical access, these were largely attributable to external constraints, including security conditions and institutional restructuring. Overall, management arrangements were fit for purpose in a fragile and conflict-affected setting.

EQ6. Coordination with national institutions and international partners

Coordination with national institutions was functional but uneven, supporting implementation while limiting joint planning and institutionalization. Coordination with international partners remained informal and relationship-based, constraining systematic linkages with market access and financing initiatives. These coordination limitations affected potential cumulative effects but reflect systemic constraints rather than deficiencies in CSP-OPT's implementation approach.

6.5 Impact

Given the relatively short timeframe of the programme and the significant contextual constraints affecting economic activity in the West Bank, the evaluation assesses impact primarily at the outcome level rather than in terms of long-term sector transformation. In this report, outcome-level impacts refer to observable changes in cooperative governance practices, institutional coordination, and participation dynamics that can reasonably be linked to CSP-OPT interventions. Broader economic impacts such as sustained income growth, employment expansion, or sector-wide cooperative development typically require longer time horizons and enabling market conditions beyond the project lifecycle.

EQ7. Outcome-level impacts on cooperatives, institutions, and livelihoods

CSP-OPT's most consistent impacts were observed at the cooperative level through strengthened governance practices, improved organizational functioning, and more structured operational procedures. These changes contributed to improved internal coordination, better working conditions, and greater operational stability within supported cooperatives. Economic and employment effects were modest and uneven, with CSP support contributing more to the stabilization of livelihoods under constrained conditions than to the creation of new jobs or substantial income gains. Institutional-level impacts remained incremental due to the partial operationalization of system-level mechanisms during the project lifecycle.

EQ8. Contribution to secondary job creation

The project's contribution to secondary job creation through cooperative-linked infrastructure or services was limited and not systematically documented. While some operational improvements supported stabilization and short-term activity, there is no robust evidence of sustained secondary job creation attributable to CSP-OPT within the project timeframe. CSP-OPT's contribution in this area remains indirect and preparatory.

6.6 Sustainability

EQ9. Sustainability of institutional and organizational capacities

CSP-OPT contributed to sustainability primarily through institutional capacity strengthening and technical groundwork rather than through the establishment of fully operational and durable systems. The non-operationalization of the Cooperative Development Fund (CDF) and the Cooperative Development Institute (CDI), combined with institutional restructuring affecting the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), limited long-term prospects for system-level continuity. Union engagement was also uneven, which further constrained shared ownership of cooperative support functions. Sustainability of cooperative-level gains appears stronger where improved governance and management practices have been integrated into daily operations; however, long-term continuation will depend on institutional follow-up and improved access to finance and markets.

Long-term sustainability depends not only on formal endorsement of CSP-OPT tools and mechanisms but also on the practical capacity of responsible institutions to operationalize and maintain them. This includes the availability of financial resources, staffing capacity, and clear institutional mandates. In fragile institutional environments, the transition from project-supported initiatives to fully institutionalized systems often requires additional phases of technical support, budget allocation, and clearly defined custodianship responsibilities. Sustainability should therefore be understood as a gradual institutionalization process rather than an immediate outcome at project closure.

EQ10. Collaborative initiatives and sector interconnectedness

The project supported initial collaboration and dialogue among cooperative actors but did not establish durable, institutionalized coordination mechanisms. Collaborative initiatives improved awareness and connectivity but remained largely informal and activity-based. As a result, CSP-OPT's contribution to long-term sector interconnectedness and collective resilience was incremental rather than transformative.

6.7 Cross-cutting Criteria

EQ11. International labour standards

CSP-OPT translated international labour standards into practical cooperative-level practices, including improved governance, participation, transparency, and working conditions. While broader labour market impacts were constrained, adherence to ILS was visible in implementation and supported decent work principles within cooperatives.

EQ12. Tripartism and social dialogue

Engagement of the PGFTU and sectoral unions was limited and uneven, despite MTE recommendations. While selected unions participated in specific activities, unions were not consistently embedded as system-level actors capable of sustaining cooperative support beyond the project cycle. This represents a sustainability risk for tripartite engagement.

EQ13. Gender equality and non-discrimination

CSP-OPT made credible progress in promoting women's participation and voice within cooperatives, particularly in women-led and service-oriented cooperatives. However, gender impacts were uneven and constrained by structural barriers such as time poverty and unpaid care responsibilities. The childcare cooperative model remains an intended response, with impacts yet to be demonstrated.

6.8 Validity and Reliability of Conclusions

The conclusions presented in this chapter are grounded in triangulated evidence from multiple sources, including document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and site visits. Consistency of findings across stakeholder groups and evidence streams strengthened validity, while systematic alignment between the evaluation questions, findings, and conclusions supports reliability. Where evidence was limited; particularly regarding longer-term economic impacts and secondary job creation, conclusions are framed cautiously and focus on outcome-level contributions observed within the evaluation period. Contextual constraints affecting access and implementation were taken into account throughout the evaluative reasoning to avoid over-attribution and to ensure fair, impartial, and evidence-consistent judgements.

7 LESSONS LEARNED

This evaluation identifies the following lessons that can inform future cooperative development programming in Palestine and comparable fragile and conflict-affected settings. Detailed lesson templates are provided in Annex 1.

Lesson 1: Macro-level change requires a clear adoption and institutionalization pathway

Lesson statement: System-level reform outputs are unlikely to translate into sustained change without explicit pathways for endorsement, institutional hosting, and resourcing.

- **Context derived from:** Technical inputs and policy dialogue advanced, while formal adoption of several macro-level outputs did not occur within the project lifecycle amid institutional restructuring in cooperative sector governance.
- **Applicable when:** Programming includes legal/policy reform, institutional restructuring, or new system-level mechanisms that require formal approval.
- **Target users:** ILO Country Office; ILO Project Team; Ministry of Labour; relevant public institutions; donors.
- **Repeat / avoid:** **Repeat** early mapping of endorsement pathways, ownership, and resourcing arrangements; **avoid** relying on technical deliverables alone without a defined institutionalization route.

Lesson 2: Scaling through representative bodies requires explicit roles and realistic capacity assumptions

Lesson statement: Representative bodies do not automatically function as scaling channels; their roles, commitments, and capacities need to be assessed and defined.

- **Context derived from:** Engagement of representative bodies was uneven; the Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit was consistently responsive, while broader union engagement was limited, and engagement of the Palestinian General

Federation of Trade Unions became more visible later through care/childcare cooperative-related activities.

- **Applicable when:** Programmes expect unions or representative organizations to disseminate tools, provide follow-up, or sustain capacity development beyond project end.
- **Target users:** ILO Country Office; ILO Project Team; Ministry of Labour; cooperative unions and representative bodies; donors.
- **Repeat / avoid:** **Repeat** explicit role definition, minimum commitments, and mitigation plans for coordination constraints; **avoid** assuming representative bodies can scale without operational support.

Lesson 3: Under volatility and fixed ceilings, depth often matters more than breadth

Lesson statement: Broad coverage can dilute results; focusing on fewer models can strengthen demonstrable outcomes and learning.

- **Context derived from:** Under volatile conditions and resource ceilings, stakeholders emphasized the trade-off between wide coverage and depth of support, affecting the clarity of results.
- **Applicable when:** Implementation faces constrained access, unstable markets, or limited budgets and staffing.
- **Target users:** ILO Project Team; ILO Representative Office; donors; implementing partners.
- **Repeat / avoid:** **Repeat** prioritization of a limited number of replicable models with clear selection criteria; **avoid** spreading resources across too many sites without sufficient intensity for demonstrable change.

Lesson 4: Bottom-up cooperative strengthening generates ownership, but scaling requires system integration and handover arrangements

Lesson statement: Cooperative-level practice change can be achieved faster than system-level uptake; sustaining gains requires institutional integration and clear handover.

- **Context derived from:** Cooperative-level support produced clearer practice changes than system-level uptake, while institutional adoption of some system-level mechanisms did not materialize within the project period.
- **Applicable when:** Programmes build governance and operational practices at cooperative level while also seeking system-level institutionalization.
- **Target users:** ILO Representative Office; ILO Project Team; Ministry of Labour; Cooperative Work Agency; donors.
- **Repeat / avoid:** **Repeat** explicit handover arrangements (post-project ownership, follow-up roles, and resourcing); **avoid** leaving successful approaches dependent on project delivery without integration into institutional routines.

Lesson 5: Capacity development is more effective when tailored to cooperative maturity and delivered through accessible modalities

Lesson statement: Different cooperatives require different support; delivery modality influences participation, efficiency, and equity.

- **Context derived from:** Smaller/less experienced cooperatives valued foundational training, while larger/more established cooperatives requested specialized inputs;

stakeholders noted that centralized delivery increased time/effort costs and could reduce continuity, while localized delivery improved accessibility.

- **Applicable when:** Cooperatives vary widely in maturity, governance quality, and market readiness, and participation barriers (travel, time, care responsibilities) are significant.
- **Target users:** ILO Project Team; implementing partners; Ministry of Labour; Cooperative Work Agency.
- **Repeat / avoid:** **Repeat** tiered capacity development (foundational vs. advanced) and governorate-based delivery with follow-up; **avoid** one-size-fits-all training or centralized formats that increase participation barriers.

Lesson 6: Combining governance coaching with targeted operational upgrades can accelerate practical improvements

Lesson statement: Governance support can translate into faster operational gains when paired with needs-based upgrades that remove verified bottlenecks.

- **Context derived from:** Where governance strengthening was combined with upgrades to working environments and production tools/equipment, cooperatives reported tangible operational improvements (workflow organization, hygiene/product handling, safer and more functional workspaces).
- **Applicable when:** Cooperatives have operational bottlenecks that limit the effectiveness of governance and management improvements.
- **Target users:** ILO Project Team; donors; implementing partners; relevant technical service providers.
- **Repeat / avoid:** **Repeat** bottleneck verification and minimum conditions for utilization (maintenance arrangements and basic enabling infrastructure); **avoid** providing equipment or upgrades without clear utilization plans and follow-up.

Lesson 7: Market linkages are needed to translate internal strengthening into livelihood outcomes

Lesson statement: Governance and production improvements alone may not produce livelihood gains without market access and commercialization support.

- **Context derived from:** Cooperatives repeatedly highlighted unmet needs related to marketing, branding/packaging, distribution channels, and participation in exhibitions/trade fairs as pathways to higher-value markets and potential contracts.
- **Applicable when:** Cooperative programming aims to generate or strengthen livelihood outcomes in contexts of market volatility and access constraints.
- **Target users:** ILO Representative Office; ILO Project Team; Ministry of Labour; donors; partners working on markets and finance.
- **Repeat / avoid:** **Repeat** explicit market-facing pathways (commercialization and buyer linkages) linked to readiness milestones; **avoid** treating market support as an optional add-on when livelihood outcomes are expected.

Lesson 8: In constrained environments, resilience and continuity outcomes should be defined and measured explicitly

Lesson statement: When expansion-oriented outcomes are unrealistic, programmes benefit from defining “resilience/continuity” as an explicit result and aligning measurement accordingly.

- **Context derived from:** After October 2023 and under long-standing movement and access constraints, adaptive delivery focused on sustaining cooperative operations and protecting governance practices from regression.
- **Applicable when:** Implementation occurs under prolonged shocks, restricted access, or high uncertainty where growth targets are not feasible.
- **Target users:** ILO Representative Office; ILO Project Team; donors; national counterparts responsible for monitoring and learning.
- **Repeat / avoid:** **Repeat** results frameworks that include resilience/continuity indicators and realistic targets; **avoid** relying only on expansion or growth metrics in crisis conditions.

8 EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

This evaluation identifies the following emerging good practices with potential to strengthen cooperative development programming in Palestine and comparable fragile and conflict-affected settings. Detailed Good Practice templates are provided in Annex 2.

Good Practice 1 — Practice-oriented governance coaching

How it works: CSP-OPT translated cooperative principles into practical governance routines through training and follow-up coaching, reinforcing role allocation, structured meetings, documentation, record-keeping, and internal accountability. This approach was most effective where cooperative leadership was engaged and members could adopt gradual formalization under constrained conditions.

Context: Fragile operating environment with constraints affecting continuity and follow-up.

Target users: Cooperative boards and members; trainers/coaches; public-sector cooperative support structures.

Link to impacts: FGDs and site visits indicate outcome-level improvements in role clarity, decision-making practices, and documentation, supporting more consistent internal governance.

Replicability: High, particularly in constrained settings where strengthening internal governance is a prerequisite for improved performance.

Good Practice 2 — Standardized needs identification and support planning

How it works: CSP-OPT applied structured approaches to diagnose cooperative needs and organize support planning more consistently across sites, helping address fragmentation in how cooperatives are assessed and supported.

Context: Cooperative support services vary in quality and approach across different actors, limiting consistency and comparability.

Target users: Ministry of Labour and relevant public institutions; cooperative support organizations; implementing partners.

Link to impacts: Evidence suggests improved structure in identifying constraints and planning support; broader system-level effects remained incremental where formal institutional adoption and resourcing were incomplete.

Replicability: High, especially for programmes seeking consistent assessment and support planning across multiple cooperatives.

Good Practice 3 — Pairing capacity development with targeted operational upgrades

How it works: CSP-OPT combined coaching and training with selective improvements to working environments and production tools/equipment in response to verified operational bottlenecks.

Context: Operational constraints (workflow, hygiene/handling, workspace functionality) can limit the practical benefits of training alone.

Target users: ILO project teams; donors; implementing partners; technical service providers supporting cooperative production and operations.

Link to impacts: Where cooperatives had minimum conditions to utilize inputs (basic infrastructure and feasible maintenance arrangements), fieldwork indicates practical outcome-level gains such as improved workflow organization, safer and more functional workspaces, and better product handling and hygiene.

Replicability: Moderate to high, provided inputs remain technically specific, matched to cooperative maturity, and linked to verified constraints.

Good Practice 4 — Adaptive management focused on resilience and continuity

How it works: After October 2023, CSP-OPT re-sequenced activities and prioritized feasible interventions to maintain cooperative continuity under a deteriorating West Bank context shaped by movement and access restrictions, market disruption, rising costs, and heightened insecurity.

Context: Shocks and access constraints reduced feasibility of expansion-oriented outcomes and increased implementation risks.

Target users: ILO project management teams; donors; national counterparts engaged in crisis-affected programming.

Link to impacts: KIs and FGDs suggest this adaptive shift helped sustain basic operations and prevent regression in governance practices, even where economic gains were constrained by external conditions.

Replicability: High, particularly for programmes in fragile and conflict-affected settings where maintaining continuity is a meaningful result.

Good Practice 5 — Targeted gender entry points addressing participation barriers

How it works: CSP-OPT sought to strengthen women's participation through accessible capacity-building and targeted interventions intended to address structural barriers, including unpaid care constraints, while encouraging women's voice in cooperative decision-making.

Context: Women's participation was influenced by time poverty, care responsibilities, and varying norms across cooperative types and locations.

Target users: ILO project teams; implementing partners; cooperative leaders; institutions shaping cooperative support modalities.

Link to impacts: FGDs indicate outcome-level gains among participating women in confidence, voice, and participation in cooperative decision-making, though results were uneven across cooperative types and locations. The care/childcare cooperative model emerged later as a relevant pathway; however, as it is not yet functioning, related effects should be treated as intended rather than demonstrated during the evaluation period.

Replicability: Moderate, with higher likelihood of success where delivery modalities reduce participation barriers and sequencing allows time for care-related solutions.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Institutionalize cooperative support tools within a clear governance arrangement

The International Labour Organization Representative Office in the occupied Palestinian territory and the Ministry of Labour should agree, document, and implement an institutional governance arrangement for the cooperative support tools developed under the programme, including responsibilities for staffing, financing, decision-making, and custodianship of training materials, assessment tools, and follow-up support, in order to prevent loss of gains during ongoing institutional restructuring.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Representative Office; Project Management; Ministry of Labour	High	Medium	Short-term

Recommendation 2: Establish a feasible pathway for cooperatives to access finance

The Ministry of Labour and the Cooperative Work Agency, with support from the International Labour Organization and in consultation with cooperative representative bodies and relevant stakeholders, should assess and determine the most feasible option to improve cooperatives' access to finance. Possible options may include operationalizing a cooperative financing mechanism or establishing formal referral arrangements with existing financial institutions. Any chosen approach should take into account regulatory requirements, eligibility constraints, and the financial management capacities of cooperatives.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
Ministry of Labour; Cooperative Work Agency; ILO Representative Office; Project Management	High	High	Medium-term

Recommendation 3: Implement tiered capacity development based on cooperative maturity and needs

The International Labour Organization Project Team should implement a tiered capacity development model that distinguishes foundational training for newer or smaller cooperatives from specialized coaching for more established cooperatives, based on verified needs assessments, and including tailored modules such as quality assurance, production optimization, business planning, and marketing, as relevant.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
Project Management (ILO Project Team)	High	Medium	Short-term

Recommendation 4: Organize governorate-based training and coaching to reduce participation barriers

The International Labour Organization Project Team, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and the Cooperative Work Agency, should prioritize governorate-based delivery of training and coaching, with predictable schedules and follow-up sessions, to reduce travel time and

transaction costs and to improve continuity of participation, particularly for women and participants with care responsibilities.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
Project Management (ILO Project Team); Ministry of Labour; Cooperative Work Agency	Medium	Medium	Short-term

Recommendation 5: Integrate market access and commercialization support as a defined results pathway

The International Labour Organization representative Office and national counterparts should complement governance support with practical market-facing assistance, including branding and packaging, distribution linkages, buyer identification, and support for participation in trade fairs and exhibitions where feasible, prioritizing cooperatives that meet minimum governance and product readiness milestones.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Representative Office; Project Management; Ministry of Labour	High	Medium	Medium-term

Recommendation 6: Clarify and strengthen the role of representative bodies in scaling cooperative support

The International Labour Organization representative Office and the Ministry of Labour should agree a realistic engagement approach with cooperative unions and representative bodies, defining explicit roles for follow-up support, dissemination, and referrals, including structured entry points for the Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit and a feasible plan to broaden engagement beyond a single consistently responsive body.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Representative Office; Ministry of Labour; Tripartite Constituents	Medium	Low	Short-term

Recommendation 7: Define and integrate a purposeful role for the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions

The International Labour Organization representative Office, the Ministry of Labour, and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions should agree an explicit and feasible role for the federation in cooperative-related programming, such as awareness-raising on rights and responsibilities, linkages to workers' concerns, and support to care economy initiatives where relevant, and integrate this role from the outset of future programmes rather than through late or ad hoc engagement.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Representative Office; Ministry of Labour; Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions	Medium	Low	Medium-term

Recommendation 8: Address gender-related participation barriers through accessible delivery and feasible care solutions

The International Labour Organization Project Team and partners should implement practical measures to support women’s participation, including accessible training locations, schedules compatible with care responsibilities, and follow-up modalities that reduce travel burdens. Where care-related cooperative initiatives are pursued, these should be underpinned by a feasibility-based operational plan covering governance arrangement, service scope, revenue model, staffing, and safeguarding.

To ensure effectiveness and accountability, these measures should be accompanied by strengthened routine monitoring, including the systematic collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated participation and outcome data (e.g., leadership roles, training completion, access to services, and market participation), in line with the data limitations identified in Section 4.7.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
Project Management (ILO Project Team); ILO Representative Office; Ministry of Labour	High	Medium	Short-term

Recommendation 9: Streamline cooperative-facing administrative requirements while maintaining accountability safeguards

The International Labour Organization Project Team should streamline templates and reporting requirements, reduce duplication, and apply proportional compliance expectations for smaller cooperatives while maintaining fiduciary safeguards, and provide light-touch coaching on documentation to improve uptake without overloading limited cooperative staffing. At the same time, future programmes should embed systematic disaggregation of routine monitoring data (e.g. by sex, age, cooperative type, and intervention level) to enable more robust assessment of differentiated results without increasing reporting burdens.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
Project Management (ILO Project Team)	Medium	Low	Short-term

10 APPENDICES



Annex 1: Lessons Learned

Project title: Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine (CSP-OPT)

Project DC/SYMBOL: PSE/19/01/ITA

Name of Evaluator: Faraj Ghunaim

Date: 30 Jan 2026

Lesson 1: Macro-level change requires a clear adoption and institutionalization pathway

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	System-level reform outputs (policies, tools, frameworks) are unlikely to translate into sustained change without an explicit pathway for endorsement, institutional hosting, and resourcing.
Context and any related preconditions	CSP-OPT advanced technical inputs and policy dialogue, but several macro-level outputs were not formally adopted within the project lifecycle amid institutional restructuring and shifting mandates in cooperative sector governance.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Representative Office; ILO Project Team; Ministry of Labour (MoL); Cooperative Work Agency / relevant public institutions; donors.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Limited and uneven engagement of representative bodies, particularly sectoral unions and employers' organizations, constrained broader ownership of system-level reform outputs • Absence of fully institutionalized social dialogue mechanisms reduced opportunities for tripartite endorsement and follow-up • Ongoing institutional restructuring and unclear mandates weakened formal adoption pathways • System-level reforms depended on formal endorsement processes that extended beyond the project lifecycle
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Strong technical quality of outputs aligned with international good practice and relevant International Labour Standards, including the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193) • Constructive policy dialogue increased awareness of reform needs among key public institutions • Initial stakeholder engagement with selected institutions created a foundation for potential future uptake and institutionalization
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Design underestimated the time and political capital required for institutionalization; limited dedicated resources for adoption support, follow-up, and transition planning.

Lesson 2: Scaling through representative bodies requires explicit roles and realistic capacity assumptions

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Representative bodies did not function automatically as scaling mechanisms; effectiveness depended on clearly defined roles, minimum commitments, and realistic assessments of organizational capacity.
Context and any related preconditions	Engagement with cooperative unions and representative bodies varied considerably. While the Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit showed consistent responsiveness, broader union engagement remained uneven, and PGFTU engagement became more visible later in the project through care and childcare cooperative activities.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Representative Office; ILO Project Team; Ministry of Labour; cooperative unions and representative bodies; donors.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Assumptions about capacity and availability of representative bodies • Limited operational support and incentives • Competing mandates and workload pressures
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Where roles were clear, representative bodies contributed to outreach and follow-up • Existing sectoral relevance increased responsiveness (e.g. saving and credit unions)
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Need for stronger upfront capacity assessment and clearer partnership frameworks, including resource allocation for coordination and follow-up.

Lesson 3: Under volatility and fixed ceilings, depth often matters more than breadth

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Attempting wide geographic or sectoral coverage under volatile conditions diluted results, while more focused engagement produced clearer outcomes and learning.
Context and any related preconditions	Implementation occurred under access constraints, market instability, and fixed resource ceilings, forcing trade-offs between the number of supported cooperatives and the intensity of support provided.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Project Team; ILO Representative Office; donors; implementing partners.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Pressure to demonstrate broad reach • Limited time and staffing to support follow-up • Fragmentation of support across multiple sites
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Concentrated support enabled demonstrable practice change • Clearer evidence of results and replicable models
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Design incentives favored coverage indicators over depth; monitoring frameworks could have better reflected intensity and quality of support.

Lesson 4: Bottom-up cooperative strengthening generates ownership, but scaling requires system integration and handover arrangements

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Cooperative-level practice change was achieved more rapidly than system-level uptake; sustaining gains required clearer integration into institutional routines and post-project handover arrangements.
Context and any related preconditions	The project successfully strengthened governance and operations at cooperative level, while institutional adoption of some system-level mechanisms did not materialize within the project period.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Representative Office; ILO Project Team; Ministry of Labour; Cooperative Work Agency; donors.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Lack of formal handover plans • Dependence on project-based delivery • Limited institutional readiness for absorption
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• High ownership at cooperative level • Visible practice change and governance improvements
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Insufficient emphasis on exit strategies and post-project ownership in design and implementation planning.

Lesson 5: Capacity development is more effective when tailored to cooperative maturity and delivered through accessible modalities

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Tailored capacity development aligned with cooperative maturity levels and delivered through accessible modalities improved participation, relevance, and equity.
Context and any related preconditions	Cooperatives varied widely in governance quality, experience, and market readiness. Centralized delivery increased time and cost burdens, while localized delivery improved accessibility, particularly for women.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Project Team; implementing partners; Ministry of Labour; Cooperative Work Agency.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• One-size-fits-all training approaches • Centralized delivery creating participation barriers • Limited follow-up in some locations
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Tiered training matched cooperative needs • Localized delivery increased continuity and inclusion
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Need for greater flexibility in training design, budgeting for decentralized delivery, and structured follow-up mechanisms.

Lesson 6: Combining governance coaching with targeted operational upgrades can accelerate practical improvements

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Governance strengthening produced faster operational gains when paired with targeted upgrades that addressed verified bottlenecks.
Context and any related preconditions	Cooperatives that received both governance coaching and improvements to workspaces or equipment reported tangible gains in workflow, hygiene, and safety.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Project Team; donors; implementing partners; technical service providers.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Risk of underutilized equipment without follow-up • Maintenance and sustainability concerns
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Bottleneck-driven upgrades enhanced utilization • Improved working environments reinforced governance practices
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Design benefited from better integration between “soft” governance support and “hard” operational investments.

Lesson 7: Market linkages are needed to translate internal strengthening into livelihood outcomes

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Internal governance and production improvements did not automatically lead to livelihood gains without structured market access and commercialization support.
Context and any related preconditions	Cooperatives identified unmet needs related to marketing, branding, packaging, and access to buyers, exhibitions, and trade fairs.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Representative Office; ILO Project Team; Ministry of Labour; donors; market and finance partners.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Market support treated as supplementary • Limited integration with market-focused actors
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Clear demand for market-facing interventions • Cooperatives demonstrated readiness when linked to concrete opportunities
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Stronger coordination with market and private-sector partners could have enhanced livelihood outcomes.

Lesson 8: In constrained environments, resilience and continuity outcomes should be defined and measured explicitly

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Defining resilience and continuity as explicit outcomes improved the relevance of programming when expansion-oriented results were unrealistic.
Context and any related preconditions	Following October 2023 and under prolonged access restrictions, implementation focused on sustaining cooperative operations and preventing regression.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO Representative Office; ILO Project Team; donors; national counterparts responsible for monitoring and learning.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Results frameworks emphasizing growth despite crisis conditions • Limited indicators capturing resilience and continuity
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Adaptive delivery sustained core governance practices • Cooperatives maintained operations under shock conditions
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Monitoring frameworks required greater flexibility to reflect crisis-adapted objectives and realistic targets.



Annex 2: Emerging Good Practices

Project title: Final independent evaluation of the Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine (CSP-OPT)

Project DC/SYMBOL: PSE/19/01/ITA

Name of Evaluator: Faraj Ghunaim

Date: 30 Jan 2026

Emerging Good Practice 1: Practice-oriented governance coaching

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Practice-oriented governance coaching
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	CSP-OPT delivered governance-focused training and coaching that translated cooperative principles into day-to-day routines (role allocation, structured meetings, documentation, record-keeping, internal accountability). This aligns with CSP-OPT's cooperative strengthening objectives by improving governance and management practices as a foundation for cooperative performance.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Most applicable where cooperative leadership is engaged and members can adopt gradual formalization. In highly constrained environments, routine-based improvements remain feasible, but depth of practice change varies with cooperative staffing and time availability.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Training/coaching + follow-up reinforcement → improved understanding and adoption of governance routines → clearer roles and more structured decision-making and documentation.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Target beneficiaries: cooperative boards and members in supported cooperatives. Measurable/observable outcome-level changes reported through FGDs and site visits include improved role clarity, more structured meetings/decisions, and improved documentation/record-keeping.
Potential for replication and by whom	High replicability. Can be replicated by Cooperative Work Agency/Ministry structures, implementing partners, and trained local facilitators using standardized materials and follow-up modalities.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Contributes to DWCP-aligned institutional and capacity development priorities and supports decent work principles through improved cooperative governance and accountability, consistent with ILO Recommendation No. 193.
Other documents or relevant comments	Supported by KIIs/FGDs and cooperative visit minutes/case summaries; effectiveness stronger where training is adapted to cooperative maturity and delivered accessibly.

Emerging Good Practice 2: Standardized needs identification and support planning

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Standardized diagnostic and support-planning approach for cooperatives.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	CSP-OPT applied structured approaches to identify cooperative needs and organize support planning consistently across sites, aiming to reduce fragmentation and improve the quality/consistency of cooperative support. This links to CSP-OPT's ecosystem-strengthening intent and development of standardized tools and approaches.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Best suited in ecosystems with multiple actors and uneven service quality. Sector-wide effect depends on institutional adoption and resourcing; without formal uptake, benefits remain localized to supported cooperatives/partners.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Standardized diagnostic/support planning, clearer identification of binding constraints and more coherent support packages, improved relevance and targeting of interventions at cooperative level.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Target beneficiaries: cooperatives receiving support; institutions/support providers applying the approach. Observable outcomes include improved structure in needs identification and support planning; broader system-level change remains incremental where adoption is incomplete.
Potential for replication and by whom	High potential for replication by public-sector cooperative bodies, implementing partners, and donors requiring harmonized approaches; replication strengthened by formal endorsement and integration into routine workflows.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Supports DWCP-aligned outcomes on institutional strengthening and more coherent delivery of decent work-related support, consistent with the ILO's SSE orientation and Recommendation No. 193.
Other documents or relevant comments	Note: concepts/tools advanced under CSP-OPT were not fully institutionalized during the project lifecycle; replication requires clarity of mandates and resourcing arrangements.

Emerging Good Practice 3: Pairing capacity development with targeted operational upgrades

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Combined package: capacity development + targeted improvements to working environment and production tools/equipment.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	CSP-OPT paired training/coaching with selective upgrades to workspaces and production tools/equipment to address verified bottlenecks and improve operational functioning. This supports cooperative-level performance by linking “know-how” with practical enabling inputs.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Most effective where minimum enabling conditions exist (basic infrastructure, ability to maintain/utilize equipment). Cost-effectiveness varies where needs exceed available ceilings or where utilization depends on conditions outside project control (e.g., logistics, power, maintenance).
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Verified bottleneck + targeted equipment/workspace improvement (with coaching) → improved workflow, safer/more functional workspaces, better handling/hygiene → improved operational efficiency and product consistency.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Target beneficiaries: cooperative members/workers in supported cooperatives. Observable outcome-level effects from site visits/FGDs include improved workflow organization, safer and more organized workspaces, improved product handling/hygiene, and reduced operational inefficiencies; economic impacts remained modest/uneven due to external constraints.
Potential for replication and by whom	Replicable by programmes and implementing partners using needs-based technical packages, with clear criteria and minimum utilization conditions; donors can replicate through targeted small grants linked to diagnostics.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	Supports DWCP priorities on sustainable livelihoods and decent work by improving working conditions and strengthening cooperative operational capacity.
Other documents or relevant comments	Cooperatives frequently linked equipment/workspace needs to market readiness; complementary market-linkage support increases likelihood of translating operational gains into livelihood outcomes.

Emerging Good Practice 4: Adaptive management focused on resilience and continuity

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Adaptive re-sequencing and prioritization to maintain continuity under deterioration.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	After October 2023, CSP-OPT adapted by re-sequencing activities and prioritizing feasible interventions supporting resilience and continuity under intensified access restrictions, insecurity, market disruption, and rising costs in the West Bank. This aligns with CSP-OPT's objective of sustaining cooperative functioning and institutional stability under volatile conditions.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Applicable in fragile/conflict-affected contexts where operating conditions shift rapidly. Adaptation may constrain achievement of expansion-oriented economic outcomes; success depends on timely decision-making and flexible implementation arrangements.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Adaptive reprioritization (continuity/resilience focus) → feasible delivery under constraints → prevention of regression in governance practices and support for maintaining basic operations.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Target beneficiaries: supported cooperatives and partner institutions. Evidence indicates contributions to maintaining basic operations, cooperative cohesion, and governance practices; economic gains remained constrained by external factors.
Potential for replication and by whom	Replicable by ILO/partners and donors implementing in volatile contexts, using adaptive management mechanisms (re-phasing, flexible modalities, context monitoring).
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Supports DWCP-aligned resilience of decent work-related systems and sustained delivery in fragile contexts, consistent with risk-informed programme management.
Other documents or relevant comments	Should be linked to clear decision logs and documented adaptations to maintain accountability and learning.

Emerging Good Practice 5: Targeted gender entry points addressing participation barriers

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Gender entry points to support women's participation (accessible training + targeted interventions addressing structural barriers).
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	CSP-OPT promoted women's participation through accessible capacity-building and targeted approaches intended to address structural barriers to engagement, including unpaid care constraints. This supports CSP-OPT's inclusion objectives and strengthens women's voice within cooperative decision-making.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Applicability varies by cooperative type and socio-cultural context; women's participation remained lower in some agricultural cooperatives due to structural constraints. Interventions addressing care barriers require realistic sequencing and functional operational arrangements.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Accessible, participation-oriented capacity development → increased confidence and participation in meetings/decision-making → incremental shifts in women's leadership and voice within engaged cooperatives.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Target beneficiaries: women cooperative members/leaders (and cooperatives seeking inclusive governance). FGDs report outcome-level gains in confidence and participation among engaged women. The care/childcare cooperative model is not yet functioning; effects in that pathway are intended rather than demonstrated during the evaluation period.
Potential for replication and by whom	Replicable by implementing partners and institutions if delivery modalities reduce participation barriers and structural constraints are explicitly considered; replication strengthened by practical enabling measures and sustained follow-up.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Aligns with DWCP priorities on gender equality and inclusion in decent work and cooperative development, consistent with ILO commitments to non-discrimination.
Other documents or relevant comments	Avoid over-claiming results: childcare model should be reported as an intended mechanism until operational and evidenced.

Annex 3: Terms of Reference



Terms of Reference

Final independent evaluation of the Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine (CSP-OPT)

1. Key facts

Title of project being evaluated	Cooperative Support Programme for Palestine (CSP-OPT)
Project DC Code	PSE/19/01/ITA
Type of evaluation (e.g. independent, internal)	Independent evaluation
Timing of evaluation (e.g. midterm, final)	Final
Donor	Italy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation;
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	ILO Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS)
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	COOP and ROAS
P&B outcome (s) under evaluation	2022-23 Outcome 4: Sustainable Enterprises; 5: Rural employment; 6: Informal economy 2024-25 Outcome 4 (Enterprises) Output 4.4 (formalization), Outcome 3, Output 3.3 (Rural)
SDG(s) under evaluation	SDG 8
Budget	1,774,370 USD

2. Background information

Cooperatives in Palestine date back to the early twentieth century and have become a key model for community-driven economic development across various sectors, including agriculture, credit, housing, and social services. They often arise to meet needs unmet by the public or private sector, helping communities create jobs, improve livelihoods, and access markets and resources, especially in rural and informal economies.

By 2021, there were 675 registered cooperatives, with 336 active and 339 inactive, and a total membership of 55,758, including 189 in Gaza. Women remain underrepresented, with only 66 women-led cooperatives, 49 of which are active. Despite this, cooperatives offer significant potential for inclusive economic participation.

The sector is regulated by Decree Law No. 20 of 2017, aligned with ILO Recommendation No. 193, which promotes autonomous and inclusive cooperatives based on voluntary membership, democratic management, and cooperation between groups, aiming to strengthen both members' livelihoods and community well-being.

Cooperative Support Programme (CSP)

The ILO's Cooperative Support Programme (CSP) is a component of the 3-year Programme "Be the Impact". Funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) for EUR 1.5 million, it aims to strengthen Palestinian cooperatives. It also aims to consolidate the core principles of social entrepreneurship culture to pave the way to a more inclusive and sustainable form of development that combines market principles and social purpose.

The core of the problem:

Palestinian cooperatives have strong potential to create jobs, reduce poverty, promote gender equality, and support marginalized groups. However, they currently underperform due to a "triple crisis":

- The institutional, legal and administrative environment in which cooperatives operate is not fully conducive;
- The very purpose of many cooperatives is not clear, because they have been promoted from outside with little or no member involvement;
- The performance of many cooperatives is poor, due to both internal factors (management capacity) and external factors (those affecting the entire Palestinian economy).

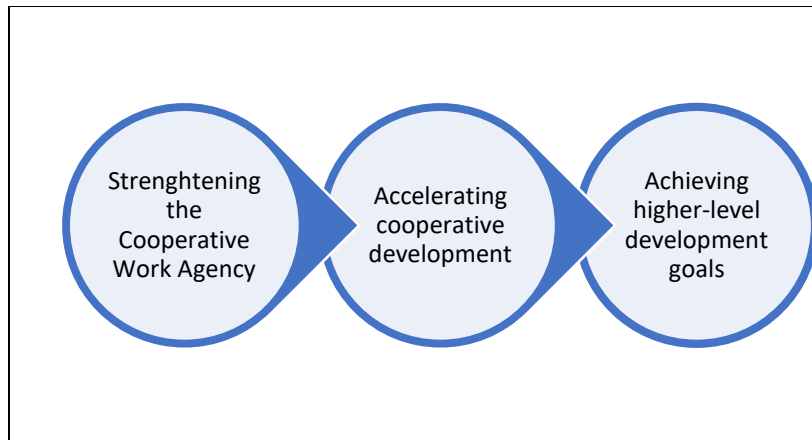
The CSP is based on the idea that autonomous cooperatives can contribute to broader development goals like job creation, equality, and economic growth. Strengthening cooperatives is not a goal in itself but a means to support national development priorities.

The primary focus will be on improving the environment in which cooperatives operate by supporting the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA) and its subsidiary bodies, the Cooperative Development Institute (CDI) and Cooperative Development Fund (CDF). These bodies will regulate and promote cooperatives, ensuring their independence while creating a supportive ecosystem in line with ILO Recommendation 193.

Improving this environment is expected to also help resolve the identity and performance challenges of cooperatives. The CWA and CDI will offer capacity building, improve management systems, and ensure all cooperatives align with the 2017 cooperative law and cooperative principles.

These interventions are intended to contribute to the development of a conducive ecosystem that will allow cooperatives to emerge and flourish while preserving their independence and autonomy.

Moreover, the CSP works to enable cooperatives to effectively contribute to local economic development through technical support to the newly founded General Cooperative Union (GCU) and its six sectorial unions: Agriculture, Housing, Savings and Credit, Consumer, Handicraft, and Marketing. This support will focus on planning, training, governance, and effective leadership to improve service provision by these secondary and tertiary bodies to primary cooperatives. It also promotes the exchange of expertise and knowledge with international partners including the cooperative movement.



The project aligns with the Cooperative Sector Strategy 2017–2022, which prioritizes:

- A supportive institutional environment,
- Better organizational performance,
- Expansion into new cooperative fields.

The vision: A strong, independent cooperative sector grounded in cooperative principles, contributing meaningfully to Palestine’s economy and state-building.

The CSP is formulated around the following development objectives and outputs.

The development objective of the project:

Decent work for Palestinian women and men through the promotion and strengthening of autonomous and economically self-reliant cooperatives

Outcomes of the project:

Outcome1: Conducive eco-system

Output 1.1: CWA fully operational

Output 1.2: Cooperative unions reviewed and strengthened
 Output1. 3: A national cooperative conference convened in Palestine
 Outcome2: Efficient Support infrastructure
 Output 2.1: CDI and CDF legal and institutional setup established
 Outcome3: Cooperative Innovations
 Output 3.1: Knowledge and experience sharing with other countries organized
 Output 3.2: South-South cooperation in cooperative development
 Output3.3: New forms and types of cooperatives introduced

The pre-conditions as per logframe are:

- The political and social situation remains relatively stable;
- The security conditions do not hinder the implementation of the activities;
- Freedom of access and movement is guaranteed in the project area for staff and beneficiaries;
- The reference institutions support the intervention;
- Continued engagement and strong collaboration between tripartite constituents and the ILO;
- Political will and continuity of representation and collaboration of ILO constituents, irrespective of political turnover.

The assumptions as per logframe include:

- The tightening of Israeli policies does not escalate further
- Political factors do not slow down the reform of the system that regulates cooperative work
- Key stakeholders collaborate and actively participate
 - High public interest in the issues addressed and promoted by the project
 - Interest of key stakeholders in innovating the cooperative sector
 - Good participation of policy makers in the proposed activities
 - High level engagement of CWA committee and staff
 - CWA representatives will be willing to work with the project to produce and develop the different documents needed.
 - CWA representatives will be open to receive training
 - Sectoral unions and GCU collaborate and actively participate in the assessment
 - Good attendance at the strategic planning workshops
 - Good attendance at training sessions
- Freedom of access and movement is guaranteed
 - The project manages to go to the field for conducting the assessments/activities with sectoral unions, GCU and primary cooperatives.

Contribution to the ILO's strategic framework and national priorities

The project contribute directly to three policy outcomes of the 2018-19 ILO Programme and Budget, namely:

- Outcome 4, "Sustainable Enterprises", in particular its indicator 4.1
- Outcome 5, "Decent work in the rural economy", in particular its indicator 5.2
- Outcome 6, "Formalization of the informal economy", in particular its indicator 6.2

Moreover, the project will contribute to priority 1 of the second-generation ILO Decent Work Programme¹ (DWP) for Palestine (2018-22) (International Labour Organization, 2018), namely to “enhance employment and livelihood opportunities for Palestinian women and men”, under ILO support for the implementation of the Cooperative Sector Strategy has been included. Within the context of this strategy, the DWP is expected to support the Government and the social partners to develop a model of intervention to support cooperatives. The project aims to contribute to the achievement of Decent Work Country Programme Outcome PSE 102: Entrepreneurship development and women economic empowerment promoted (linked to policy outcome 4: Promoting sustainable enterprises).

The project is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDG) in Palestine and contribute specifically to SDG 8.

Moreover, according to the Mid Term Evaluation, the project is aligned with the broader National Policy Agenda 2017-2022, specifically Pillar 3, which emphasizes Economic Independence. The project aligns with priorities 11 (Building Palestine’s Future Economy) and 12 (Creating Job Opportunities), showcasing its commitment to contributing to the economic development goals of the nation. Furthermore, the project adheres to the principles and actions of the European Joint Strategy in Support of Palestine 2017-2020, positioning itself as an integral part of the international cooperative development landscape.

Cross-cutting issues

The Cooperative Support Programme (CSP) for Palestine integrated ILO cross-cutting issues into its design and results framework.

In terms of **international labour standards**, the project aligned closely with ILO Recommendation No. 193, emphasizing cooperative autonomy, equality with other enterprise forms, and support for social objectives such as employment and inclusion. The CSP worked to harmonize the Palestinian cooperative legal framework with these international standards, including through support for the Cooperative Labour Law. However, the MTE also concluded that “it is imperative that this adherence transcends the realm of mere principle and is visibly reflected in practical implementations that align with global best practices in cooperative development.”

Social dialogue: The project employed a bottom-up, participatory approach by engaging a wide range of stakeholders—cooperative members, unions, civil society organizations, and public institutions—in strategic planning and decision-making. These processes helped foster ownership and accountability, while also promoting alignment with the National Policy Agenda.

Gender equality: The CSP designed specific interventions to promote women’s participation and leadership in cooperatives and unions. It developed women-only cooperative training materials, implemented leadership workshops, and encouraged women participation in all major capacity-

¹ ILO’s previous and very first DWP for Palestine **Invalid source specified.**, which had covered the period 2013-2106, also included a strong element of cooperative development, with a particular focus on the promotion of women’s cooperatives, for which a dedicated output had been formulated.

building activities. Moreover, efforts to digitalize learning materials aimed to make cooperative knowledge more accessible to youth and women.

The project's overarching commitment to **non-discrimination** was reflected in its support for cooperatives that serve marginalized and excluded populations, including those in the informal economy and conflict-affected areas such as Gaza. Activities promoting inclusive governance, awareness-raising, and equitable service delivery reinforced these values. Disability inclusion was not a specific focus.

Steering committee

The project is guided, coordinated and monitored by a dedicated steering committee comprising representatives from the CWA, the CDI and the CDF, elected leaders from the cooperative unions, the ILO, as well as the donor supporting the project. A national cooperative conference (see above) would be organized towards the end of project implementation as well.

ILO management set up of CSP

The project team is supported by the ILO Office in Jerusalem, which is responsible for ILO activities in the OPT. Additional technical support is provided by the Regional Office for the Arab States, located in Beirut, and the Decent Work Team of technical specialists attached to the Regional Office. In addition, ILO COOP and various other technical units at ILO headquarters also provide technical support.

The project implementation started in June 2021 and the project end date is November 2025. As foreseen for this project, and in alignment with the ILO evaluation rules and procedures for similar projects of the same scope, a final independent evaluation will be conducted. For this purpose, an evaluator(s) will be recruited to produce a draft and final report based on information and data gathered including through a field mission. The Project Team and partners will participate in the exercise and provide inputs for the report as and when needed.

3. Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

The ILO is committed to enhancing the quality and use of evaluations so that they become a key vehicle of accountability and learning, in line with ILO's Evaluation Policy. The evaluation of the CSP is an independent final evaluation.

Purpose and objectives

The final independent evaluation of the Cooperative Support Programme (CSP) covers the entire project design and implementation process, with a view to examining, in line with OECD/DAC criteria: relevance, coherence, design validity, performance, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The evaluation will also identify strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy, and implementation as well as lessons learned, best practices, and recommendations for consideration in future interventions and projects. It will also touch upon cross cutting issues such as gender equality, disability, social dialogue, international standards, and covid-19, and the achievement of the relevant sustainable development goals, in terms of challenges and opportunities for tackling the most vulnerable segments in line with guidelines and protocols set by EVAL/ILO. The findings of the evaluation will be used to feed into the ILO's programme and projects, particularly in this area of work in Palestine and enhance the ILO's relevance and

impact in that regard. It will amongst others, specifically inform the development of a potential new project to be designed and agreed with the donor for 2026.

Scope

The evaluation will span 4 years and 6 months, from June 2021 to November 2025, capturing valuable insights into the program's nature, extent, impact, and sustainability. It will take into account the political, security, and environmental constraints as well as the alignment of the project objectives with key frameworks, such as the ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B) strategy, the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) in Palestine and the Decent Work Programme (DWP) in Palestine. The geographical scope of the project is Palestine.

The Decent Work Programme (DWP) in Palestine is undergoing an evaluation mid 2025, approximately during the same time-frame as for the current evaluation of the CSP. As the evaluation of the Decent Work Programme (DWP) in Palestine encompasses CSP as well as other projects, care will be taken to coordinate and share information and reduce duplication of interviews and survey with the same stakeholders.

Clients

The primary users of this evaluation are the: ILO Project Team, ILO-Jerusalem Representative Office, ILO ROAS, Italy, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), the Cooperative work Agency (CWA), General Cooperative Union (GCU) and its six sectorial unions, Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (FPCCIA).

Secondary users include, the Government Ministries and Official Bodies that are directly involved in the cooperative sector and will benefit from the findings, including The Ministry of Labor (MOL); The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA); The Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MOPWH); The Ministry of National Economy (MONE); The Ministry of Finance (MOF); and The Ministry of Local Government (MOLG).

Relevant international organizations active in the field of cooperation include: We Effect, Oxfam, CARE International, COSPE (Italian), Spanish organizations, and the Italian Banking Association (ABI), as well as the ILO and FAO. Additionally, national civil society institutions which actively support the cooperative sector include the Palestinian Economic and Social Development Center (ESDC), Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), Ma'an Development Center, ARIJ Institute, Palestinian Youth Union, Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD), Palestinian Youth Union, Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), Working Women's Association, Rural Women's Development Society (RWDS), Businesswomen's Association (Asala).

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

The evaluation utilizes the standard ILO framework and follows its major evaluation criteria: strategic relevance, coherence and design validity, efficiency, impact and sustainability, as well as cross-cutting criteria relating to international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination and just transition to the environment.

To measure these evaluation criteria, the evaluator will refer, centrally but not exclusively, to the result indicators in the project document and also take into account the results of the mid-term evaluation and of the DWP for Palestine. The evaluation should identify the strengths and weaknesses in the project design, strategy, and implementation as well as lessons learned, best practices, and recommendations for consideration in future interventions and projects.

The questions below are intended to guide and facilitate the evaluation. It is by no means an exhaustive list. The evaluator may adapt the evaluation criteria and questions, but any fundamental changes should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluator, and reflected in the inception report.

Relevance and coherence

- Where there any changes since the MTE, with regards to the extent to which the project's objectives are aligned with the priorities of the Cooperative Sector Strategy 2017–2022 and with the national priorities of Palestine?
- Where there any changes since the MTE, with regards to the extent to which the project responds to the actual needs and priorities of cooperative members, unions, and other constituents in the OPT?

Design validity

- Are the project's strategies (e.g., support to the CWA, CDI, and CDF) still valid and appropriate given the evolving political, legal, and economic context?

Efficiency and effectiveness

- To what extent have the project's resources (financial, human, material) been used efficiently since the MTE, to produce planned outputs?
- How effective and timely were the project's management and operational arrangements in delivering planned activities?
- How well did the project coordinate with national institutions (e.g., CWA, ministries) and international partners to support implementation?

Impact

- What positive or negative changes (intended or unintended) has the project generated among cooperative members, unions, and partner institutions, especially in terms of employment and economic empowerment?
- To what extent has the project contributed to secondary job creation through cooperative-linked infrastructure or services (e.g., markets, agriculture)?

Sustainability

- To what extent have cooperative institutions (CWA, CDI, CDF) and unions built sustainable capacity and systems to continue supporting cooperatives beyond the project's end?

- To what extent has the project promoted collaborative initiatives (as detailed in the MTE) that reinforce the interconnectedness of the cooperative sector, and contribute to its resilience and sustainability?

Cross-cutting criterion (international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination, and just transition to the environment)

- To what extent did the project's adherence to international labour standards transcend the realm of mere principle and was this visibly reflected in practical implementation?
- To what extent has the GSU and sectoral unions participated in strengthening cooperative institutions, and the other way round, taking into account the specific recommendations of the MTE?
- How effectively did the project promote gender equality and non-discrimination, taking into account the specific recommendations in that regard formulated in the MTE?

5. Methodology

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

- This evaluation will follow a mixed method approach relying on available quantitative data from the mid-term evaluation, progress reports, monitoring studies and databases, and primary qualitative data collected through interviews and group interviews. It will also utilize information and data gathered for the 2025 evaluation of the DWP for Palestine. Triangulation of the primary qualitative data will be done using the secondary data collected
- The analysis will follow a thematic examination of the main evaluation areas as guided by the evaluation questions. A list of stakeholders will be prepared and provided by the project team. Depending on the number and nature of stakeholders, the number of group interviews and individual KIs to be conducted will be identified.
- Gender will be mainstreamed throughout the methodology from data collection to data analysis. Where appropriate, the methodology will ensure equal representation of women and men throughout data collection and provide separate group meetings as relevant. The evaluation will follow the ILO guidelines on integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation.²
- The detailed specific evaluation methodology, including the workplan, will be provided in the Inception Report prepared by the evaluator and approved by the Evaluation Manager.
- The methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods, including those related to representation of specific group of stakeholders.

² See the [Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation](#) and the [Supplementary Guidance Note: Integrating gender equality in ILO monitoring and evaluation, 2020](#)

- Tools: the interview guide will be developed in a participatory manner with a selected number of key stakeholders as agreed with the project team and ILO evaluation manager, in light of the evaluation themes and main questions as well as the type of stakeholders.
- Key selected stakeholders should be involved and participate in the implementation and dissemination of the evaluation. A validation workshop should be organized, to present and validate the findings and results of the evaluation with the key stakeholders.
- Sample: The study sample should be reflective of all relevant stakeholders taking into consideration the scope of the project and its evaluation as well as data saturation. All analysed data should be disaggregated by gender, and other criteria relevant to the project (disability status, age group, ethnic group etc)

The results shall address the crosscutting issues described above. The evaluator may adapt the methodology, but any fundamental changes should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluator, and reflected in the inception report.

6. Main deliverables

The main deliverables of the evaluation are:

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

Inception report

The inception report will follow the below structure:

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

Final report

The final version of the report will follow the below format and:

- Title page
- Table of contents, including a list of appendices, tables

- List of acronyms or abbreviations
- Executive summary with methodology, key findings, conclusions and recommendations
- Background and project description
- Purpose of evaluation
- Evaluation methodology and evaluation questions
- Clearly identified findings along OECD/DAC criteria, substantiated with evidence
- Key results (i.e. figures and qualitative results) achieved per objective (expected and unexpected)
- Clearly identified conclusions and recommendations that are linked to findings (identifying which stakeholders are responsible, priority of recommendations, and timeframe)
- Lessons learned per ILO template
- Potential good practices per ILO template
- Annexes (list of interviews, TORs, lessons learned and best practices in ILO EVAL templates, list of documents consulted, etc.) –
- See section 10 below for links to the checklists.

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

7. Management arrangements and work plan

The independent final evaluation will be managed by an ILO official, certified by ILO/EVAL as Evaluation Manager, who is independent from the implementation of the project, according to ILO procedures. The evaluation is supported by the Regional Evaluation Officer (REO) at the ILO ROAS and the Evaluation Officer from the Evaluation Department in Geneva.

The evaluator (team) will discuss with her all technical and methodological issues when needed. She will be coordinate with the CTA to provide the main documents and any information that the evaluator (team) will need to carry out their mission. The evaluator will send the report to the Evaluation Manager. The evaluation manager will be supervised by the ILO Regional Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, who will provide technical support during the evaluation process.

The project team will provide administrative support including sending the main documents and any information that the evaluator will need to carry out their mission and facilitate contacts with the various partners. Meetings will be organized on this occasion with the authorities, partners and beneficiaries concerned by the project. Meetings with OPT authorities and partners may take place in OpT or remotely. Meetings with international partners and ILO colleagues based outside OpT may be held remotely. Visits will be organized to the project's pilot regions according to the program established by the project to meet with those involved in the operational organization of activities and the final beneficiaries of the project. The multi-partner feedback workshop will be held remotely.

The logistical organization is the responsibility of the evaluator, with the support of the ILO country office. Candidates' financial offers must include only the daily rate (in USD)

proposed by the candidate. The ILO will cover travel expenses and pay a daily subsistence allowance (DSA) to cover accommodation costs.

The work assignment will include:

1. Internal briefing by the project team(s)

The evaluator will have an initial consultation with the ILO relevant staff. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority assessment questions, available data sources and data collection instruments, and an outline of the final assessment report. The following topics will be covered: status of logistical arrangements, project's backgrounds and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, the outline of the inception and final report.

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

Desk Review

The evaluator will review project's background materials before conducting any interviews. These include:

- Project documents (Logic Framework, Theory of change...)
- Baseline reports and related data (if available)
- Monitoring reports conducted during the project
- Progress and status reports, extensions, and budget revisions
- Previous phase or related evaluation reports of the project (if available)
- Other studies and research were undertaken by the project
- Project beneficiary documentation
- Strategic documents (e.g., DWCP, Government's strategic plan)

Individual Interviews and group interviews

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

Individual or group interviews will be conducted with the following:

- ILO staff/consultants that are involved in the project.
- Representatives of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).
- Interviews with constituents and other stakeholders as relevant: CWA, GCU, and its sectorial unions, and the primary cooperatives.
- International civil society organizations which support the cooperative sector include; We Effect, Oxfam, CARE International, COSPE (Italian), Spanish organizations, and the Italian Banking Association (ABI), as well as the WFP and FAO.

- National civil society institutions which actively support the cooperative sector include the Palestinian Economic and Social Development Center (ESDC), Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), Ma'an Development Center, ARIJ Institute, Palestinian Youth Union, Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD), Palestinian Youth Union, Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), Working Women's Association, Rural Women's Development Society (RWDS), Businesswomen's Association (Asala).
- Representatives of different ministries including MOL, MOA, MONE, etc. as Cooperatives operate across a number of sectors.

Presentation at validation workshop

Upon completion of the missions and the first draft report, the evaluator will provide a presentation to the stakeholders on the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations during the validation workshop.

Evaluation Management

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

TABLE: Work plan and timeframe for deliverables : total 24 working days

Phases	Deliverables/justifications	Estimated working days	Timing and deadlines
Inception Phase	Deliverable 1: Inception Report	3 days	8 December
Verification & translation of tools (interview guide)	Tools in Arabic.	1 day	
Consultations with the project management team; donor, project coordinator, and other relevant partners and institutions	List of participants.	4 days	
Fieldwork, interviews and data collection (consultation with beneficiaries and local partners)	Travel/mission justifications	5 days	
Report writing	Deliverable 2: Draft evaluation report.	3 days	15 January
Validation of findings and results	Deliverable 3: Presentation of the findings and results at the validation workshop	2 days	January 2025 (date tbc)

	(including PowerPoint Presentation).		
Report writing continued	Deliverable 4: Draft 2 evaluation report.	3 days	28 February 2026
Review of evaluation report	Deliverable 5: Comments log of how all comments were considered and taken on board by the evaluator or not and why not.	1 days	28 February 2026
Finalization and publication of final report	Deliverable 6: Final evaluation report with executive summary (report will be considered final after all comments are integrated and validated by ILO EVAL).	2 days	28 February 2026

8. Profile of the evaluator

The evaluator(s) should have:

- An advanced degree in social sciences, development economics or relevant disciplines;
- Proven expertise in evaluation methods, labor markets, conflict issues and the ILO approach;
- At least 7 years of experience in the evaluation of development interventions and in the humanitarian context;
- Expertise in the Labour-intensive modality, job creation projects, capacity building and skills development, and other relevant subject matter;
- Previous experience in evaluations for UN agencies is preferred, particularly the ILO.
- An understanding of the ILO's mandate, tripartite structure, and international labour standard;
- Knowledge of OPT, and the regional context;
- Full command of the English and Arabic language (spoken and written) will be required.

9. Legal and ethical matters

This internal evaluation will comply with ILO evaluation guidelines and UN Norms and Standards.

- These ToRs will be accompanied by the code of conduct for carrying out the evaluation “Code of conduct for evaluation in the ILO”
- A specific statement that the consultant should not have any links to project management, or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation
- UNEG ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the internal evaluation.

10. Key resources for the evaluation

1. Code of conduct form (To be signed by the evaluator)

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206205/lang--en/index.htm

2. Checklist No. 3 Writing the inception report

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165972/lang--en/index.htm

3. Checklist 5 Preparing the evaluation report

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165967/lang--en/index.htm

4. Checklist 6 Rating the quality of evaluation report

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165968/lang--en/index.htm

5. Template for lessons learned and Emerging Good Practices

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206158/lang--en/index.htm

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206159/lang--en/index.htm

6. Guidance note 7 Stakeholders participation in the ILO evaluation

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165982/lang--en/index.htm

7. Guidance note 4 Integrating gender equality in M&E of projects

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165986/lang--en/index.htm

8. Template for evaluation title page

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_166357/lang--en/index.htm

9. Template for evaluation summary: <http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/edmas/eval/template-summary-en.doc>

Annex 4: List of persons interviewed

Table 1 List of persons interviewed

S.N.	Name	Gender	Organization	Designation	Mode of interview
1	Giuseppe Marano	M	AICS	Programme Officer Economic Development	Virtual
2	Mohammad Musleh	M	AICS	Economic Development Lead	Virtual
3	Dan Cork	M	ILO Jerusalem	ILO Representative, Jerusalem	Virtual
4	Abbas Mulhem	M	Palestinian Farmers Union	Director	Virtual
5	Mohammd Tobasi	M	Al-Reihiya cooperative-Yatta	Head	In person
6	Waseem kalboneh	M	Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU)	Coordinator	Virtual
7	Aisha Hmouda	F		Coordinator	Virtual
8	Rebhi Baker	M	Agricultural Cooperative Union	Cooperative Head	Virtual
9	Shawkat Sarsour	M	Sector Expert	Sector Expert/ ILO Master Trainer	Virtual
10	Mohammed Hasasneh	M	Land Research Center (LRC)	General Manager	Virtual
11	Medhat Al-Atawneh	M		Coordinator	Virtual
12	Sabreen Mohammad	F		Coordinator	Virtual
13	Sukaina Samhan	F	OXFAM	Economic Justice – Project Manager	Virtual
14	Mustafa Tamaizeh	M	OXFAM		Virtual
15	Marah khawaja	F	OXFAM	Coordinator	Virtual
16	Jamal Mubaslat	M	ESDC	Head, ESDC	Virtual
17	Rasha El Shurafa		ILO Jerusalem	Program Analyst (ILO)	Virtual
18	Dr. Radwan Qasrawi	M	Al-Quds University	Project Manager	Virtual
19	Rula Shqaier	F		Coordinator	Virtual
20	Rand Taweel	F		Coordinator	Virtual
21	Younis Sbeih	M	ILO/Ramallah	Project Management Team	Virtual
22	Coop team	2 M	Alsanabel Coop	Coop team	In person
23	Coop team	2 F	Beit Ummar Coop	Coop team	In person
24	Coop team	3 F	Dura Coop	Coop team	In person
25	Coop team	3 F	Battir Coop	Coop team	In person
26	Coop team	2 M	Almakhrour Coop	Coop team	In person
27	Coop team	2 M	Abu Dies Coop	Coop team	In person
28	Coop team	4 F	Salfeet Coop	Coop team	In person
29	Coop team	3 F	Ibdaa Coop-Deir Balut	Coop team	In person
30	Razan Asfour	F	ILO	Project Management Team	Virtual
31	Fuad Kharma	M	CWA	Prohects Manager	Virtual

Annex 5: Evaluation questions matrix, including data collection instruments

The evaluation questions applied in this Final Report correspond to those approved in the Inception Report (Annex II – Data Collection Plan Worksheet).

Minor wording differences between the TOR and the Inception version reflect updated national strategy references and contextual developments following October 2023. These adjustments did not alter the scope or intent of the original TOR questions

Table 2 Evaluation questions matrix, including data collection instruments

TOR Question (Verbatim)	Inception-Approved Question	Indicators	Sources of Data	Methods
Relevance & Coherence				
Where there any changes since the MTE, with regards to the extent to which the project's objectives are aligned with the priorities of the Cooperative Sector Strategy 2017–2022 and with the national priorities of Palestine?	1. Were there any changes since the MTE regarding the extent to which the project's objectives are aligned with the priorities of the National Cooperative Strategy 2025–2029, and with the national priorities of Palestine?	Degree of continued alignment with National Cooperative Strategy 2025–2029 •Evidence of alignment with evolving national priorities	•ProDoc •MTE •National strategies •KIIs with CWA/MoL/DGCU	•Desk review • KIIs
Where there any changes since the MTE, with regards to the extent to which the project responds to the actual needs and priorities of cooperative members, unions, and other constituents in the OPT?	2. Were there any changes since the MTE in how the project responds to the actual needs and priorities of cooperative members, unions, and other constituents in the OPT? (Coherence). To what extent was CSP-OPT coherent with other ILO interventions and external partners?	•Extent to which support remains relevant to needs •Stakeholder perceptions	•Extent to which support remains relevant to needs •Stakeholder perceptions	•KIIs with cooperatives, unions, members •Annual reports
Design Validity				

Are the project's strategies (e.g., support to the CWA, CDI, and CDF) still valid and appropriate given the evolving political, legal, and economic context?	3. Are the project's strategies (e.g., support to the CWA) still valid and appropriate given the evolving political, legal, and economic context? P.S Following the Steering Committee decision after October 2023, the CSP adjusted its action plan to align with emerging national priorities.	•Appropriateness of strategies relative to context changes •Stakeholder assessment of strategic validity	•National context updates •ILO & government	•Desk review •KIIs
Efficiency & Effectiveness				
To what extent have the project's resources (financial, human, material) been used efficiently since the MTE, to produce planned outputs?	4. To what extent have the project's resources (financial, human, material) been used efficiently since the MTE, to produce planned outputs?	•Evidence of planned outputs delivered •Use of resources relative to ToR timelines	•Financial and progress reports •KIIs with ILO team	•Evidence of planned outputs delivered •Use of resources relative to ToR timelines
How effective and timely were the project's management and operational arrangements in delivering planned activities?	5. How effective and timely were the project's management and operational arrangements in delivering planned activities?	•Timeliness of implementation •Stakeholder feedback on management arrangements	•ILO project team •Implementing partners	•KIIs

How well did the project coordinate with national institutions (e.g., CWA, ministries) and international partners to support implementation?	6. How well did the project coordinate with national institutions (e.g., CWA, ministries) and international partners to support implementation?	•Evidence of coordination mechanisms •Stakeholder satisfaction	•CWA, ministries, partners •Project documentation	•KIIs
Impact				
What positive or negative changes (intended or unintended) has the project generated among cooperative members, unions, and partner institutions, especially in terms of employment and economic empowerment?	7. What positive or negative changes (intended or unintended) has the project generated among cooperative members, unions, and partner institutions, especially in terms of employment and economic empowerment?	•Observable changes in employment •Perceived economic empowerment •Institutional change	•FGDs •Field visits	•Field observations •KIIs
To what extent has the project contributed to secondary job creation through cooperative-linked infrastructure or services (e.g., markets, agriculture)?	8. To what extent has the project contributed to secondary job creation through cooperative-linked infrastructure or services (e.g., markets, agriculture)?	•Beneficiary perceptions •Evidence of job creation linked to services/infrastructure	• Cooperatives • Unions • Project reports	• KIIs
Sustainability				
To what extent have cooperative institutions (CWA, CDI, CDF) and unions built sustainable capacity and systems to continue supporting cooperatives beyond the project's end?	9. To what extent have cooperative institutions (CWA) and unions built sustainable capacity and systems to continue supporting cooperatives beyond the project's end?	•Institutional capacity retained •Systems established •Ownership demonstrated	•CWA •project files	• Field observations •KIIs

To what extent has the project promoted collaborative initiatives (as detailed in the MTE) that reinforce the interconnectedness of the cooperative sector and contribute to its resilience and sustainability?

Cross-Cutting Issues

To what extent did the project's adherence to international labour standards transcend the realm of mere principle and was this visibly reflected in practical implementation?

To what extent has the GSU and sectoral unions participated in strengthening cooperative institutions, and the other way round, taking into account the specific recommendations of the MTE?

How effectively did the project promote gender equality and non-discrimination, taking into account the specific recommendations in that regard formulated in the MTE?

10. To what extent has the project promoted collaborative initiatives (as detailed in the MTE) that reinforce the interconnectedness of the cooperative sector, and contribute to its resilience and sustainability?

11. To what extent did the project's adherence to international labour standards transcend the realm of mere principle and was this visibly reflected in practical implementation?

12. To what extent has the GSU and sectoral unions participated in strengthening cooperative institutions, and the other way round, taking into account the specific recommendations of the MTE?

13. How effectively did the project promote gender equality and non-discrimination, taking into account the specific recommendations in that regard formulated in the MTE?

- Evidence of collaboration
- Continuity of networks

- Instances of practical application of ILS

- Joint actions taken
- Engagement levels

- Women's participation
- Gender-sensitive results
- Barriers identified

- Stakeholder interviews
- Project documents

- KIIs with ILO, CWA
- Reports

- GSU
- Sectoral unions

- Cooperatives
- FGDs
- Reports

- KIIs

- KIIs
- Desk review

- KIIs

- KIIs

Bibliography

Cooperative Work Agency (CWA). (2024). *Strategic plan of the Cooperative Work Agency (Arabic), 2024–2027*.

International Labour Conference (ILC). (2002). *Recommendation No. 193 concerning the promotion of cooperatives*. International Labour Organization.

International Labour Conference (ILC). (2022, June 10). *Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy* (110th Session). International Labour Organization.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (n.d.). *Concept structuring of the Cooperative Development Fund (CDF)*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (n.d.). *Concept structuring of the Cooperative development Institute (CDI)*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2023, December). *Cooperative Support Programme (CSP) – Mid-term evaluation report*. ILO.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2020, September). *Cooperative Support Programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (CSP-OPT): Project document and agreement*. ILO.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2025, September). *Draft independent evaluation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) and Employment-Related Programme (ERP) – Palestine*. ILO, Geneva.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022, July). *First annual report – Cooperative Support Programme (CSP-OPT)*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (n.d.). *Revised workplan – Cooperative Support Programme (CSP-OPT)*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2023, November). *Second annual report – Cooperative Support Programme (CSP-OPT)*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022, September). *Assessment of cooperative unions*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2023, September). *Cooperative factsheets – Occupied Palestinian Territory*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2024, May). *Letter to the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) regarding the suspension of project activities in Gaza*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2024, September 23). *Minutes of the fourth steering committee meeting of the Cooperative Support Programme*. ILO.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2025, October). *Cooperative Support Programme (CSP) – Factsheet*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2025, December 19). *Letter to the Minister of Labour: Clarification of management, oversight and implementation arrangements for CSP-OPT*. ILO, Occupied Palestinian Territory.

International Labour Organization Governing Body. (2022). *Matters arising out of the work of the 110th Session (2022) of the International Labour Conference*. International Labour Organization.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022). *Decent work and the social and solidarity economy* (Report VI, International Labour Conference, 110th Session) (Arabic version reviewed). International Labour Organization.

International Labour Organization (ILO). (2023). *Programme and budget for 2024–25*. International Labour Organization.

International Labour Organization (ILO) & Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). (2019). *Be the Impact: Cooperative system and social entrepreneurship in Palestine – Programme document*. ILO / AICS.

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU). (2025, October). *Final technical report on the childcare cooperative pilot*. PGFTU, Palestine.

Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU). (n.d). *Strategic Plan 2025-2029*. PGFTU, Palestine.

United Nations and donor agencies. (Various years). *Relevant reports and assessments linked to ERP and DWCP implementation in Palestine*. Reviewed as part of contextual analysis.

United Nations General Assembly. (2024). *Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development: Report of the Secretary-General* (Arabic version reviewed). United Nations.

United Nations Secretary-General. (2024). *Note of the Secretary-General on promoting the social and solidarity economy* (Arabic version reviewed). United Nations.

United Nations Secretary-General. (2025). *The role of cooperatives in social development: Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly* (Arabic version reviewed). United Nations.