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

### QUICK FACTS

**Countries:** State of Palestine

**Evaluation date:** 28 February 2026

**Evaluation type:** Project

**Evaluation timing:** Final

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**DC Symbol:** PSE/19/01/ITA

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*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)

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Cooperative Support Programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (CSP-OPT) aimed to strengthen the cooperative ecosystem in Palestine to promote decent work, inclusive economic participation, and social cohesion. The programme addressed structural constraints affecting the cooperative sector through institutional strengthening, policy dialogue, and direct cooperative capacity development.

The intervention followed a three-level Theory of Change addressing complementary constraints at the macro, meso, and micro levels. At the macro level, the programme supported improvements in the enabling environment for cooperatives through policy dialogue and institutional strengthening, particularly with the Ministry of Labour and the Cooperative Work Agency. At the meso level, it aimed to strengthen sector support mechanisms, tools, and coordination structures. At the micro level, CSP-OPT supported primary cooperatives through governance strengthening, capacity development, and pilot initiatives to improve operational viability and inclusiveness.

The programme was implemented across the West Bank and managed by the ILO Jerusalem Representative Office with technical support from the ILO Regional Office for Arab States and the ILO Cooperatives Unit in Geneva. It was funded by the Government of Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) with a total budget of USD 1,774,370.

### Present situation of the project

CSP-OPT was implemented from June 2021 to November 2025 and has now formally concluded. Programme implementation took place in a volatile political and economic environment characterized by movement restrictions, economic fragmentation, and institutional uncertainty affecting the cooperative sector.

Following the events of October 2023, the operating context deteriorated significantly, affecting cooperative activities, market access, and institutional coordination. In response, the programme adopted adaptive management measures that prioritized cooperative continuity and resilience-oriented support. While cooperative-level activities continued under adapted modalities, system-level institutional reforms progressed more slowly due to institutional restructuring and contextual constraints.

**Purpose, scope  
and clients of the  
evaluation**

The purpose of this Final Independent Evaluation is to assess the programme's performance against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability in accordance with ILO evaluation policy and UNEG standards.

The evaluation covers the full implementation period (2021–2025) with particular attention to developments after the Mid-Term Evaluation and programme adaptations following October 2023.

The primary users of the evaluation are the International Labour Organization, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, and national institutional partners including the Ministry of Labour and the Cooperative Work Agency. The evaluation aims to support accountability, learning, and future programming in cooperative development in Palestine and similar fragile contexts.

**Methodology of  
evaluation**

The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative evidence with available quantitative programme data.

Data collection included:

- desk review of project documentation;
- 24 Key Informant Interviews with ILO staff, institutional partners, unions, implementing organizations, and donor representatives;
- eight Focus Group Discussions with CSP-supported cooperatives;
- field visits to cooperatives in Hebron, Bethlehem, Salfit, and the Jerusalem periphery.

Findings were triangulated across sources and analysed against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria while integrating cross-cutting themes including gender equality, social dialogue and tripartism, international labour standards, and environmental considerations.

Limitations included movement restrictions after October 2023, security constraints, and the absence of consistent financial performance data across cooperatives. Impact was therefore assessed primarily at the outcome level.

**MAIN FINDINGS  
& CONCLUSIONS**

**Relevance:** CSP-OPT remained highly relevant to national cooperative development priorities and aligned with the ILO Decent Work Agenda. The

programme addressed structural constraints affecting cooperative governance, institutional coordination, and operational capacity. Its relevance increased after October 2023 as activities were adapted to support cooperative resilience under deteriorating economic and security conditions.

**Effectiveness:** The programme achieved its strongest results at the cooperative level. Capacity development and governance support improved internal management procedures, clarified roles and responsibilities, and strengthened participation in cooperative decision-making.

At the institutional level, CSP-OPT contributed technical groundwork and policy dialogue. However, several mechanisms, including the Cooperative Development Fund and the Cooperative Development Institute, were not operationalized during the project lifecycle due to institutional restructuring and limited formal adoption.

**Efficiency:** Implementation demonstrated adaptive management and generally efficient use of resources under challenging conditions. Decentralized delivery and flexible sequencing enabled continued activity implementation despite access restrictions and market disruptions.

**Impact:** The most consistent impacts were improvements in cooperative governance, organizational practices, and member participation. Economic and employment impacts were modest due to severe external constraints affecting market access and financing.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability prospects are moderate. While institutional capacities and technical tools were strengthened, several system-level mechanisms were not operationalized during the project period. Long-term sustainability will depend on institutional adoption of programme outputs and improved access to finance and markets for cooperatives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### Main findings & Conclusions

- Institutionalize cooperative support tools within a clear governance framework.
- Establish a feasible pathway for cooperative access to finance.
- Introduce tiered capacity-building approaches based on cooperative maturity.

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|                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand decentralized training and coaching modalities.</li> <li>• Integrate market access and commercialization support.</li> <li>• Strengthen engagement of representative bodies, including cooperative unions.</li> <li>• Clarify roles of tripartite constituents in cooperative development.</li> <li>• Address gender-related participation barriers.</li> <li>• Streamline administrative requirements for smaller cooperatives.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Main lessons learned and good practices</b> | <p><b>Main Lessons Learned</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-level programming linking institutional reform, sector support systems, and cooperative-level strengthening enhances resilience in fragile contexts.</li> <li>• Governance and capacity development interventions can produce durable organizational improvements even when economic expansion is constrained.</li> <li>• Care-sensitive approaches are essential to support women's sustained participation in cooperative activities.</li> <li>• Adaptive management and flexible delivery modalities are critical for programme continuity in volatile environments.</li> <li>• Sustainability depends on institutional anchoring and resourcing of tools and practices beyond the project lifecycle.</li> </ul> <p><b>Emerging Good Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptive re-sequencing of activities after October 2023 to maintain cooperative continuity.</li> <li>• Gender-responsive delivery modalities supporting women's participation.</li> <li>• Localized training and coaching approaches to reduce access barriers.</li> <li>• Practical governance tools combined with hands-on coaching for cooperative leaders.</li> <li>• Differentiated support based on cooperative readiness and capacity levels.</li> </ul> |