



PROMOTING THE ADVANCEMENT OF VULNERABLE PERSONS AND ENTERPRISES (PAVE) PROJECT IN SRI LANKA - FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Northern Province of Sri Lanka continues to face heightened socio-economic vulnerability due to the lasting impacts of conflict, high rural dependence on agriculture and fisheries, and elevated levels of poverty and unemployment, particularly among female-headed households and persons with disabilities. These structural challenges were further intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis. In response, the Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE) Project, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contributes to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Decent Work Agenda by promoting inclusive economic recovery, sustainable employment, enterprise development, and social cohesion in the Northern Province.

The Project aimed to create sustainable employment opportunities for marginalized women, men, and persons with disabilities by developing inclusive agriculture and aquaculture value chains and strengthening the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) ecosystem in Sri Lanka's Northern Province.

The approach in developing inclusive agriculture and aquaculture value chains anchored in partnerships with leading private companies that adopt inclusive business models through investments in inputs, technology, and technical know-how for suppliers and producers. The PAVE co-finances initial investments as a risk-sharing mechanism, enabling partner companies to secure higher-quality supply chains while improving productivity, incomes, and access to wage employment for producers, thereby ensuring sustainability.

The approach in strengthening the enterprise ecosystem, PAVE has focused on capacity building of selected key Business Development Service providers for enhanced delivery of Business Development Services to entrepreneurs.

These incentive driven models, offered a win-win proposition for all, thus making the impacts sustainable and scalable.

Present situation of the project

The PAVE project is currently in its final implementation phase, with core interventions delivered and ongoing efforts focused on consolidating results, addressing implementation gaps, and supporting sustainability and transition to its next phase.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the Final Independent Evaluation (FIE) was to promote learning and accountability among the ILO, implementing partners, and key stakeholders, and to generate evidence-based guidance for future programming. The evaluation covered all PAVE project interventions implemented in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, from inception to the time of evaluation and integrated ILO cross-cutting priorities, including gender equality, disability inclusion, social dialogue, and non-discrimination. The primary clients of the evaluation are the ILO, the project donor, national and provincial government counterparts, and private sector partners.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach based on the project's Theory of Change to assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and alignment with ILO strategic objectives, Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) outcomes, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Data collection included desk review, key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies, engaging core project staff, state stakeholders, private sector partners, Civil Society Organisations/Community Based Organisations (CSOs/CBOs), and primary

This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office.

beneficiaries, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Purposive and stratified sampling, complemented by snowballing, ensured representation across five districts. Field-level workshops were conducted to triangulate data, validate findings, and ensure stakeholder ownership. Confidentiality was maintained, and Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) principles guided the process to enhance learning and practical application of findings.

Limitations included the evolving stage of some interventions, gaps and inconsistencies in monitoring data, stakeholder unavailability due to turnover, and logistical constraints requiring virtual interviews in certain cases. Despite these, triangulation of multiple data sources and verifications supported robust, evidence-based conclusions, including identification of lessons learned, good practices, and areas for future improvement.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The project interventions were strongly based on initial needs and value chain assessments and adapted to district-specific contexts. The project effectively supported state institutions, namely, Department of Agriculture (DoA), Department of Industries (DoI), Small Enterprises Development Division (SEDD), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA), Department of Social Services (DSS) and private sector partners of the four value chains selected for intervention, providing capacity-building, technical guidance, and resources tailored to local priorities. Beneficiaries benefited from improved working conditions, enhanced knowledge and skills for productions and targeted entrepreneurial and vocational skills development for enterprises. The Theory of Change, linking engagement in decent work, access to business services, and adoption of digital and climate-smart solutions to economic resilience and social recognition, was well reflected in project design and implementation. Interventions remained responsive to emerging challenges, including shifts in national policy affecting peanut and chilli production, through strategic pivoting to export-oriented value chains.

The project demonstrated strong alignment internally and externally. Internally, training, enterprise support, and value chain development reinforced each other, while externally, PAVE synergized with ILO's LEED+ and Jobs for Peace initiatives, the UNSDCF, SDGs (5, 8, 10, 13), and national development priorities. Cross cutting issues of gender equality, disability inclusion, social dialogue, and climate smart practices were integrated systematically, and collaboration with state institutions, private sector partners and CBOs ensured complementarity and avoided duplication.

The project successfully achieved its planned outcomes, with notable gains in capacity-building, adoption of inclusive value chain business models, productivity, market linkages, and income generation. Beneficiaries reported increased financial independence, social recognition, and improved livelihoods. Private sector partners and institutions demonstrated enhanced skills, motivation, and responsiveness to vulnerable groups. Mature value chains, particularly gherkin and seaweed, evidenced adoption of digital solutions and climate-smart practices, while emerging interventions in mango and tilapia value chains are on track to replicate these gains.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) development strategy, implemented through the capacity building of Business Development Service (BDS) providers, was partially effective. While BDS providers demonstrated enhanced skills, motivation, and improvements in the quality and reach of services, the adoption of these services by

Micro, Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (MSMEs) was uneven and slower than anticipated. This limited uptake, due in part to insufficient follow-up and backstopping.

The project optimized resources and staff expertise to deliver interventions effectively across five districts. Field-based teams, resource inputs and stakeholder workshops facilitated timely and cost-effective implementation. Targeted sampling ensured equitable reach to vulnerable populations, while collaboration with state and private partners leveraged existing capacities. Resource allocation for gender, disability, and social dialogue activities contributed to efficient delivery, though access to credit for beneficiaries remained limited.

The project contributed to sustainable improvements in economic well-being, resilience, and social inclusion. Beneficiaries used increased income for debt repayment, household improvements, and education, while improved work environments and engagement with reputable partners enhanced social recognition.

The slow uptake in the MSMEs highlighted the need for strengthened post-training support mechanisms to ensure lasting improvements in MSME productivity, competitiveness, and resilience.

State institutions strengthened their capacity to support MSMEs and private sector partners, reinforced inclusive economic growth through adoption of climate-smart and digital practices.

The project established strong foundations for continued impact beyond project closure. Capacity-building, mentoring, and inclusive business models are embedded within state institutions, private sector partners, and CBOs. Digital communication, marketing tools, and climate-smart practices contribute to improved operational efficiency. Stakeholder ownership, institutionalization of knowledge, and adaptive project management indicate high potential for sustained benefits and replication in other regions and value chains.

Overall, the project has remained highly relevant, coherent, effective, and efficient, generating positive economic, social, and institutional impacts while laying the groundwork for sustainable continuation. The project exemplifies a well-aligned, inclusive, and adaptive approach to promoting decent work and resilience for marginalized communities in post-conflict Northern Sri Lanka.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations

The evaluation recommends institutionalising the Inclusive Value Chain Partnership Model through formal means.

It also recommends the importance of continuous capacity building and backstopping of MSMEs as an integral part of the strategy.

Establishing a regional coordination and monitoring mechanism from project inception to ensure oversight, risk mitigation, and institutional learning is another key recommendation of the evaluation.

It further highlights the importance of use of digital tools, gender and disability inclusion, and climate-smart practices as integral components of these implementations.

Gender policy rollout should be strengthened through a structured, phased implementation plan that goes beyond awareness-raising to institutionalization. This

	should include clear roles and accountabilities across national, provincial and local levels and practical implementation guidelines. Preventive safeguards against market concentration, adherence to legal processes, and systematic knowledge documentation and dissemination are advised to enhance transparency, accountability, and replicability in future interventions.
Main lessons learned and good practices	Key lessons learnt include engaging communities as organised entities (CBOs/CSOs) rather than individuals, treating MSME training as an ongoing process with structured backstopping, and adhering to proper legal processes for acquiring government properties to safeguard operations, sustainability, and credibility of value chain interventions. The project demonstrated several good practices, including inclusive value chain partnerships that actively engaged women, youth, persons with disabilities, and female-headed households; provincial gender policy formulation and rollout to embed gender equality in local governance; interactive and inclusive MSME training for BDS providers; mainstreaming climate-smart practices into value chains; and the use of digital media platforms to strengthen communication, coordination, and transparency among VC actors and MSMEs. These lessons and practices collectively contribute to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable local economic development, while strengthening accountability, participation, and the capacity of stakeholders in post-conflict contexts.

List of Acronyms

AI	Agriculture Instructor
BDS	Business Development Service
Cargills	Cargills Pvt Ltd
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoI	Department of Industries
DO	Development Officer
DSS	Department of Social Services
DS	Divisional Secretariat
EFC	Employers Federation of Ceylon
FIE	Final Independent Evaluation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHH	Female-Headed Household
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JHC	Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd
KII	Key Informant Interview
MAFP	Marine Algae Farms Pvt Ltd
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MSME	Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise
MSMEs	Micro, Small & Medium Entrepreneurs
NAQDA	National Aquaculture Development Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordinator
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
P&B	Program & Budget
PAVE	Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises
PPP	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
PwDs	Persons with Disabilities
RWPL	Reitzel Walker Pvt Ltd
SEDD	Small Enterprises Development Division
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSI	Semi Structured Interview
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNSDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Framework
VC	Value Chain

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Introduction and Project Description

Overview of the Project

The Northern Province of Sri Lanka, which is home to 1.3 million Sri Lankans (2021), was one of the worst affected areas during the three-decade long civil conflict that raged in the country until 2009. Even more than a decade after the war, unemployment and poverty rates remain higher than the national average – making it among Sri Lanka’s poorest regions.

Livelihoods in the Northern Province are heavily reliant on agriculture and fishing with 83.4 per cent of people living in rural areas. In addition to being marginalized in terms of remote localities, the province is home to many females headed families whose partners were lost due to the war, and men and women with disabilities who find themselves in an especially precarious position, with the stigma from having an impairment intermingling with assumptions of being an ex-combatant. In 2022, 75,600 female-headed households (FHHs) and 21,660 persons with disabilities were recorded in the province.

Following the adverse impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent economic crisis in Sri Lanka, PAVE targets these groups with the aim of addressing economic challenges, strengthening gender and disability inclusion, promoting social cohesion, and uplifting the province’s vulnerable communities.

The ‘Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE)’ project, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aims to create lasting employment opportunities for marginalized women, men and persons with disabilities in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

Project Objective

The project objective is stated as “Create lasting employment opportunities for marginalized women, men and persons with disabilities through developing promising agriculture and aquaculture value chains (VCs), and by improving the ecosystem for MSMEs in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka”.

The PAVE project has been built on four key pillars, thus: contributing to inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization through interventions in both the agricultural and fisheries sectors in the northern region of Sri Lanka.

This project ends in December 2025, would be followed by a new joint-funded project by International Labour Organisation (ILO), Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) ‘Generating Resilient Opportunities for Work’ (GROW) that was launched in June 2025. The ILO staff engaged in PAVE has started the initial preparatory work on this project.

The PAVE Project builds on the previous ILO Local Empowerment for Economic Development and Reconciliation (LEED+) project, funded by the Government of Norway and DFAT that ran from 2018 to 2023. Like LEED+, PAVE is going beyond the traditional livelihoods approach to also look at broader market systems.

The approach consists of forging partnerships with leading private companies within selected value chains to adopt and adapt inclusive business models that not only benefit the suppliers-producers but also strengthen their own supply chains.

The fundamental principle of the business models is that they are owned by the partner companies through investments in the form of input, technical know-how and technology for its suppliers/producers.

The ILO finances part of the initial investments made by the partner companies as a risk-sharing mechanism and to help them adopt the models. Partner companies can therefore source a higher number of products, of better quality, through a secured supply channel and a growing supplier base. In turn, suppliers/producers become more productive and efficient with increased revenue and improved access

to new wage employments. These incentive driven models, therefore, offer a win-win proposition for all, thus making the impact both sustainable and scalable.

Due to sudden changes in import regulations and the influx of cheaper produce from India, the PAVE Project had shifted its strategy and shifted its focus from value addition in domestic-oriented value chains to primary production in export-oriented value chains in the Northern Province.

In view of addressing the enterprise component of the Project Document, the PAVE has focused towards capacitating selected stakeholders in the Business Development Service Market.

Theory of Change

The Project's Theory of Change is stipulated as:

IF the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the Northern Province are engaged in decent work – be it primary production, enterprise level, or self-employment – in the most promising value chains and they can access business development services, make use of digital solutions, and develop partnerships and representation at the national level,

THEN they are more likely to achieve greater economic well-being, show higher resilience to economic shocks and disasters, and gain a stronger voice in the community, **BECAUSE** they will be skilled, efficient, productive, competitive and able to make tangible economic and social contributions to the development of the local as well as the national economy.

Annex 01: Theory of Change

Project Outcomes

The overall Project goals, objectives/outcomes, and the key outputs and interventions to achieve the objectives as explained in the results framework in the project are as follows:

IMPACT: The Northern Province has a growing and inclusive economy that supports vulnerable groups by improving their economic well-being.

OUTCOME 1: Vulnerable women and persons with disabilities engaged in promising value chains and enterprises enjoy decent employment and better support from public institutions, family members and their community.

Output 1.1 Processing units and collection centres established together with private companies and communities.

Output 1.2 Improved and inclusive decent working conditions in primary production and in enterprises.

Output 1.3 Families and community members have increased awareness of gender equality, and disability equity for the economic progression of targeted vulnerable groups.

OUTCOME 2: New and existing MSMEs and primary producers are more productive and competitive.

Output 2.1 Selected Business Development Service providers have increased capacity to offer competitive solutions to MSMEs and potential entrepreneurs, in an improved enabling environment for business and entrepreneurship in the Northern Province.

Output 2.2 Targeted individuals have increased job-specific or entrepreneurial and business management skills.

Output 2.3 MSMEs and primary producers including vulnerable men, women and persons with disabilities have access to alternative targeted and appropriate financial services.

OUTCOME 3: Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have adopted climate smart practices and/or digital solutions.

Output 3.1 Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have improved access to climate-smart practices

Output 3.2 Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have improved digital skills

Output 3.3 More digital solutions are offered to primary producers and enterprises

The results framework explains the interventions planned under each of the outputs to achieve these results.

Annex 02: Results Framework (Updated on 06.09.2024)

Project Compliances

The Project is contributing to the ILO Decent Work Country Programme for Sri Lanka 2018-2022, Country Priority 1: Creation of sustainable, inclusive, and decent employment.

The Project also contributes to the ILO Programme and Budget for 2024-25, in particular: Outcome 4: Sustainable Enterprises for Inclusive Growth and Decent Work and Outcome 5: Gender Equality and Equality of Treatment and Opportunities for All.

The Project contributes towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well, in particular to SDG 8 on 'Promoting Decent Work' (8.5 Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value); SDG 5 on 'Supporting Gender Equality' (5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life); SDG 10 on 'Reduced Inequality' (10.2 Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status), and SDG 13 on 'Climate Change' (13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning).

The Project is well aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Sri Lanka 2023-27, in particular: Outcome 2: Sustainable and Inclusive, Green-Led Growth, People-Centred Economic Recovery, Livelihoods and Productivity; Outcome 3: Natural Resource Management, Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability; and Outcome 6: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Synergies and complementarities with other active ILO and Norway projects

The Project also contributes to the ILO's flagship programme "Jobs for Peace and Resilience", 'Recommendation 193' (cooperatives), 'Recommendation 205', (Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience), as well as 'Job Creation in Small and Medium-Size Enterprises Recommendation 1998' (No. 189).

Project Management

The Project is managed by the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), based in Colombo. The National Project Officer, based in Colombo, is responsible for supporting and coordinating national level policy dialogue and engagement, and will lead communications and engagements on social media. A Junior Professional Officer supported the monitoring & evaluation (M&E) function of the Project until November 2025 and the National Project Officer, based in Colombo monitored the Project since then.

A field team, based in Vavuniya, is coordinating the implementation of the Project at the local level. The team consists of the National Project Coordinator (NPC), responsible for the technical and financial delivery

of the Project, and two Field Coordinators, responsible for implementing field level activities such as identifying and selecting beneficiaries, monitoring, and assessing partners' field activities and providing feedback to management. The field team also consists of a National Gender and Disability Technical Officer, an Admin and Finance Officer, and a driver.

Evaluation Management

In line with ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluations, an Evaluation Manager managed the evaluation.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions sought to obtain relevant information on the Project's evaluation criteria covering relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and/or sustainability, as well as cross-cutting issues of gender, non-discrimination and social dialogue and tripartism.

The evaluation questions (given in the ToR) have been reviewed against OECD-DAC Criteria, UNEG Evaluation Norms & Standards, relevant SDGs, ILO's Decent Work Country Programme priorities and outcomes on gender equality, women's empowerment and disability.

Key Evaluation questions and corresponding probing questions to each of the criteria were as follows:

OECD-DAC Criteria	Corresponding Evaluation Questions
Relevance (Is the intervention doing the right things? and validity of design)	1. To what extent do the project interventions and activities respond to the need of Sri Lanka's tripartite constituents, partner institutions and beneficiaries? 2. To what extent has the project adapted to remain relevant to the communities, tripartite constituents and other stakeholders? How has the project adapted to emerging situations / needs during the implementation? 3. To what extent is the project theory of change logical and coherent? How does the ToC reflect in the interventions?
Coherence (How well the intervention fits)	4. How well has the Pave project synergized with work of other ILO and Norway interventions in Sri Lanka, as well as with other international development partners, Government, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and national development frameworks?
Coherence (Alignment to cross-cutting themes of ILO: gender equality, disability; tripartism and social dialogue)	5. Has the Project been able to leverage the ILO contributions through its comparative advantages including International Labour Standards, social dialogue and tripartism?
Effectiveness (Is the intervention achieving its objectives?)	6. To what extent has the Project achieved its planned results? Are there any unintended (positive and negative) outcomes? Are there any changes / amendments to the original plan? 7. To what extent and how has the Project supported value chains and led to the creation of decent employment for vulnerable workers, men, women and people with disabilities in the target value chains? 8. To what extent and how have the MSMEs and primary producers become more efficient, productive and competitive because of the interventions supported/introduced by the Project? 9. To what extent have MSMEs and primary producers adopted climate smart and digital solutions promoted by the Project?

	10. What are the key achievements of the Project in addressing gender equality, women's empowerment, and discrimination, including disability inclusion?
Effectiveness of management arrangement	11. How effective was the project management, and the support provided to the project team by the ILO (PU of the country office, technical specialists), donors, and tripartite constituents in delivering results? What could have been done differently? 12. How well the project objectives and its ToC has been reflected in the project interventions? To what extent was results-based management implemented in the programme put in place to support the achievement of the planned results? 13. Are the direct beneficiaries (primary producers, MSMEs, government service providers) satisfied with the capacity building/technical support from the project and its partners? What are perceived as the most useful?
Efficiency of resource usage/implementation: (How well are resources being used?)	14. To what extent were the Project's resources (funds, expertise, time, staff, etc) strategically utilised to deliver in a timely and an efficient manner? 15. Has the Project allocated sufficient resources in achieving its gender equality, disability, and non-discrimination; tripartism and social dialogue activities? 16. To what extent has the Project complemented and/or harmonized or coordinated with other actors and their interventions to maximise the Project's effectiveness and impact? 17. Which interventions help achieving the results as planned?
Impact (What difference does the intervention make?)	18. To what extent did the project interventions contribute to sustain any lasting changes? How has the interventions addressed the problems identified by the project? 19. To what extent and how have the actors (e.g. financial institutions, BDS providers, SEDD, government extensions and other government institutions, COOP, private sector as well as value chain actors in the supply chains) behaved/functioned in ways that promote decent employment and an inclusive economy in the target value chains? 20. How has the climate smart practices and digital solutions promoted by the Project made an impact in the lives of the primary producers, MSMEs, government service providers? 21. To what extent and how has the Project contributed to peace and resilience in the Northern Province?
Sustainability of the intervention (continuity / likely continuity of the benefits of the intervention)	22. To what extent were the processes followed leading towards intervention sustainability? How has the continuation of the introductions such as climate smart practices and digital solutions be assured by the Project? 23. What would be an effective exit strategy and next step for the ILO and the relevant stakeholders in helping to ensure the Project's benefits will continue after it ends? 24. What funding opportunities could the ILO pursue to support the assistance indicated in the points above? 25. What is the impact of the Project on other projects, and to what extent can the results be expected to build stakeholder capacity and sustainability in the longer term?

The Evaluation Questions were probed appropriately using customized questionnaires prepared for each stakeholder. The specific areas for probing by the stakeholders and associated methods and tools for data collection and has been explained the Evaluation Matrix.

Annex 03: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Background

Purpose and Objectives of the Final Independent Evaluation (FIE)

The main purpose of this FIE was to enhance learning among the Project team and stakeholders and to ensure accountability to the stakeholders, as well as to provide necessary guidance for future projects.

Scope of the ETE

The scope of the final evaluation was to cover all the ILO and implementing partners' interventions from the beginning of the Project to date.

The evaluation integrated ILO's cross-cutting issues, including norms and social dialogue, gender equality, disability inclusion, other non-discrimination concerns, and the medium and long-term effects of capacity development issues throughout the evaluation methodology and all deliverables, including the final report. Furthermore, the evaluation has given specific attention to how the intervention is relevant to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels, UNSDCF and national sustainable development strategy (or its equivalent) or other relevant national development frameworks, including any relevant sectoral policies or programmes.

Specific Objectives of the FIE

1. To provide an independent assessment of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, connectedness and sustainability of the processes initiated by the PAVE project
2. To assess of the role of the PAVE, in addressing economic challenges, strengthening gender and disability inclusion, promoting social cohesion, and uplifting the province's vulnerable communities
3. To assess the institutional set-up, capacity for project implementation, coordination mechanisms and management setup in implementing the PAVE project through
4. To review and assess the effectiveness of the strategies adopted to create lasting decent employment opportunities for marginalized groups and to develop promising agriculture and aquaculture value chains for MSMEs in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.
5. To identify lessons learnt, good practices, recommendations and related innovative approaches evolved by the PAVE project.

The users of this final evaluation are ILO project teams, implementing partners and stakeholders. The FIE ensured that issues and inputs from stakeholders and tripartite constituents are adequately covered.

The Evaluation Report is the final deliverable of this assignment, developed based on the evaluation carried out in the field, discussions with the project stakeholders, PAVE project staff and review of project documents. The main purpose of this report is to provide a descriptive analysis of the project implementation and an account on the achievement of the objectives.

Methodology and limitations

The Methodology

The methodology included examining the intervention's Theory of Change, with particular attention to the identification of assumptions, risk and mitigation strategies, and the logical connect between levels of results and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at global and national levels, as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets.

Also, the evaluation complied with UNEG evaluation norms and standards, and followed ethical safeguards, as specified in the ILO's evaluation procedures.

The data collection, analysis and presentation included issues relating to the ILO's normative work, social dialogue, gender equality, diversity and non-discrimination, including disability issues. Project's response to the four main pillars of intervention specified in the Pro-Doc; inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization would also be closely evaluated.

As per the ToR, the FIE adopted a mix of methods/approaches engaging with key project stakeholders at all levels during the design, field work, validation, and reporting stages, namely, project stakeholders, state sector stakeholders, project partners, service providers, worker organizations and individual beneficiaries.

The FIE began with a desk review of project documents, progress and annual reports and several discussions with PAVE project staff.

A series of meetings, brainstorming sessions and interviews took place (face-to-face and virtual interviews through MS Team or Zoom) with the PAVE project team in Sri Lanka and relevant ILO staff who were backstopping the Project (ILO CO Colombo, ILO ROAP in Bangkok, and HQ in Geneva, if any) as well as the Evaluation Manager who resides in Jakarta, Indonesia.

A stakeholder workshop to present the findings, and a draft of the evaluation report for feedback from relevant stakeholders would also take place at the institutional level.

The field level evaluation mainly was Semi-structured Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews and in the case of inability to reach out to any, a virtual platform was used. At the end of the field level data collection, a Verification Workshop with the key stakeholders was held.

The data and information collection, analysis and presentation concentrated on appropriate gender disaggregation even if the project design did not take gender into account.

As expected in the ToR, elements of Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE) Approach to enhance the ownership and utility of the review findings were adopted.

The discussions had a strong focus on the intended uses and the intended users / stakeholders of the project, more specifically on the intervention's contributions to the achievement of expected and unexpected outcomes and on the ways and means of extension / continuity of the interventions to the next phase beyond the project.

The FIE approach essentially focused on;

- Review on the theory of change; evaluate the logical connectivity between the results, interventions and the compliances / alignments expected by ILO
- Review on stakeholder engagement; strategies and processes
- Verification of the data, analysis and preliminary findings by the stakeholders at different stages of the evaluation

The evaluation questions mainly focused on the accountability of the stakeholders for continuity / sustainability of the interventions, more specifically on the workability (replicability and continuity) of the models implemented and the accountability of the stakeholders to continue the learning.

To maintain the accuracy and objectivity, the information / data was triangulated across the stakeholders at different levels. Also, the evaluation process ensured involvement of the stakeholders at different stages of the evaluation. Triangulation of information was done through verification using up-to-date data such as progress reports, annual reports and any other data available.

Confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback obtained during individual and group interviews has been maintained. The discussions began with an explanation of the purpose of FIE and with a message to the respondents that information would not carry one's identity. Consent of the respondents to take part in the discussions and share information was sought at the beginning of all the discussions.

To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure maximum freedom of expression for implementing partners, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, project staff were present during the interviews.

At the end of the field data collection, a field-level stakeholder workshop to triangulate / verify the information / data was carried out with the stakeholders interviewed / met during the data collection process. It was expected that this would ensure the evaluation findings are owned and therefore utilized in improving the project.

Findings were validated through verification at the field-level stakeholder workshop, and by cross-checking multiple data sources available with different stakeholders, in project documentation and PAVE field staff.

Conclusions were drawn only when supported by verified evidence and aligned with the project's Theory of Change and evaluation criteria. Conflicting findings were further probed and assessed, and additional data was collected where necessary. Unresolved discrepancies in the findings have been clearly stated.

Stakeholder Analysis

The project had 05 stakeholder categories, namely, core project staff of PAVE & ILO including the resource persons involved in the studies and training, state sector stakeholders collaborated with the project, private sector partners who are the core stakeholders of the interventions, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) or Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and primary stakeholders; communities benefited from the project interventions.

Core Project Staff:

The core project staff of PAVE consisted of the Regional Evaluation Officer, Evaluation Manager and Project Manager/ CTA at the central institutional level providing technical support and guidance to the project and for the evaluation.

The field level team included a National Project Officer, National Project Coordinator (NPC), Gender and Disability Technical Officer and 02 Field Coordinators responsible for providing necessary documentation, information and the lists of contacts/stakeholders/constituents/beneficiaries and provide technical support to the Evaluation Team, when necessary.

The Finance and Admin Officer was responsible for administrative and financial support required to facilitate the project interventions and the evaluation.

State Sector Stakeholders / BDS Providers:

The state sector organisations / BDS providers mainly collaborated with the project are;
Department of Agriculture (DoA)

Department of Social Services (DSS)
Department of Industries (DoI)
Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)
National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA)
Small Enterprises Development Division (SEDD)
District and Provincial Departments (Northern Province)

Private Sector Partners:

There are 04 private sector partners / companies collaborated with the project;

Reitzel Walker Pvt Ltd (RWPL)
Marine Algae Farms Pvt Ltd (MAFP)
Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd (JHC)
Cargills Pvt Ltd (Cargills)

PAVE partnership with RWPL has focused on establishing a gherkin sourcing base in the North, benefiting farmers, including women, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), and youths by increasing crop yields, by enhancing product quality and by creating employment opportunities.

Through the PAVE project, MAFP with technical support of NAQDA, has introduced new ways and means for vulnerable women to be involved in the sector while ensuring decent work conditions. The PAVE project has also facilitated MAFP to meet their market requirements while ensuring occupational safety and health for women, environmentally friendly farming methods, etc.

Partnership with JHC has addressed economic challenges in the Northern Province to promote inclusive growth, focusing on vulnerable groups like women and persons with disabilities and youth farmers, through creation of self-employment opportunities for at least 500 producers in the horticulture (TJ mango) sector in and around Jaffna and adjoining districts.

Cargills has collaborated and invested in a pilot intervention in the Tilapia sector by creating marketing opportunities for Tilapia through innovative recipes through its supermarket retail network. To ensure a steady supply of fish throughout the year, Cargills has proposed engaging in cage culture for Tilapia farming as an alternative solution to boost fish production during the off-season.

External Service Providers:

Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC)
Curve-up Pvt Ltd
PASS Asia Pvt Ltd
Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development (IPID)

External service providers were resource persons who provided resource / capacity building inputs to the project stakeholders on various aspects such as training, research, studies, technical advice, etc.

CSO / CBO Stakeholders:

Gherkin Farmer groups
St. Anne Seaweed Park Association
Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society
Tilapia Rural Fisheries Organizations

Primary Stakeholders:

Primary Producers / Farmers: Women, Men, Youth, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Female-headed Households (FHHs)
MSMEs

Stakeholder Mapping by the Interventions

Strengthening Value Chain productions				
Intervention	Private Sector Partners	State Sector Stakeholders	CSOs/CBOs	Primary Stakeholders
Gherkin Procurement	Reitzel Walker Pvt Ltd (RWPL)	Department of Agriculture (DoA) Northern Province	Gherkin Farmer groups	Gherkin Producers
Seaweed Processing	Marine Algae Farms Pvt Ltd (MAFP)	National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA)	St. Anne Seaweed Park Association	Seaweed Farmers
Horticulture (Mango)	Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd (JHC)	Department of Agriculture (DoA) Northern Province		Mango Farmers
		Ministry of Agriculture (NP)		
Tilapia Cage Culture	Cargills Pvt Ltd (Cargills)	National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA)	Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society	Tilapia Farmers
Strengthening BDS provision in MSME				
Intervention	Private Sector Partner	State Sector Stakeholders	CSOs/CBOs	Primary Stakeholders
Enterprise Development	Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) Curve-up Pvt Ltd	Small Enterprises Development Division (SEDD) Department of Social Services (DSS) Department of Industries (DoI)		MSMEs

Stakeholder Participation in the FIE

Stakeholder	Responsibility / Role in the Project	Role in the FIE	Phase of the FIE
PAVE/ILO	Quality assurance and provide guidance to the project for the management of the project M&E	Review of FIE reports	Design Triangulation Final Report
PAVE Team	Implementation of the project interventions Assistance to implementing partners Coordinating with State and other stakeholders M&E of the project activities	Facilitate documents required for desk review Participate in the FIE Design Review of FIE reports Facilitate and coordinate data collection process Participate in KIIs during data collection Facilitate secondary data collection	Design Data Collection Triangulation Final Report
State sector stakeholders at national level	Implementation / assist in the implementation of the project interventions Guidance to state stakeholders at project level	Participate in KIIs during data collection Facilitate secondary data collection	Data Collection Triangulation Final Report
State sector stakeholders at project level	Implementation / assist in the implementation of the project interventions Assistance to private sector implementing partners	Participate in KIIs / SSIs during data collection Facilitate participation of respective stakeholders in KIIs / SSIs Facilitate secondary data collection	Data Collection Triangulation

Private Sector Partners	Implementation of the project interventions Coordination with respective State stakeholders of the project Collaboration with primary stakeholders in the implementation of the interventions Collaboration with PAVE in the project implementation and in M&E	Participate in KIIs / SSIs during data collection Facilitate participation of respective stakeholders in KIIs / SSIs Facilitate secondary data collection	Data Collection Triangulation
Civil Society Stakeholders	Implementation of the respective project activities Coordination with respective State stakeholders Collaboration with primary stakeholders in the implementation of the interventions	Participate in KIIs / FGDs during data collection Facilitate participation of respective local level stakeholders in FGDs Facilitate secondary data collection	Data Collection Triangulation
Primary Stakeholders	Implementation of the respective project interventions and receive benefits	Facilitate participation of respective community members in FGDs during data collection Participate in FGDs during data collection	Data Collection Triangulation

Sample Selection

Information gathering through stakeholder participation was a key step in the FIE. Considering the widespread nature of the primary stakeholder base involved in the project interventions, a purposive sample of primary stakeholders, stratified by the following criteria was selected.

Criteria:

- Intervention and Output types
- Geographic coverage
- High and low implementation intensity by the project
- Different socioeconomic context
- Gender / ethnic representation
- Vulnerable or priority groups (Youth, PwDs)
- Availability and accessibility
- Practical constraints (timing, language, travel feasibility to cover all 05 Districts)

Such a selection ensured adequate response to the evaluation questions and enabled a broader analysis of the project, the context and the issues affected. To maintain objectivity of the FIE, identification of the individuals or groups within this purposive and stratified sample was carried out randomly.

The FIE also adopted a snowballing technique to identify and include primary stakeholders that may be revealed as important / critical during the data collection.

All 04 private sector partners, state stakeholders, CSOs/CBOs and primary stakeholders of the 05 districts have been covered by the FIE.

Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection:

Data collection methods were determined based on the types of information to be generated and the stakeholders to be engaged. Tools and techniques such as Desk Review, Focus Group Discussions (FGD),

Key Informant Interviews (KII), Semi Structured Interviews (SSI), Case Studies, and Secondary Data Collection were used for this purpose.

Desk Review of the project documents was carried out at the inception and throughout the evaluation to support the evaluation design, analysis, verification, triangulation and formulation of findings.

KIIs were mainly used for the discussions with national and project level key state stakeholders using a predetermined questionnaire / checklist.

SSIs were used to facilitate the semi-structured discussions with groups of state stakeholders, private sector partners and CSO / CBO stakeholders.

In view of facilitating interactive dialogue, discussions with the primary stakeholders were carried out as FGDs using a checklist.

Case Studies where appropriate has been provided as evidence to the analysis or as lessons learnt / good practices.

Privacy of the information was assured in meeting with and in reporting sensitive and gender specific data in the consultations with FHHs, PwDs and youth.

As per the ToR, time allocated for the primary data collection was 10 days (on the basis of 1.5-02 field workdays per location).

Data Analysis:

Data analysis was predominantly a qualitative analysis of data, gathered from the selected sample of primary stakeholders, supported by secondary data collection.

The data collected were categorized and analysed against the evaluation questions.

Data Collection Plan

Data collection mainly took place at the project level, but some of the state sector stakeholders, private sector partners and external resource persons were met in Colombo.

Also, meetings with ILO/PAVE national level staff took place in Colombo.

At the project level, the evaluation team met with the PAVE project team, all the state sector stakeholders, CSOs/CBOs and 02-04 primary stakeholder groups per intervention. In the case of inability to gather primary stakeholders into one group, several small groups were met.

Time allocated for KIIs / SSIs: 1 - 1.5 hours with .5 hours travel time to institutions.

Time allocated for FGDs: 2-2.5 hours with 1 hour travel time to locations. 10-15 participants per group.

Annex 04: Data Collection Schedule

Stakeholders met during the FIE

Stakeholder	Designation	F	M	Evaluation Tool
National Level				
PAVE/ILO	Project Manager / CTA		01	KII
	National Coordinator for M&E	01		
	Junior Program Officer	01		KII via Zoom
Private consultants				
Curve-up Pvt Ltd	Director		01	SSI
	Programme Manager - Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship	01		
Private Sector Partners				
Marine Algae Farms Pvt Ltd (MAFP)	Managing Director		01	KII

Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd (JHC)	Managing Director		01	KII
Cargills Pvt Ltd (Cargills)	Group Managers		02	KII
Regional Level				
PAVE Team	National Project Coordinator		01	SSI
	Gender and Inclusion Technical Officer	01		
	Field Coordinator		01	
	Field Coordinator		01	
State Sector Stakeholders				
Small Enterprises Development Division (SEDD)	Enterprise Development Training Officers - Vavuniya	02		SSI
National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA)	Assistant Director Extension & Monitoring Unit - Northern Province		01	SSI
Department of Agriculture (DoA) - Northern Province	Provincial Director	01		SSI
	Agriculture Instructor		01	
	Agriculture Instructor		01	SSI
Department of Social Services (DSS) - Northern Province	Provincial Director	01		SSI via Telephone
Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) - Northern Province	Development Officer	01		SSI
Department of Industries (DoI) - Northern Province	Industries Promotion Officer		01	SSI
	Development Officer	01		
Private Sector Partners				
Reitzel Walker Pvt Ltd (RWPL) -Vavuniya	Manager - Agri Operations (Northern)		01	SSI
	Field Officers	01	01	
Marine Algae Farms Pvt Ltd (MAFP) - Kilinochchi	Field Manager		01	SSI
	Field Officer		01	
Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd (JHC) - Jaffna	Farm Manager		01	SSI
	Factory Manager		01	
	Customer Service Manager		01	
Cargills Pvt Ltd (Cargills) - Kilinochchi	Agriculture Executive		01	SSI
Civil Society Stakeholders - Value Chains				
Gherkin Farmer Centre - Kokkuvaili	Centre Coordinators	06		FGD
St.Anne Seaweed Park Association - Poonakary	Office Bearers	02	04	SSI
Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen’s Cooperative Society - Iranaimadu	Office Bearers	02	04	SSI
Primary Stakeholders - Value Chains				
Gherkin Producers: Women, Men, PwDs - Sundarampuram	Primary Producers	04	02	FGD
Gherkin Producers: Women’s Group - Sinnathampennai	Primary Producers	08	02	FGD
Gherkin Producers: Women’s Group - Olumadu	Primary Producers	06		FGD
Gherkin Producers: Women, Men, PwDs - Oddusudan	Primary Producers	04	03	FGD
Seaweed Farmers: Women, Men, PwDs - Valaippadu	Primary Producers	08	05	FGD
Mango Farmers: Women, Men, PwDs - Echalawakkai	Primary Producers	03	07	FGD
Mango Farmers: Women, Men, PwDs - Periyamadu	Primary Producers	05	06	FGD
Tilapia Growers: Women, Men, PwDs - Iranaimadu	Primary Producers	08	02	FGD
Individual MSMEs and VC Producers				

Gherkin VC Producer - Poosariyakulam	PwD, Ex-combatant - Age 42		01	Case Study
Gherkin VC Producer - Thattianmalai	PwD, Ex-combatant - Age 48		01	Case Study
Gherkin VC Producer - Velanai	Primary Producer - Age 28		01	Case Study
Gherkin VC Producer - Olumadu	Primary Producer - Age 45	01		Case Study
Mango VC Producer - Eachchlawakkai	PwD, Ex-combatant - Age 36		01	Case Study
MSME - Tailor, Kodikamam	PwD, Ex-combatant - Age 35		01	Case Study
MSME - Sewing Entrepreneur, Kanagampihekkulam	PwD, Ex-combatant - Age 45	01		Case Study
MSME - Sewing Entrepreneur, Jaffna	PwD - Age 48	01		Case Study
MSME - Sewing Entrepreneur, Kodikamam	PwD - Age 43	01		Case Study
MSME - Mechanic, Saravanai	PwD, Ex-combatant - Age 38		01	Case Study

Evaluation governance

The FIE evaluator led the methodological design of evaluation, producing design document, conduct data collection, triangulation, validation of data, data analysis, drawing conclusion and recommendations based on evidence with and producing good quality evaluation report including assessing quality of the report as per the guidance of ILO Evaluation Office.

Development of evaluation methodology and take part in the data collection and analysis, triangulation and report writing, with overall responsibility of the evaluation deliverables was carried out by the evaluator in consultation with the evaluation manager.

Tamil Language Interpreter and Notetaker from the locality accompanied the Evaluator in all the field visits to the primary stakeholders and to the civil society stakeholders.

The project Team of ILO/PAVE facilitated and provided feedback to the FIE as and when required.

The Regional Evaluation Specialist and the Evaluation Manager at ILO provided guidance and quality assurance support to the FIE.

Annex 05: ToR of the Evaluation

Quality assurance of the FIE

The consultant worked closely with the ILO/PAVE team to ensure the FIE conformed to the standards, guidelines to be met by the FIE. As state above, in-depth studies of the ILO and UNEG guidelines were carried out and adhered to.

The Inception Report and Final Evaluation Report (and standalone evaluation summary in ILO standard template) prepared met the requirements and followed the formats suggested in the guidelines / ToR.

Resource requirements and logistical support from ILO

Primary responsibility on the provision of documents, liaison with the stakeholders to facilitate data collection and quality assurance of the FIE was laid with ILO/PAVE.

Work plan

Key Steps of the Evaluation were:

- Inception Meeting with Key stakeholders
- Visits / Meetings with Selected Partners
- Inception Report
- Evaluation - field work
- Debriefing Meeting
- Evaluation Report
- Evaluation Findings Dissemination Workshop

Work Schedule:

Tasks	Responsibility	Deliverables	Completion Date & Days	
Design phase				
Induction meeting with the evaluator	PAVE	Literature and References	07 th Nov	½
Document Review	Evaluator	Draft Inception Report	14 th Nov	3
Orientation meeting with the project team	PAVE, Evaluator	Draft Fieldwork Schedule	18 th Nov	1
Visits / Meetings with Selected Partners	PAVE, Evaluator	Primary Data	18 th Nov	2
Feedback for the Inception Report	PAVE	Feedback / Comments	16 th Nov	-
Finalize the Inception Report	Evaluator	Final Inception Report	18 th Nov	3
Field phase				
Collecting Primary data/information	PAVE, Evaluator	Primary data	30 th Nov	10
Debriefing / Triangulation at project level	PAVE, Evaluator	PowerPoint presentation	30 th Nov	½
Documentation phase				
Evaluation report - Draft	Evaluator	Evaluation Report - Draft	15 th Dec	5
Quality assurance of the Draft	PAVE	Feedback to the Draft Report	20 th Dec	-
Final Evaluation Report	Evaluator	Final Evaluation Report	30 th Dec	2
Evaluation Findings Dissemination Workshop	PAVE, Evaluator	PowerPoint presentation	05 th Jan	1

Limitations:

Though the evaluation focused on utilization / continuation of the project interventions, some of the interventions were still at an evolving / early implementation stage and the experiences were not mature enough to draw lessons for continuity.

Several gaps and inconsistencies in monitoring data were identified in the project's monitoring data during the secondary data review. Delays in data updating and, in some cases, non-availability of disaggregated data were observed. Changes in M&E responsibilities during implementation, some of the activities were still ongoing and unclear lines of responsibility within the project team had resulted these lapses.

Also, there were limitations in meeting all the stakeholders within the tight schedule of the ETE. In such situations, telephone / virtual interviews were conducted.

Some key state stakeholders had been changed in the course and despite several attempts, meeting them were not possible.

Ditwah, the cyclone that hit Sri Lanka in November, including the northern part of the country, hindered / delayed meeting some of the stakeholders, particularly the communities in Mannar and the Institutional stakeholders who had to attend to relief and rescue work for few weeks in December 2025.

Main findings

Relevance (Is the intervention doing the right things? and validity of design)

1. To what extent do the project interventions and activities respond to the need of Sri Lanka's tripartite constituents, partner institutions and beneficiaries?

Response to Needs Assessments:

The project has been mainly built on needs assessments and value chain assessments carried out at the inception. The key recommendations and findings have been uniformly implemented across the 05 districts.

The decision on the VCs Though there had been district-specific recommendations such as Jaffna's focus on digital literacy, Kilinochchi's financial independence concerns, Mullaitivu's economic hardship issues require specific mentorship approaches, etc., the implementation has been carried out uniformly across the districts.

The main reason for such a uniformed implementation approach is to ensure a wider outreach of the training and capacity building provided, beyond the identified target areas.

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, the staff from the institutions of MoWA in the Northern province received capacity-building on leadership, gender, governance, strategic planning, etc. It is expected that these skills would help the respective officials in empowering women and the vulnerable in their communities.

Following on the outcomes of the EFC delegation took place with the aim of prompting investment opportunities in the North, OSH (WISE) training was provided to MSMEs and VC producers / employees in facilitating enabling work environments in the MSMEs and VCs.

Also, as a measure in eliminating heavy financial reliance on donor funding, it has been expected to increase access to credit and investment opportunities for the communities. Significant inputs in this regard were not evident except the integrated financial planning inputs given to MSMEs as an integral part of the training given to them.

Response to Tripartite Constituents:

It was evident that the project has explicitly focused on capacity building and rolling out support for State sector institutions such as SEDD, DoI, EFC, NAQDA and DoA(NP). The capacity building provided has covered a series of training, ToT and the rolling out support has been determined based on the needs of the specific sectors.

SEDD and DoI has been supported with training module and material development required for MSME training and roll out. Also, there were instances where state sector officials from across many provinces outside Northern Province were called in for training and capacity building. Inclusion of SSOs from across many districts for the ToT on MSME and on digital media use in enterprise development has been a response to the request / need.

Support provided to NAQDA for training and follow up could also be noticed as a response to a need / request by the institution.

The DoA(NP) stated that the engagement in the training and activities related to mango cultivation enabled valuable, new learning which can be used in their own activities as well.

The above mentioned private sector partners have been benefitted from the collaboration in many ways. Whilst direct support to the interventions is the main response by PAVE, the shift of mindset of the partner

staff to be sensitive to vulnerabilities and acceptance of the communities as co-partners could be seen as a ripple effect of the orientation / awareness provided to them. Though, there was a difficulty in specifically mentioning / recalling the training / awareness received, all private sector partner staffs were able to explain about the measures taken to address vulnerabilities, gender sensitivities, climate smart practices in their activities. Digital applications were also evident in the interventions of both Gherkin and Seaweed, while the interventions of Tilapia and Mango which are still at the early stages of implementation, were yet to explore / develop theirs.

Response to Beneficiaries:

The main response that could be witnessed was the emphasis given by the project to place the CBOs such as farmer / fisheries organisations at the core of the interventions. The space created and improved ability of CBOs to voice their views, negotiate and engage in the VC activities can be attributed to the series of capacity building that has taken place. Initiatives such as provision of conducive working conditions, collection centres in the neighbourhood, flexible hours of operation are some of the observations on the sensitivities evidenced in all 04 VCs.

When it comes to MSMEs, the project, in keeping to its focus on value addition, has mainly focused on addressing the needs of the emerging / upcoming entrepreneurs. However, the two organisations mainly attended the MSME capacity building, SEDD and DoI have purposively selected the needy / vulnerable within this purposive selection, such as women household heads and ex-combatants. As envisaged in the needs assessment, entrepreneurial skill-building, empowering women in business development and income generation have been the focus of MSME support.

In view of building capacities on safe work environment practices, EFC has carried out OSH (WISE) training to MSMEs and VC producers / employees.

2. To what extent has the project adapted to remain relevant to the communities, tripartite constituents and other stakeholders? How has the project adapted to emerging situations / needs during the implementation?

The project has made significant adaptations from the inception itself in ensuring contextual relevance, facilitating partnerships, empowering constituents and in reinforcing social justice in responding to emerging situations / needs during its implementation.

Contextual Relevance:

The most significant contextual adaptation done by PAVE was the strategic shift in responding to the state policy changes affecting local peanut and chilli cultivation. The project had been originally planned to build on / continue the value chains of peanut and chilli cultivation, which was an extension of previous ILO project LEED+. However, since both these VCs were affected by the changes to import and export decisions by the state, as an immediate response, the new VCs were identified by the project team.

The two intervention models developed by the project has specifically responded to the much needed income and enterprise development. As stated above, the two organisations, SEDD and DoI has been directly benefitted from the capacity building process for MSMEs: module development and ToT. Both SEDD and NAQDA stated that they were able to streamline their capacity building as result of PAVE support. The DoA stated that the new knowledge gained by PAVE, mainly the resource interventions, provided together with JHC on addressing issues of mango cultivation was found to be timely and useful to improve the extension services provided to mango VC. The PAVE project supported the request made by DoA to

build the capacity of the officials and farmers to improve the skills and knowledge on climate resilient crop practices, use of the latest mobile apps, equipment, machinery and geographic information systems.

3. To what extent is the project theory of change logical and coherent? How does the ToC reflect in the interventions?

The Project's Theory of Change is stipulated as:

IF the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the Northern Province are engaged in decent work – be it primary production, enterprise level, or self-employment – in the most promising value chains and they can access business development services, make use of digital solutions, and develop partnerships and representation at the national level,

THEN they are more likely to achieve greater economic well-being, show higher resilience to economic shocks and disasters, and gain a stronger voice in the community, **BECAUSE** they will be skilled, efficient, productive, competitive and able to make tangible economic and social contributions to the development of the local as well as the national economy.

ToC and the Results Framework:

The outcomes as stated in the Results Framework, vulnerable women and PwDs engaged in promising VCs and MSMEs enjoy decent employment and better support from public institutions, family members and their community, productive and competitive new and existing MSMEs and primary producers and adoption of climate smart practices and/or digital solutions in VCs and MSMEs has direct links to economic wellbeing and higher resilience to shocks, and social recognition as stated in the ToC.

At individuals' level, gherkin and seaweed producers, mainly women and PwDs place a high value on the aspects of economic wellbeing and social recognition. Financial independence and the ability to receive the sales and income information by the individuals were most valued by them.

Income from the productions have been mainly used to settle debts, help in children's schooling, improvements to households, which reflects the improved resilience in the families.

At community level, Improved facilities, infrastructure and vulnerability-sensitive working arrangements in the VCs and information were recognised as decent work environments.

The Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society perceived the ability to work and negotiate with nationally known company such as Cargills, as an elevated social recognition.

At institutional level, the officers from SEDD, DoI, NAQDA and DoA stated the training received in their respective fields as the most significant value addition to their work. The modules prepared and new mentoring and training methods learnt were attributed to the renewed interest by the staff to proactively work on MSMEs.

WhatsApp groups as a mode of communication in both VCs and MSMEs, have acted as a binding factor between the producers / entrepreneurs and the companies / institutions. Introduction on digital marketing, was also seen as a promising avenue with better outreach to a wider market by the MSMEs met with.

Therefore, it can be stated that the project interventions have been well-determined to reflect its ToC and address its objectives.

Overall, it can be stated that the project design and implementation remained relevant, with interventions based on needs identified, responsive to contextual changes, and well aligned with the Theory of Change, thereby contributing to decent work outcomes, institutional capacity strengthening and improved economic resilience of vulnerable groups in the Northern Province.

Coherence (How well the intervention fits)

4. How well has the Pave project synergized with work of other ILO and Norway interventions in Sri Lanka, as well as with other international development partners, Government, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and national development frameworks?

Alignment with international and national frameworks:

In keeping aligned with the priority 01 of ILO's Decent Work Country Programme, Creation of sustainable, inclusive, and decent employment, PAVE has clearly set its focus on capacity building and on creating a conducive VCs and enterprises for the vulnerable, mainly women, youth, and PwDs.

Developing and strengthening the tripartite partners to equip VCs and MSMEs with solutions to enhance their resilience, sustainability, and competitiveness responds to ILO's emphasis on tripartite constituents.

The MSME component of PAVE was expected to respond to National SME Policy and government's strategy "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour" in creating higher value through cluster production and processing, promoting regional balance in growth and promotion of rural industries and domestic production. When it comes to MSME interventions, though there are attempts such as roll-out of training in MSME component by the SEDD and DoI, formal measures taken in ensuring sustainability through value added production in enterprises, institutional partnerships and marketing was not significant. Due to vast geographical extent that is covered by the SEDD and DoI officials, the anticipated cluster production and processing at regional level does not seem feasible.

The project in responding to UNSDF (United Nations Sustainable Development Framework) aimed to support the Government achieve peaceful, just, inclusive and equitable development with a special focus on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. Two main interventions of PAVE, Inclusion of the vulnerable and ensuring decent work could be stated as the key contributing factors in this regard. Awareness on inclusion of the vulnerable to all the stakeholders was evident across all the interventions of the project. It could be observed that following the training, several practical solutions / measures have been implemented in Gherkin and Seaweed VCs. During the time of the evaluation, an OSH training was also carried out for the respective stakeholders.

These activities have also contributed to the ILO's flagship programme "Jobs for Peace and Resilience" and active engagement of the cooperative societies such as Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society, St. Anne's Seaweed Society are the evidence in this regard.

It could be observed that the needs assessment carried out also has specifically focused on the vulnerabilities linked to local economic development and peacebuilding.

The project has been developed as an extension of LEED+ which is a continued development through various phases of ILO projects since 2011. The understanding, appreciation and familiarity of the state stakeholders with PAVE and its evolution provides evidence to the strategic vision ILO has maintained. It could be observed that this long-term cooperation and existence has helped anchoring critical concepts such as inclusiveness and partnership approach at the ground level.

In conclusion, the PAVE project demonstrated strong coherence with ILO priorities, national development frameworks, UNSDCF commitments and Norway-supported interventions, building on long-term ILO engagement in local economic development. While synergies around inclusion, decent work and institutional capacity strengthening are evident at value chain level, further consolidation is required for sustainability and clustering approaches within MSME interventions.

Coherence (Alignment to cross-cutting themes of ILO: gender equality, disability, tripartism and social dialogue)

5. Has the Project been able to leverage the ILO contributions through its comparative advantages including International Labour Standards, social dialogue and tripartism?

ILO influence on PAVE conforming to cross-cutting themes

The cross-cutting themes of ILO, gender & disability inclusion, tripartism and social dialogue has been addressed along with other compliances of the project.

The Norway's development priorities for Sri Lanka including the promotion of sustainable development with a focus on economic development, private sector cooperation, lasting peace and reconciliation, and the Sri Lanka Peace building Priority Plan (PPP) are the two key frameworks PAVE has been directly linked to. Inclusive economic recovery through long-term interventions / partnerships with private sector, mainly through improved VCs, enterprises and markets is stated as the foremost contributing factor to peacebuilding in both these frameworks. One of the key emphasis the PAVE project has ensured in its VC interventions is the sustainability through private sector partnerships with national / international market linkages. Also, these interventions closely align with ILO's flagship programme "Jobs for Peace and Resilience" recommendations, decent work for peace and resilience and job creation in MSMEs.

Also, the project has strongly resonated with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sri Lanka's commitments to these goals to "leave no-one behind." Promoting jobs and enterprise, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue are the four pillars of the ILO Decent Work Agenda with gender as a cross-cutting theme. The most significant observation regarding inclusion is that the specific attention given to productively engage women and the PwDs in the VCs and the MSMEs. Considerations given in VC processes to women, such as conducive production practices for women, convenient produce collection arrangements for women and PwDs, provision of measures to ease the difficult working conditions for women. This vulnerable-centered thinking has noticeably fulfilled aspirations of PPP, that women, PwDs and FHHs are not merely 'victims of war' nor 'beneficiaries' of the programmes/project but decision-makers and principal agents of peace building and change contributing to community cohesion by strengthening resilience and confidence amongst the populations.

The project has implemented several strategies of the to ensure tripartism of government institutions, private sector, employees / MSMEs and other key stakeholders. Ensuring knowledge transfer on inclusive economy to all levels of stakeholders, facilitate dialogue and negotiation between the private sector stakeholders and the primary producers / CBOs, periodic review meetings with all the stakeholders are some of the examples that could be observed in this regard.

However, PAVE / ILO existence / facilitation in these activities was not distinctly visible. This could be perceived as a part of the strategy, where PAVE / ILO played a secondary / submissive role, allowing the key stakeholders to take the lead in the dialogue.

Overall, it could be stated that PAVE has effectively leveraged ILO's comparative advantages by mainstreaming gender equality, disability inclusion, tripartism and social dialogue across its interventions, in line with International Labour Standards, the Decent Work Agenda and the "Jobs for Peace and Resilience" framework. While ILO's facilitative role was less visible, this approach supported national ownership and demonstrated the project's contribution to sustainable, inclusive economic recovery and peacebuilding.

Effectiveness (Is the intervention achieving its objectives?)

6. To what extent has the Project achieved its planned results? Are there any unintended (positive and negative) outcomes? Are there any changes / amendments to the original plan?

In general, the project has been able to stay aligned to the results framework as planned.

Of the activities planned under outcome 01, Vulnerable women and persons with disabilities engaged in promising VCs and enterprises enjoy decent employment and better support from public institutions, family members and their community, identification of the new VCs could be stated as the most challenging activity carried out by the project.

As an immediate response, the project had suddenly deviated from its originally planned VCs, groundnuts and chillie cultivation, due to unexpected changes in the import and export policies which affected the marketing of these products. The 04 new VCs and partnerships identified, have been implemented remarkably well.

Number of employees and producers who enjoy decent work conditions¹ have reached 2611², well above the target of 2000. Of the 04 VCs, The Gherkin and Seaweed VCs have mainly contributed to this result by effectively implementing their business models as planned and have produced 1888 and 465 income opportunities respectively.

The Seaweed VC was temporarily affected by the issues of infrastructure facility withdrawn due to changes in the political atmosphere, hence shown a relatively low progress than the Gherkin VC.

The Tilapia and Mango VCs were executed later than the Gherkin and Seaweed VCs due to various logistical and planning issues and are yet to be fully implemented.

The intensive planning and logistics required to execute Tilapia VC has considerably delayed the implementation of VC activities. However, the Fisheries Society is convinced that once implemented, the VC would bring in a sustainable and regular income for their community and recognition for their produce. Some components of the VC, mainly fish meal production and maintenance of the cages have already created income opportunities for the community. The infrastructure for fish processing is nearing completion and expected to be operational in December 2025.

The Mango VC has also faced some delays due to various logistics matters, due a series of trouble shooting and training took place, including a training session from resource persons from India. Since JHC has previously worked only in Jaffna, organisation of the VC across all 05 districts in the Northern Province has demanded time to set up producer clusters and new infrastructure such as collection centres, processing centres and composting yards. Mango being a seasonal fruit, the knowledge gained from the training can be fully applied only from January 2026 starting from pruning of the trees.

The main activities that have been carried out in ensuring improved and inclusive decent work conditions in primary production and in enterprises are, sensitisation on gender and disability inclusion, training on OSH and training and follow up support to MSMEs.

As stated above, the gender and disability inclusion have been an integral aspect of the activities carried out. The training received at different levels seem to have helped integrating gender and disability sensitive thinking into the processes.

¹ As per ILO definition, following are considered as decent work conditions:

- a) safer working space (reduced number of occupational injuries,
- b) number of hours work per week (if it is more than 48, it is excessive)
- c) equal treatment (no gender wage gap, non-discrimination in recruit, women in senior management)
- d) social security
- e) no child labour
- f) adequate earning

² Source: PAVE Project Database

The number of employments created for vulnerable communities by the project has reached well above its target of 500. Once again, the main contribution to this achievement is also from the Gherkin VC. Records indicating FHH 796 FHHs, 65 PwDs and 593 young females in production and in employment evidence the extent of the engagement of the vulnerable.

In overall, the female participation in the Gherkin VC production and in employment is 1454 and is greater than that of male participation which is 781.

Though not as high as Gherkin VC, the Seaweed VC also have engaged 238 FHHs, 10 PwDs and 109 young females totalling 357 out of the 411 population in production and in employment in this VC.

Table 01: Employees and primary producers who experience improved decent work conditions:

Criteria	Gherkin			Seaweed			Tilapia			Mango		
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
Society Members				178	36	214	42	143	185			
Increased income	1010	878	1888	169	35	204	2	4	6	46	38	84
Gender Training	1010	878	1888	246	73	319	21	123	144			
OSH Training	1010	878	1888	38	16	54						
CSP Training	1010	878	1888	43	22	56	2	16	18	124	65	189

Attention paid in MSME activities to address vulnerabilities though not as visible as that of VCs, few cases studied on MSME trainees revealed the efforts taken by the SSOs to follow-up on the vulnerable trainees. It could be observed that the geographical spread of the MSME trainees across the districts, has affected the much needed on the job support following the training.

One of the significant accomplishments at the institutional level in addressing the vulnerabilities is the liaison with the MoWA to develop the provincial gender policy. This is said to be the first ever gender policy developed at provincial level. The next step following the policy, which is the capacity building of the government to implement the policy, is yet to be implemented.

Of the activities planned under Outcome 02, productive and competitive new and existing MSMEs and enterprises, the SEDD and DoI officials stated the module preparation, handbook development and ToT for MSME delivery as the most appreciated interventions. The ToT has capacitated them with innovative training methods and renewed interest to roll out.

The ToT training on MSME, has trained 50 master trainers from government officers, persons from CSOs and NGOs on MSME, inclusion of gender and disability into economic activities. Though the rollout following the training said to have been achieved, the statistics was not available at the time of the evaluation. However, the few cases studied provided a detailed account of the rollout training and follow up provided by the SEDD and DoI officials.

The inputs received on the SYB, IYB, digital application, financial management frequently mentioned and appreciated by the MSMEs as entrepreneurial and business management skills improved their MSMEs. While both institutions have confined to train MSMEs with potential for improvement, conscious efforts taken to include the FHHs, ex-combatants and PwDs were evident.

The research and resource inputs facilitated through Tilapia aquaculture interventions was also highly recognized by NAQDA as critical value additions to their work.

Enabling the access to financial services for the MSMEs and VCs though have been planned, there was no evidence of proactive steps taken in this regard, except for the specific assistance such as equipment donations / concessions by the Provincial authorities. Presence of financing companies or financial institutions to deliver financial services were not evident. Financial needs of the producers and employees of VCs have been fulfilled jointly by the respective private companies and PAVE.

Of the activities planned under Outcome 03, adoption of climate smart practices and digital solutions by the MSMEs and primary producers of the VCs, the most significant are the adoption of conducive farming / cultivation methods in Gherkin and Mango production, measures to effectively manage water in Gherkin VCs, adoption of circular economy practices through managed cage culture for Tilapia VC and facilitation of recycling / reuse in Mango and Tilapia VCs.

It could be observed that these implementations, mainly training, have ensured positive mindset shift among the DoA and NAQDA officials to act with a sense of social responsibility. Though in a small-scale, replication of some of these practices in their work outside the PAVE project was evident.

“We learnt many new and environmentally responsive techniques and methods through the training and inputs facilitated by PAVE on mango cultivation. The trees planted few years ago by previous schemes were not giving fruits properly and the specially the field training given by the Indian resource persons was beneficial.”

Provincial Director- DoA (NP)

Table 02: Participation of DoA in the Training on Mango cultivation:

Details of the training	Location	Male	Female	Total
Farm Mechanisation (03days)	FMTC, Anuradhapura	39	08	47
Plant Protection (03 days)	District Agriculture Training Centre	24	08	32
Soil testing (03 days)	Horticultural Crop Research and Development Institute (HORDI), Gannoruwa	26	06	32

Of the 03, both plant protection and soil testing training has discussed climate smart agricultural practices, water conservation, hybrid techniques on plant protection.

Following the training, the DoA officials have rolled out 40 training sessions on various cultivation practices to 727 male and 572 female mango producers totalling to 1299.

In addition, the trained Agriculture Instructors (AIs) attached to the regional offices, have gathered 30 producers and trained them on farm mechanisation, plant protection and soil testing.

NAQDA considered the training / resource inputs received on aquaculture practices as a very important and timely investment on preserving natural aqua resources. Introduction of cage culture enabling fish growth and harvesting in a monitored environment, processing of fish waste to make fish feed are some of the climate smart practices adopted in the Tilapia VC.

The climate-smart practices adopted in MSMEs are specific to the individuals and the cases studied revealed some of the CSPs adopted such as drip irrigation practices, land preparation for Gherkin.

Both VCs and MSMEs have adapted varied digital applications customised to suit the specific needs. The most used digital medium is the WhatsApp to receive information related to VCs. The most descriptive application was the digital app used by the Reitzell to share the information on the produce, fertilising and income. The producers already using the digital tools perceive the groups and apps as a means of increased recognition and standardisation of the VC livelihoods.

The Mango and Tilapia VCs which are at the early stages of implementation, are yet to introduce the digital measures.

The MSMEs though have received the training on digital application, the decisions have been made depending on the needs and the capacity of the individuals. For instance, all the tailors met during the evaluation said that they are self-sufficient and, therefore do not perceive the need for digital marketing as critical.

Generally, it could be stated that the concept of CSP and digital solutions for productive and competitive VCs and MSMEs has been contextualised, but the implementation had varied progresses depending on the need and the stage of the interventions.

7. To what extent and how has the Project supported value chains and led to the creation of decent employment for vulnerable workers, men, women and people with disabilities in the target value chains?

Support to partners to create decent employment for the vulnerable:

Setting up local collection centres, provision of equipment, tools and gear for Gherkin, Seaweed and Mango VCs, fish meal production facility including processing equipment, processing facility for fish processing for Tilapia VC, processing facility for Mango VC were the infrastructure that has created decent work environments in the VCs. The funds were facilitated jointly by PAVE and the respective private companies.

Organisation of the collection and processing according to the schedules and domestic chores of the local producers, facilitation of the formation of the producer clusters in Gherkin and Mango VCs, coordination of the engagement of the respective CBOs, private companies and state institutions in Seaweed and Tilapia VCs were the implementation support provided in creating decent work for the VCs.

The series of capacity building to the stakeholders is another significant support provided by the project to improve performance of VCs. The private sector stakeholders have been provided with training on specific VC activities, Gender & Inclusiveness, Leadership and Communication. Also, there had been research carried out by the State and Private sector stakeholders and that has been fully funded by PAVE.

Inputs to Primary Producers have covered training on production, Gender and Domestic Violence, Leadership and Team building, Drug addiction, OSH, Communication and Negotiation, Financial management & accounting and Digital Application.

All the above inputs have collectively led to creation of value added employment and livelihood options for the primary producers and employees in the VCs.

Table 03: Employments and Livelihoods created in the VCs:

VC	Producers	PwDs		FHHs ³	Youth		Others		Total		Grand Total
		F	M		F	M	F	M	F	M	
Gherkin	New	25	28	329	258	269	116	289	728	586	1314
	Total	40	64	467	335	420	168	394	1010	878	1888 ⁴
Seaweed	New	2		76	15	12	34	46	127	58	185
	Total	8	4	162	94	38	126	33	390	75	465
Tilapia	New		1	3	2	4			5	5	10
	Total	2	4	6	8	38			16	42	58
Mango	New	2	1	4	4	2	6	8	16	11	27
	Total	3	4	36	26	32	28	71	93	107	200
Total employments and livelihoods created in the VCs											2611

Addressing vulnerabilities:

All 04 VCs have paid attention to include the vulnerable; mainly PwDs, FHHs and Youth in productive employments and livelihoods.

³ Under the PAVE project VCs, the FHH is classified as a woman is the main breadwinner of the household and/or if her contribution is significant to meeting household expenditures. In some instances, even if the husband is alive but does not contribute to household expenses, the household has also been considered as an FHH.

⁴ The Gherkin VC data includes 800 farmers who cultivated chilli as well.

The primary stakeholders perceive that the knowledge received from the training enabled them to think independently and differently.

Gherkin VC has specifically identified PwDs and FHHs and has incorporated them in the VC production. On one instance, a PwD outside the project area has been incorporated in the production.

As mentioned above, Gherkin and Seaweed VCs are the main contributors enabled exceeding the targets planned on decent employment for vulnerable workers, men, women and PwDs.

Table 04: Employments and livelihoods created for vulnerable communities in the VCs:

VC	Producers	PwDs		FHHs	Youth		Total		Total Vulnerable
		F	M	F	F	M	F	M	
Gherkin	New	25	28	329	258	269	612	297	909
	Total	40	64	467	335	420	842	484	1326
Seaweed	New	2		76	15	12	93	12	105
	Total	8	4	162	94	38	264	42	306
Tilapia	New		1	3	2	4	5	5	10
	Total	2	4	6	8	38	16	42	58
Mango	New	2	1	4	4	2	10	3	13
	Total	3	4	36	26	32	65	36	101

It is notable to observe that 70% of the producers in the Gherkin VC and 66% of the producers in the Seaweed VC are from the vulnerable communities. The discussions revealed the conscious efforts taken to include the FHHs, ex-combatants and PwDs. Though small in numbers, both Tilapia and Mango VCs have also given attention to inclusion of the vulnerable.

Therefore, it can be stated that the VCs have paid greater attention to enable an inclusive economy.

Case Study: N. Naguleswaran

Male, 42 years | Person with Disability | Producer in Gherkin Value Chain

Location: Poosariyakulam

Naguleswaran is a smallholder farmer and person with disability living in Poosariyakulam with his mother, wife, and three children aged 18, 11, and 4 years. He owns three acres of land and was previously engaged in cultivating groundnuts and vegetables, with income fluctuating significantly due to market volatility.

He learned about gherkin cultivation through farmers in a neighbouring village and was subsequently introduced to the company operating the value chain. Following a field visit by the company's extension officer, he entered into a production agreement and initiated cultivation on a quarter acre of land using 600 seeds supplied. With technical guidance, he adopted new practices, such as ridge-and-furrow method.

Harvesting was carried out with the support of family members, while fellow farmers assisted with transporting produce to the collection centre located approximately three kilometers away. The first production cycle yielded approximately 1,000 kg of gherkins, generating a net income of around LKR 150,000 after deducting input costs of approximately LKR 40,000. This represented a substantial improvement compared to earnings from previous vegetable and chilli cultivation, which averaged LKR 30,000–35,000 per season.

Income earned from gherkin production was used to complete a partially constructed agro-well and to invest in children's education, while loan repayments to a finance institution continue to be managed in instalments.

The primary challenge identified relates to physical access and transportation of produce, as his disability necessitates reliance on others. Improved collection arrangements at farm level would further enhance inclusivity and sustainability of his participation in the value chain.

8. To what extent and how have the MSMEs and primary producers become more efficient, productive and competitive because of the interventions supported/introduced by the Project?

The primary producers and employees in the Gherkin and Seaweed VCs, have already shown independence in taking their decisions regarding production and finances. Freedom to express individual opinion and ability to take decisions on spending the income were evident among the women.

CBO's presence to coordinate with the private company and state officials in both Seaweed and Tilapia VCs, has made the producers and employees confident in liaising with the VCs.

As discussed above, the digital applications, mainly WhatsApp groups and the App introduced by Gherkin VC have been well received by the users.

Inputs to MSME has started with MSME module development, handbook preparation and ToT for state sector officials working on MSME. The 02 main organisations engaged in this process are SEDD and DoI. The ToT has been followed up by a training rollout to MSMEs.

As stated above, MSMEs with potential for improvement have been purposively selected for the training. Inputs to MSME trainees have focused on SYB, IYB, gender and inclusion, business planning, financial management & accounting, costing and pricing and digital application.

The new modules and the interactive training approach had renewed interest of the SEDD and DoI officials and have been a key factor in the success of the rollout following the ToT.

The officials from both organisations stated that the new training approach was well-received by the MSME trainees. The inputs highly appreciated by the trainees were IYB, business planning and digital application. However, the MSMEs have not shown greater productivity or competitiveness as in the case of primary producers of the VCs but projected a self-sufficient attitude with the progress of their MSMEs.

Digital applications also though appreciated as a new learning by the MSMEs, was not considered an option to explore due to this self-sufficient attitude.

9. To what extent have MSMEs and primary producers adopted climate smart and digital solutions promoted by the Project?

Land preservation:

The "ridge and furrow" method used for land preparation to control the water content in the soil and salinity has been one of the common adaptations in Gherkin VC. Almost all the primary producers have adopted this method in their cultivations.

Produce and waste management:

As discussed above, the Tilapia cage culture intervention, which promotes a circular economy approach, contributes to improved aquaculture management by minimizing unnecessary fish harvests. However, the level of buy-in on the adoption of this method among primary producers remains uneven.

Measures taken by Tilapia and Mango VCs to compost and recycle product waste in an efficient manner should be commended, especially considering the investment / importance placed for these processes.

Drip Irrigation:

Introduction of drip irrigation to a few needy households by the Gherkin VC could be observed. However, considerably the costly investment on infrastructure (pump and pipes) this cannot be considered an affordable option for the vulnerable, unless if the project supports.

10. What are the key achievements of the Project in addressing gender equality, women's empowerment, and discrimination, including disability inclusion?

Identification of women entrepreneurs as a core strategy / change agent in sustainable livelihood:

A series of gender and inclusion training has been delivered to the community at different levels.

Table 05: Gender Sensitizations carried out:

Sessions	M	F	PwD - M	PwD - W
Gender sensitization	282	277	8	3
Gender mentorship and rollout together with MoWA	70	314	0	0
Inclusion of PwDs - rollout	286	156	0	0
PSEA	29	7	0	0
Total	667	754	8	3

As explained above, a significant result of the increased knowledge on gender and inclusion awareness is the decision making by women on issues affecting them.

“Now I also can decide on matters related to my family.... moreover, I can take responsibility to execute them as I also earn. My earnings are credited to my bank account, and I settled a loan as well. Now, I have better recognition in the family.”

Female Seaweed Producer - Valaippdu

The women in Gherkin and Seaweed VCs stated that directly receiving income to their account together with payment alerts and the ability to contribute to household and children’s expenses as the most satisfying factors.

Table 06: Primary producers having their own income from Gherkin / Seaweed cultivation:

Primary Producers	M	F
Seaweed	58	127
Gherkin	878	1010

Though not yet operational, the women, who have been selected for Tilapia processing, were able to explain the plan of action and their stake in the Tilapia processing facility. The training received has made them confident and hopeful.

Since the mango cultivation is a family-led intervention, a specific involvement of women cannot be exclusively identified. However, following the new learning in pruning, grafting, etc., the involvement of family as a unit in mango cultivation could be expected.

Female-led Collection Centres:

The responsibility of the collection, which is a critical function in the VC, has been mostly entrusted with females. Also, the vulnerable, FHHs, PwDs and young females have been recruited as collection centre employees. The Gherkin VC has a majority of females as the collection centre employees.

Table 07: Female-led collection centres:

VC	Total Collection Centres	Collection centres led by Females				
		PwDs	FHHs	Youth	Other	Total
Gherkin	56	1	34	11		46
Seaweed	3		1			1
Tilapia	1					0
Mango	2		1			1

Overall, the evidence indicated that PAVE has been largely effective in achieving its planned objectives, particularly in inclusive value chain development, creation of decent employment for vulnerable groups, and institutional capacity strengthening. While implementation progress varied across value chains and MSMEs due to contextual, logistical and timing constraints, adaptive management enabled the project to remain aligned with its Theory of Change and results framework. The observed outcomes, including unintended positive results such as institutional mindset shifts, and replication of practices beyond the project, demonstrated meaningful contributions towards inclusive, resilient and decent work-centred local economic development.

Effectiveness of management arrangement

11. How effective was the project management, and the support provided to the project team by the ILO (PU of the country office, technical specialists), donors, and tripartite constituents in delivering results? What could have been done differently?

The Pro-Doc of PAVE has planned 03 key project management arrangements at the National level, Provincial level and Institutional level.

At national level, the project was expected to report to the Decent Work Country Programme taskforce which consists of representatives from ILO's tripartite members, and which meets every four months. The taskforce meeting serves as a platform to report on the progress of the ILO's work to the Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, Employer's Federation of Ceylon, and the trade unions.

Though there had been initial arrangements and discussions in this regard, formal reviews have not been held. However, liaison with some of these stakeholders and ILO on different occasions have taken place.

At provincial level, a Project Advisory Committee (PAC), chaired by the Chief Secretary of the Provincial Council including representation of Department of Labour & Trade Union Relations, Department of Cooperative Development, Industry and Commerce, Department of Agriculture, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Disaster Management, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development, Cooperatives and Private sector was expected to periodically review progress of the project and address any challenges in project implementation.

There had been discussions to suggest district level progress review meetings which are more applicable and doable, but that also has not taken place. However, several liaisons across departments such as DoA, SEDD, NAQDA, DoI, MoWA, Private Companies and PAVE were evident. It could be stated that these deliberations have been less formal and more on operational needs and arrangements.

It was notable that ILO's longstanding liaisons with these institutions has made the implementations smoother and easier. The mutual understanding that has been developed by the state entities and ILO over the years has enabled timely implementation of interventions despite the political and administrative changes taken place.

Key responsibility of the project management at institutional level is laid with the National Project Coordinator is responsible for the technical and financial delivery of the project including day-to-day operations of field activities, progress monitoring, reporting, networking at local level. The field level team comprises of a Gender and Inclusion Officer, 02 Field Coordinators and an Admin team. The National Project Officer based in ILO office in Colombo is responsible for liaising between the NPC and field officers and the Colombo office. The National Coordinator for Monitoring and Evaluation based in ILO office in Colombo is responsible for monitoring the progress and impact of the project.

The institutional level project management has closely worked among the team and regular visits to project locations were evident. The support received from the country office in timely disbursement of funds, technical support and periodic monitoring visits were evident.

It could be stated that the networking with state sector and the private companies was at an optimal level. There was low visibility ILO/PAVE at local level among the communities, in terms of understanding ILO/PAVE stake in the VCs and in MSMEs. However, the communities could explicitly explain the inputs received such as training on gender, communication and leadership, SYB, IYB, digital applications. ILO/PAVE role in funding was somewhat understood by the VCs and was unaware by the MSMEs.

In the context of Gherkin and Seaweed VCs, where private companies, CBOs and the state officials have a well-coordinated implementation, the low visibility of ILO/PAVE could be interpreted as a positive factor.

The MSME development following the training provided to potential entrepreneurs, has not commenced in a full-fledged manner as planned. As stated before, one of the reasons is the difficulty in close monitoring due to geographical spread of the MSMEs.

12. How well the project objectives and its ToC has reflected in the project interventions? To what extent was results-based management implemented in the programme put in place support the achievement of the planned results?

Engagement of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the primary production, enterprise level or self-employment:

Active engagement of the vulnerable in the VCs was evident through active participation in the CBOs of the VCs, voicing opinion in public forums and improved ability to monitor their wage and income information. Many cluster leaders of the Gherkin and Seaweed VCs being females, FHHs or PwDs, prove that the 02 VCs have developed the conducive space for them to confidently carry out their duties.

Improved access to business development services by the MSMEs was not visible, but the fact that the MSMEs willingness to manage the enterprises in a self-sufficient manner proves the greater confidence they have developed.

The breakthrough expected by the project on the use of digital solutions, apps and platforms, have not been achieved as planned. The digital apps and platforms have mainly been used as a medium of information receiving in the VCs. As stated before, in both VCs and MSMEs, WhatsApp groups have been well received as a mode of communication and as a binding factor between the producers / entrepreneurs and the companies / institutions.

Digital media, though expected to be proactively used for marketing and for business expansion in MSMEs, have not been adopted as expected.

Private-public-community partnership in VCs:

VC interventions implemented through private-public-community partnership in the VCs, has emerged a new economic model that responds to the project objective of inclusive economy leading to economic well-being and better.

The complementary arrangement between the 03 stakeholder categories, taking on respective stakes in the VC development, has significantly increased the confidence in the community.

NAQDA officers often visit and help set up the Tilapia processing facility and advise on the management of the cages. We feel confident that the project will progress and continue as it has the key state stakeholder's support.

Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society

NAQDA, the key state stakeholder, value the knowledge and experience gained by the project.

We appreciate the fact that Cargills brought in the expertise and do a lot of research on the project. This is a collective learning experience for all of us. Community though express concerns now, will realise the value of such a circular economy approach for sustainability of the aquaculture.

Assistant Director, Provincial Extension & Monitoring Unit - NAQDA

Results Orientation of the project:

The project has made significant efforts to ensure the key results of the project; decent work conditions, inclusion and recognition for the vulnerable, economic wellbeing and sustainability of the interventions through climate sensitivity and digital solutions.

Efforts that have gone into establish the processing facilities and collection centres evidence the emphasis given by the project to ensure decent work conditions.

Sharing the benefits of the comparative advantage of the private companies in the market to the producers, by offering competitive prices for the produce could be attributed to economic wellbeing.

However, it could be observed that the Mango VC is yet to share the information on the purchasing arrangements and prices to the producers.

The communication and information sharing via organised measures such as WhatsApp and apps, sensitivities in the arrangement of collection and productions indicate the emphasis given in ensuring the inclusiveness and sustainability / smooth functioning of the VCs.

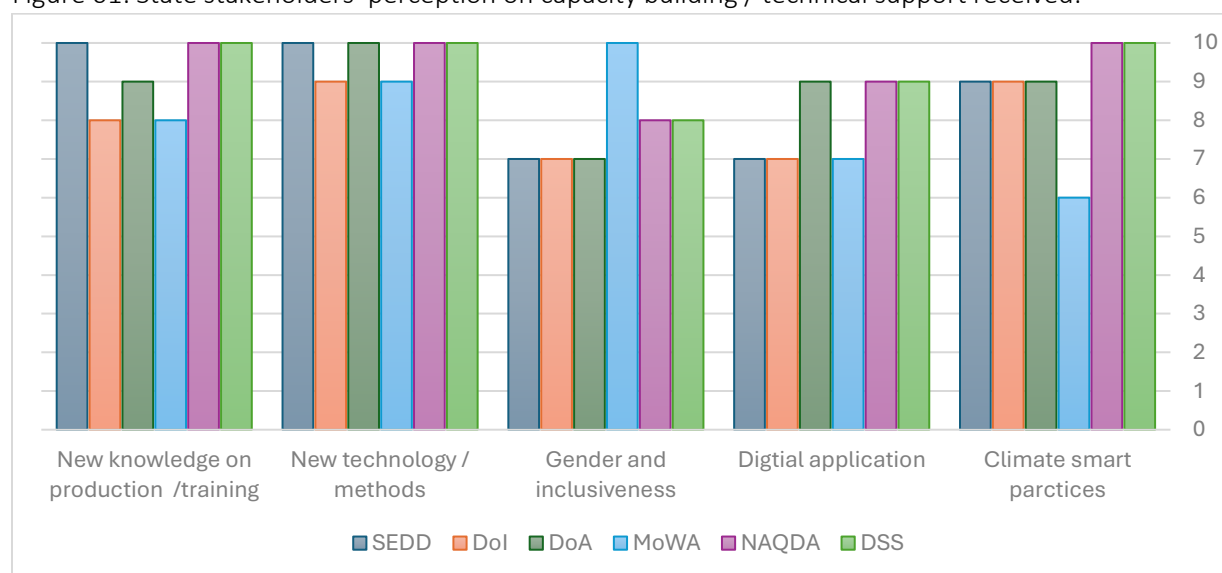
As stated above, adoption of CSPs in VCs has not only contributed to the sustainability of the interventions, but to the economic wellbeing through conducive economic practices.

13. Are the direct beneficiaries (primary producers, MSMEs, government service providers) satisfied with the capacity building/technical support from the project and its partners? What are perceived as the most useful?

Satisfaction on capacity building provided to state sector stakeholders:

The capacity building provided to state sector stakeholders have been well received as timely, informative and much needed interventions by all the key stakeholders of the project, SEDD, DoI, DoA, MoWA, NAQDA and DSS.

Figure 01: State stakeholders' perception on capacity building / technical support received:



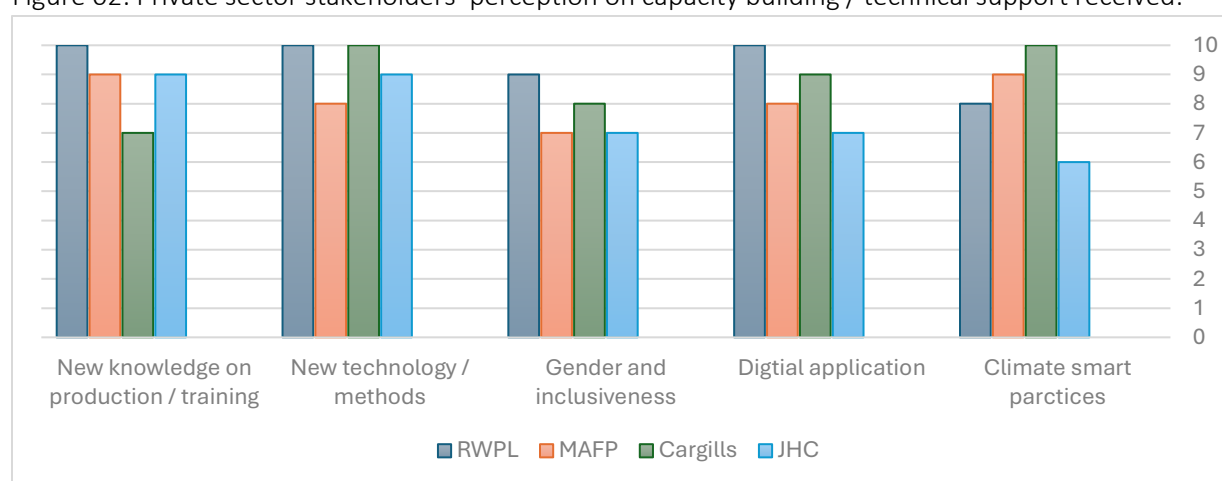
It can be observed that in a Likert scale of 10, all the stakeholders assigned values above 6 for the inputs received.

The most acknowledged inputs are, new knowledge on production / training, new technology for production / training methods for rollout and CSP practices.

Satisfaction on capacity building provided to private sector stakeholders:

The key private sector stakeholders of the 04 VCs have also acknowledged the inputs received as useful and to their economic and social wellbeing.

Figure 02: Private sector stakeholders' perception on capacity building / technical support received:

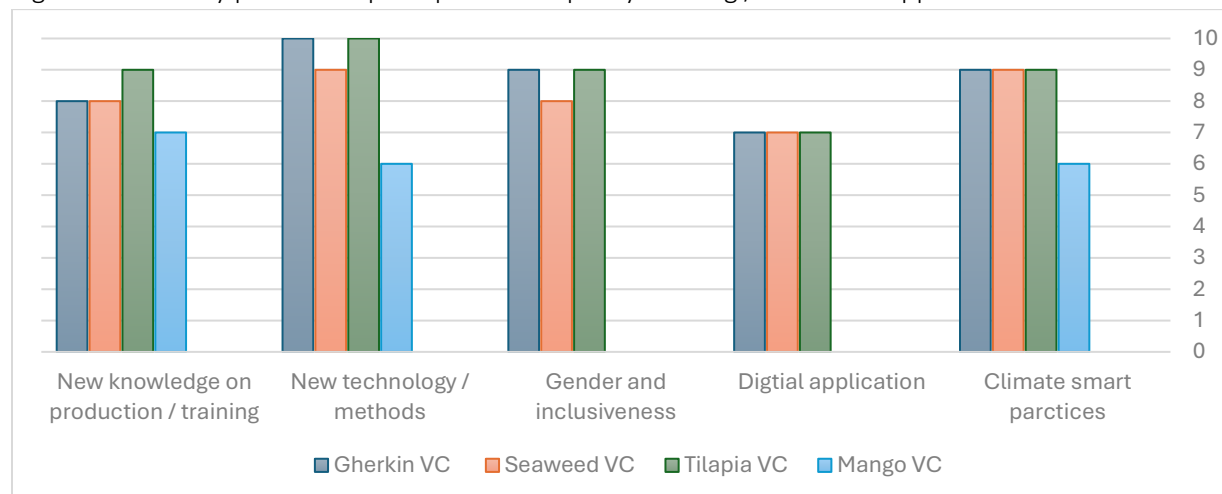


All the 04 private sector stakeholders have perceived the inputs on new technology and methods knowledge on production received as the most valued contributions by the project. It is notable that the inputs / interventions on CSPs also have been highly appreciated by 03 of the 04 VCs.

Satisfaction on capacity building provided to primary producers:

The primary producers of the VCs also perceived the inputs received as timely and much-needed interventions to their economic and social wellbeing.

Figure 03: Primary producers' perception on capacity building / technical support received:



It could be stated that the new technology / methods have been most appreciated by the VCs. The Mango VC producers were unable to provide opinion on inclusiveness and digital application, as these inputs are yet to be received by them. Also, the high level of value placed on CSP inputs indicate the realisation on the importance of these aspects in production. High acceptance of the new knowledge could be interpreted as readiness of the producers to accept and adapt to new ways.

Satisfaction on capacity building provided to MSMEs:

The perceptions on the inputs received by the MSMEs met with for the evaluation somewhat differed from that of the primary producers of the VCs.

While the new knowledge and inputs on IYB and SYB was highly valued, there were varied views on the inputs received on CSP and digital application. Inputs received on gender and inclusiveness was also acknowledged as important. As the MSMEs met for the evaluation were purposively selected from among the vulnerable, they particularly appreciated the access created to services and service providers.

Overall, project management arrangements were moderately effective, with strong operational coordination at the institutional level and responsive technical and administrative support from the ILO country office contributing to timely delivery of core interventions. While formal national and provincial level governance mechanisms were not fully operationalised as envisaged, longstanding institutional relationships and adaptive, informal coordination enabled continuity and results despite contextual and political changes. Greater use of structured review platforms and strengthened post-training follow-up, particularly for MSMEs, could have further enhanced results-based management, visibility, and sustainability of outcomes.

Efficiency of resource usage/implementation: (How well are resources being used?)

14. To what extent were the Project's resources (funds, expertise, time, staff, etc) strategically utilised to deliver in a timely and an efficient manner?

The project's main resource delivery strategy had been facilitating / lobbying the resources through the two key partners, the state sector and private sector stakeholders. As stated above, capacity building has mainly focused on knowledge enhancement, technical support and rolling out.

The main channel that has adopted by the state sector is building capacities on better implementation of the services in the selected VCs and MSMEs.

The other resource delivery strategies of the project were funding support and policy advocacy. Funding support to state sector stakeholders have been mainly for training and in addition the VCs have received VC financing (infrastructure development, equipment and tools distribution) and financing for gender, inclusion and OSH awareness measures.

The provincial gender policy developed requires building capacities of the state officials to rollout. Though planned, this has not yet been implemented.

Technical and rolling out support to VCs by the private sector partners:

Building capacities of the VCs by the private sector stakeholders has mainly adopted on the job / field based training and VC financing.

Table 08: Capacity building by the private sector stakeholders for the VCs:

Private Sector Stakeholder	Intervention	Primary Producers		Total
		F	M	
Marine Algae Pvt Ltd	VC financing	186	32	218
Reitzell walker	VC financing	1010	878	1888
Reitzell walker	Digitalization	740	524	1264
Reitzell walker	Collection centres	41	70	112
Jaffna horticulture	Technical training	62	36	98
Jaffna horticulture	Collection centres			
Cargills	Tilapia Cage culture	4	6	10

The private sector stakeholders value the part-funding received as a motivation for them. This model has not only facilitated timely implementation of the VC activities but has emerged to be an inclusive and integrated economic model that effectively enabled the economic recovery.

Technical and rollout support to VCs and MSMEs by the state sector stakeholders:

Building capacities of the VCs by the state sector stakeholders has also adopted on the job / field based training.

Building capacities of the MSMEs have exclusively adopted module-based training based on the ToT received by the state officials.

Table 09: Capacity building by the state sector stakeholder for the VCs and MSMEs:

State sector stakeholder	Type of Support	Intervention	Training to BDS provides			Training to primary stakeholders		
			F	M	Total	F	M	Total
NAQDA	Technical training	Seaweed cultivation				335	134	469

SEDD	Training	Digital application				226	51	277
DSS	Disability audit	Inclusive MSME				28	22	50
DoA	Technical training -knowledge and exposure	Climate smart agriculture practices and innovative digital solutions in agriculture	08	39	47	572	727	1299
Dol	Technical training	Improving the basic business development literacy and enabling their access to BDSs				25	23	48

The state officials emphasised that the timely part-funding provided by PAVE to match VC financing (equipment purchase for production, infrastructure development) of the private stakeholders, has helped timely implementation of the production activities. Also, the funding for the rolling out of the training to the producers and to the MSMEs and for the development of digital applications have been equally helpful in ensuring smooth implementation of the project in an informed manner.

The DoA has been able to do the rollout beyond the project's scope by including mango farmers outside the project area.

Further, the state officials acknowledged the ToT received from Curve-up as innovative and descriptive, which enabled them with a fresh approach in rolling out the training on SYB, IYB to the MSMEs.

The resource inputs by EFC on OSH was to be carried out during the time of the evaluation, hence could not be evaluated.

15. Has the Project allocated sufficient resources in achieving its gender equality, disability, and non-discrimination; tripartism and social dialogue activities?

The Outcome 02 of the results framework, increased capacity to offer competitive solutions to MSMEs and VC producers in the province, has specifically focused on three aspects; Improvement of the skills of the BDS providers to support the communities, the enhancement of the entrepreneurial or employment skills of the vulnerable to stay competitive and productive in the economy and access to appropriate financial services for the vulnerable.

Of the targets for these, it was expected 10 trained BDS providers, 4 productive VCs, 160 competitive and productive MSMEs and VCs, 200 skilled MSMEs and 100 financing opportunities be available as a result of the respective interventions.

BDSs' response to gender equality, disability, and non-discrimination; tripartism and social dialogue:

It was evident that SEDD, Dol and DoA have been able get a larger pool of master trainers trained covering a larger geographical spread.

The training carried out by the master trainers have well-exceeded the numbers targeted.

The key BDS providers, namely SEDD, Dol and DSS have been able to successfully rollout the training to the communities and have made conscious efforts to include the vulnerable.

The backstopping support provided by us following the training was a critical factor that developed a close liaison between us and the MSMEs. Now they talk freely to us and are at ease to share their issues with us.

Master Trainers - SEDD

Table 10: MSME rollout by SEDD:

District	Total trained	PwDs		FHHs	Youth		Others		Total	
		F	M	F	F	M	F	M	F	M
Mannar	50	1		17	12	7	8	5	38	12
Kilinochchi	92	3		32	22	9	23	3	80	12
Mullaitivu	40	2	1	16	13	3	3	2	34	6
Vavuniya	65	1	2	28	11	12	8	3	48	17

Table 11: MSME rollout by DoI:

District	Total trained	PwDs		FHHs	Youth		Others		Total	
		F	M	F	F	M	F	M	F	M
Mullaitivu	50	1	2	18	11	6	8	4	38	12

It could be observed that both SEDD and DoA BDS providers have selected more than 80% women for MSME training, including 08 PwDs and 111 FHHs.

The BDSs providing services to VCs, mainly DoA and NAQDA also have taken proactive measures to ensure inclusion of the vulnerable, mainly, women, youth, FHHs and PwDs in their capacity building initiatives. Both BDSs have conducted most of the training in the localities with flexibility to accommodate the PwDs and women with children.

We conducted 40 capacity building sessions in the VC locations and ensured participation of 1299 framers. 572 out of them were females. Since schedules were flexible and we personally looked into their issues, they could take part without any difficulty. Following the training in the localities, those who could, were taken to further training and exposure visits to Gannoruwa, Mahailuppallama and Anuradhapura. The training was carried out as a collective learning, by the officials and the mango growers with lot of interaction, etc. This helped them getting closer to us.

Master Trainers - DoA (NP)

Purposeful selection of the trainees by the officials themselves could be identified as a key reason for success of the training. Financial support for logistics and flexibility provided by PAVE were also acknowledged by the officials the enabling factors to carry out the training in a relaxed atmosphere with flexible times, refreshments, etc.

Though the proactive action and dynamism expected by the project, was not visible among the MSME trainees (as that of the VC entrepreneurs), progress at a slower pace was evident.

Negotiations with buyers, participation in entrepreneurs' meetings at the divisional secretariat are some of the engagements of social dialogue evidenced.

Both the VCs and MSMEs are still at a stage where it requires closer attention of the state officials to ensure that the implementation happens as planned. The state sector stakeholders play a critical role as a community safeguard / buffer in this regard.

We have realised that we have an obligation towards the communities beyond capacity building on the subject matter. As the state representative at local level, it is our responsibility to stay involved together with the private companies and the communities to safeguard the interests of the community, and particularly the needs of the vulnerable are secured throughout the process.

Provincial Director - DoA (NP)

It could also be observed that there had been flexibility within to respond to the needs emerging during the implementation of the activities at the field level. Following a request from the master trainers, PAVE has provided the training tool kits for the rollout.

The VC stakeholders engaging women, FHHs, PwDs as employees of the VC activities and introducing specific action to ensure conducive work arrangements could be seen as evidence of improved sensitivity on gender and inclusion.

We have taken into account the community lifestyle and activities when planning the times for training, meetings and collection of produce. As many of our collection centre employees are females, we do not plan any activity during the busy hours at households. We have known these facts before, but the training given to us has made us sensitive to these issues and now we specifically look into these sensitivities.

Manager - Agri Operations (North) - Reitzell Pvt. Ltd.

Table 12: Employment in the collection centres in the VCs:

VC	Total Collection Centres	FHHs	Youth		Total	
		F	F	M	F	M
Gherkin	56	35	11	10	46	10
Seaweed	3	1		2	1	2
Tilapia	1			1		1
Mango	2	1		1	1	1

The Gherkin VC managed by Reitzell could be stated as having taken the most proactive measures in ensuring the inclusion of FHH, female youth and 2 PwDs (1 female and 1 male) in their operations / employment.

The seaweed VC operations, having mainly managed by the males, do not reflect the same sensitivity in gender and inclusion as that of the Gherkin VC.

It was not possible to assess Tilapia and mango VCs as they are recent implementations, requiring more time to reflect such sensitivities. Nevertheless, the Officers acknowledged the training offered to them as valuable and helpful.

It could be stated that the project has amply provided both human and financial resources in building capacities of the BDS providers and the communities, particularly, to enhance their skills of the vulnerable to stay competitive and productive in the economy.

Providing necessary capacities and resources to facilitate this model of collective implementation of enterprises by the three stakeholders; government institutions as BDS providers, private sector VCs, employees / MSMEs and other key stakeholders, to safeguard the interests of the vulnerable communities could be seen as a significant contribution of the project.

16. To what extent has the project complemented and/or harmonized or coordinated with other actors and their interventions to maximise the project's effectiveness and impact?

Since the project has been developed as a response to the gaps identified from a VC study and a needs assessment carried out in the Northern Province, the direct benefits / advantages to the project from other interventions or direct collaborations / coordination with other interventions were not explicit.

There were no other economic development projects by development partners in the locations selected by PAVE. The only presence of a development project that was evident is the UNWOMEN working on referral pathways.

The needs assessment has revealed that the state sector enterprise development initiatives existed were not very effective.

Therefore, the obvious link that could be identified was the link to LEED+ project of ILO implemented during 2018 - 2023. Taking on from the learning of LEED+, PAVE has strongly focused on the issues of inclusion in the state sector service providers such as MoWA, DSS, DoA, DoC.

In this context, the main collaboration that could be observed in maximising the project's effectiveness and impact were the coordination with the state sector and the private sector enterprises.

More specifically, facilitation of the collaboration between the private sector enterprises and the state sector service providers could be stated as a significant coordination done by PAVE in maximising the effectiveness and impact of its objectives.

Links with State Sector Stakeholders:

The close interaction and collaborated implementation by the state, private and community stakeholders in the VC activities could be seen as a new dimension in local economic development. As stated above, the state sector stakeholders play a vital role in the implementation of the project and in the continuity of the new VC economic model that has emerged.

The BDS providers though had been working on capacity building of MSMEs, the renewed modules and new interactive teaching methodologies learnt through ToT sessions, have made a shift in the way the MSME training is delivered and followed up.

Perceiving the capacity building as a mutual learning by the BDS providers, as opposed to the standard practice of them delivering knowledge could be seen as a significant mind shift in this collaboration.

The interaction with the private companies in the VCs have brought in a lot of new knowledge and learning to us also. The opportunities created to learn from external resource persons enabled trouble shooting of the issues at hand. We have already started using this new knowledge in the other locations too. Also, PAVE has assisted us with training our officials further.

Assistant Director - NAQDA (NP)

Links with Private Companies:

The project has enabled and established the public - private interaction in achieving economic development. Ability of the CBOs to work in coordination with the private companies to ensure the local economic development could be seen as a milestone in the VC development.

The Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society coordinates with our field staff on matters related to the VC activities. We have a fulltime field officer working in the field with the society and the community. It has been harmonious and effective. We look forward to a fruitful economic collaboration that will mutually benefit the company and people. We are hopeful that this project will be a landmark in inland fisheries enterprise.

Management - Cargills Pvt. Ltd.

We have been working with this community long before Reitzell intervened in the project. So, it was easy to convince and collaborate with the society and the community as they have confidence in us as we are from their own locality.

Manager - Agri Operation (North), Reitzell Pvt. Ltd.

The key factor that has enabled effective collaboration between the community and the private companies is the familiarity of the field staff to the community and to the VC.

Selection of the VCs familiar to / existed in the communities have also made this collaboration easier and proactive.

Link with Primary Producers and MSMEs:

Linking the private companies and the primary producers through the CBOs, could be seen as a well-planned strategy with a foresight in formalising the collaboration with a focus on sustainability.

As stated above, the renewed interactive relations between the BDS providers have also been effective in the implementations VC and MSME activities.

17. Which interventions help achieving the results as planned?

Decent work conditions in the VCs and MSMEs:

It was expected that by the end of the project 2000 employees and farmers enjoy decent work conditions, including 100 employments from VC processing units and 400 new MSMEs created for vulnerable communities.

The 02 VCs achieved these results are Gherkin and Seaweed as the other 02 VCs are still at the early stages of implementation.

As per the Table 04 above, total producers and employees enjoying decent work conditions by the end of 2025 has reached 2611, which is well above the planned target of 2000. However, these figures have fluctuated due to turnover of the producers owing to seasonal nature of the productions.

Table 13: VC Producers as of 2025 first cycle / season of production:

VC	Total Producers	M	F	Total PwDs	PwD - M	PwD - F
Gherkin	1264	524	740	77	48	29
Seaweed	185	24	161	4	1	3

The figures showed that the producers in 2025 first cycle / season of production have significantly dropped, and instead significant number of new producers have joined production.

Employments and livelihoods created for vulnerable communities:

It was also expected that 500 employments and livelihoods created for vulnerable communities by the project. This target too has been achieved, and the Gherkin VC has been the main contributor. The total vulnerable benefitted by all 04 VCs is 1536 and 1314 benefitted from the Gherkin VC alone.

Evidence on the achievement of the planned result of 250 MSMEs and primary producers with improved volumes of production and/or employment could not be found.

It was also expected that 1500 of MSMEs and primary producers would receive financial services from VC financing entities. The monitoring data of PAVE indicates that 1518 have received financial assistance, but the disaggregated data and information on the financial sources were not available.

Case Study: M. Ravichandran

Male, 48 years | Person with disability | Producer in Gherkin Value Chain

Location: Thattiyamalai

M. Ravichandran is a person with a disability resulting from battle front injuries, following which he underwent two years of rehabilitation. His wife was also injured during the conflict and continues to take medical treatment. Prior to engaging in value chain production, his primary livelihood was seasonal and informal, selling fancy items from a mobile cart during religious festivals, which provided irregular income.

He owns two acres of land and began engaging in agriculture after receiving training on modern agricultural practices in 2017. Since then, he has participated in gherkin cultivation, initially through Hayleys and currently with Reitzell. During the previous season, he earned approximately LKR 300,000 from a two-month cultivation cycle and was recognised as the second-best producer in the Oddusudan area, receiving a water tank and agricultural accessories as an incentive.

Gherkin cultivation requires a three-month commitment and intensive crop management. In addition to the technical guidance provided by the company, he applied compost-based soil improvement and installed drip irrigation on one plot to enhance productivity. He undertakes most farming tasks himself, including harvesting and cleaning, with support from his wife and children for grading and transporting produce to the collection centre.

Improved and more stable income from value chain participation has provided him time and space to engage in social service work. He initiated a self-help group for persons with disabilities in his area, which has since evolved into an association formally linked to the Divisional Secretariat. The association, operating in a context with a high prevalence of disability, has received multiple capacity-building trainings and maintains close engagement with local authorities. The group is actively involved in advocacy and community activities, including organising upcoming events to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

This case demonstrates how inclusive value chain engagement can generate not only income and productivity gains for persons with disabilities but also wider social outcomes, including strengthened community organisation, leadership, and social inclusion. Sustained access to productive assets, such as improved irrigation systems, remains important to further enhance resilience and sustainability.

Use of digital solutions in economic activities of the VCs and MSMEs:

Though 1600 VC producers and MSMEs were expected to use digital solutions in their economic activities, once gain tangible records on the actual usage or measures to track the same were not evident. Verification on the monitoring data (which was last updated in 2024) revealed that 1511 persons have been provided training on digital applications by end 2025.

However, during the evaluation, the usage of apps for monitoring the updates on the produce and income was frequently mentioned by the Gherkin and Seaweed VC producers and employees. The digital applications of Mango and Tilapia VCs were still in the process of development.

Table 14: Training Received by the VC producers and MSMEs on digitalisation:

VC	Total Producers	M	F	Total PwDs	PwD - M	PwD - F
Gherkin	1264	524	740	77	48	29
Seaweed	222	37	185	4	1	3
MSMEs	25	13	12	5	3	2
Total	1511	574	937	86	52	34

Use of climate smart practices in the economic activities of the VCs and MSMEs:

It was also expected that 1500 persons engaged in the VCs and MSMEs would use climate smart practices in their economic activities. The monitoring data records Gherkin VC achieving the results as planned, the

data was not available to support this. The cumulative data available in 2024 which is 1010, does not explicitly explain the disaggregation by the VCs or the details of the CSPs being practiced.

Table 15: VC producers and MSMEs using CSPs in their economic activities:

	Total	Female	Male
VC producers and MSMEs	1010	746	264
PwDs	76	43	33

However, during the evaluation it was revealed that there had been training provided to the VCs on CSPs. Use of climate resilient irrigation and production measures, management of product waste, adoption of circular economic activities are some of the CSPs mentioned during the discussion with VCs. Though training has been provided, CSP thinking among the MSMEs was not evident.

Table 16: VC producers and MSMEs trained on the adoption of CSPs in their economic activities as of 2024:

	Total	Female	Male
VC producers and MSMEs	2564	1519	1045
PwDs	83	48	35

Overall, project resources were used efficiently, leveraging complementary contributions from state and private sector partners to enable timely delivery of value chain (VC) and MSME interventions. The co-financing model combining ILO/PAVE part-funding with private sector VC investments and state-led service delivery enhanced cost-effectiveness and accelerated rollout. While some activities (gender policy rollout, OSH application, digitalisation and CSPs) were delayed, adaptive implementation, strong ToT models, and close coordination with BDS providers supported efficient delivery and achievement of key outputs despite contextual and operational constraints.

Impact (What difference does the intervention make?)

18. To what extent did the project interventions contribute to sustain any lasting changes? How has the interventions addressed the problems identified by the project?

Development of the Public - Private - People partnership in VCs:

The most significant impact made by the project is the development of the public - private - people partnership in the VC implementation.

As stated above, this new economic model has enabled practices of inclusive economic development, through coordinated implementation efforts, interactive decision making, dialogue on the VC and its operations, collective learning, ultimately leading to ownership by all for the achievements.

The collaborated operational arrangement has enabled mutual-learning and sharing of knowledge among the 03 stakeholder categories, and it was evident that communities / CBOs have been able to confidently voice their opinion / views / concerns in an equal ground.

We informed MAFP officials that we need proper shades / shelters to sort the seaweed in order to ensure cleanliness and quality of the produce. Also, people work in the hot sun. We discussed this with NAQDA also. MAFP told us that NAQDA is going to provide temporary shelters in the shore.

Office Bearers - St Anne seaweed Society

Also, occasions where communities / CBOs requested services / inputs from the officials were evident.

After we received training on domestic violence, leadership, conflict resolution, etc., our society requested another similar training on leadership, drug addiction, etc., to our school children and teachers. PAVE promised to arrange it.

10 female Processing Centre Employees - Tilapaia VC - Iranaimadu

The communities showed confidence to express the need for discussions and clearly articulate what is to be discussed. The ability to take decisions / negotiate on the issues affecting them was also evident.

Following the training on fish processing, we just met and discussed the way forward arrangements. We need to resolve the working hours to suit our household demands. After these are finalised, we will sign the agreement.

10 female Processing Centre Employees - Tilapaia VC - Iranaimadu

We haven't had formal discussions with the company regarding the quality standards, quantity required, purchase arrangements, pricing and payment arrangement. We need to have this discussion sometime soon.

FGD participants - Echalawakkai, Mannar

Mentions of gender and inclusion, means of addressing issues, need for negotiations and space for dialogue are some of the vulnerability issues already being addressed by the VC communities.

Such an ownership would not only help continuity or sustainability of the activity, but lasting impact on economic recovery.

Remodelling of the MSME capacity building:

Development and restructuring of the MSME training delivery through adjustments to ILO's SYB and IYB modules to meet the local needs and by introducing interactive and user-friendly training methods have brought out a complete shift in the MSME capacity building process of the state BDS providers.

SEDD and DoI officials have proactively taken on the responsibility of rollout following a series of ToTs provided to develop themselves as master trainers of MSME.

The new additions to the module, digital applications and climate smart practices have been positively acknowledged by the SEDD and DoI trainers.

The training modules restructuring was much needed. The new modules are simpler and user friendly. The delivery also is not stereotyped or conventional. We learnt a lot from the way trainers from Curve up conducted the training. Following the training, upon our request, sets of tool kits required for interactive methods were provided by PAVE. The trainers now conduct the programs with more enthusiasm and professionalism.

Industries Promotion Officer - DoI (North)

The new interactive training delivery methods have bridged the distance between the trainers and the trainees. We feel this helps the MSMEs to approach us more freely than before. They also seem to find the training inputs are easily applicable.

Enterprise Development Training Officers - DSS (Vavuniya)

The MSMEs who were trained following the ToT, were able to explain the training delivery as being interactive, easy to comprehend, engaging and interesting. The new knowledge has also been perceived as timely and needed.

The way the trainers taught the subjects such as business plan development, use of digital media for business promotions and financial management were very useful and easily understood. I understood the importance of being competitive in business and on the need to stay digitally active through social media. I get the help of the younger ones to post pictures of the garments I stitch in Facebook.

MSME trainee - Kodikamam

However, there was no visibility of CSP and digital application in MSMEs as in the VCs. As stated before, the scale of MSMEs met during the evaluation were of self-sufficient nature and had no intention for expansion or scaling up.

19. To what extent and how have the actors (e.g. financial institutions, BDS providers, SEDD, government extensions and other government institutions, COOP, private sector as well as value chain actors in the supply chains) behaved/functioned in ways that promote decent employment and an inclusive economy in the target value chains?

Initiative by the BDS providers:

As stated above, SEDD and DoI BDS providers have maintained their focus on inclusive economic development by including 80% women of which more than 60% were PwDs, FHHs and young women. Selection of the MSMEs for the training has been a carefully thought out process. SEDD has taken the assistance of the DOs at the DS office to purposively select the deserving MSMEs. DoI has selected a group of 50 MSMEs from among the beneficiaries of the previous ILO projects on MSME.

As this is a business skills development program, we had to strike a balance between the vulnerability and the potential. Therefore, we sought assistance of the DOs of the DS office as they knew these MSMEs personally. So, we were able to take the vulnerable with potential and the need to improve their enterprises.

Enterprise Development Training Officers - DSS (Vavuniya)

Conducting training in conducive local environments with easy access and flexible time schedules, providing conducive accommodation for children of the lactating mothers and single mothers are some of the inclusive measures adopted at the training programs.

As stated above, the financial support for logistics and flexibility provided by PAVE also have been enabling factors to carry out the training in relaxed decent environments with flexible times, refreshments, etc.

The novel methods such as lean canvass, digital applications and provision of a comprehensive handbook for the trainees are new approaches that have significantly added value to the program.

The lean canvass method, use of digital applications, etc., were completely novel learning to us. These brought in a formal and professional touch to the MSMEs. We learnt a lot from the Curve Up trainers on the training skills. The backstopping support provided by them while we rolled out the training at the field was also helpful in ensuring quality of the training.

Provincial Director - DSS (NP)

Private sector stakeholders' engagement in the VCs:

The private companies of the 04 VCs have also made a significant contribution in ensuring quality and conducive work environments in the VCs.

The training rollout and exposure visits facilitated by the private companies following the training given to their staff on technical aspects of the VC implementation, gender and inclusiveness, digital application and CSPs have provided a formal uptake to the VC staff of the private companies as a resource provider to the VC.

Training on financial literacy by the BoC to Gherkin and Seaweed VC producers also has added value and recognition to the VC operations as a potential financial resource contributor of the local economy.

As stated above, the action implemented by the private companies in the VCs, such as ensuring inclusions, sensitivities, digital apps, climate resilient production and recycling practices have also significantly ensured decent work environments in the VCs.

Community perception on the VC and MSME operations:

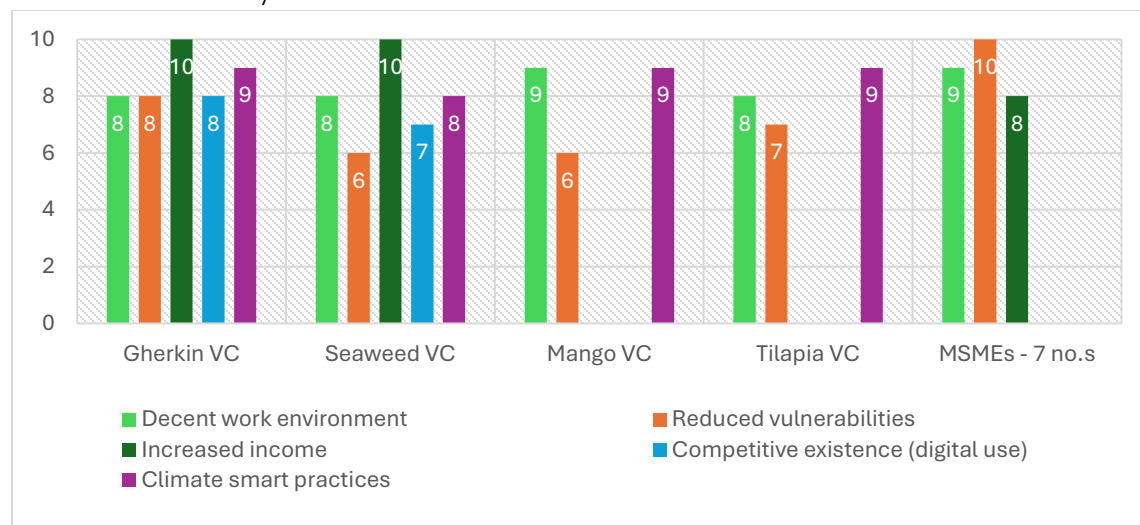
The communities also perceive the above initiatives and inputs have elevated their engagement in the VCs as producers and employees and as MSMEs.

Decent work environments, reduced vulnerabilities, improved equity, increased income, competitive existence through digital apps and conducive practices are the benefits perceive by them.

When questioned, the communities expressed their satisfaction on these achievements on a Likert scale of 10 in the following manner.

In general, it could be stated that the communities also have a favourable perception and experience on the ability of the project to bring in decent employment and an inclusive local economy.

Figure 04: Primary producers' perception on the ability of the project to bring in decent employment and an inclusive local economy:



The less favourable perception on the reduction of vulnerability among the Seaweed VC community is due to the lengthy process of approval required to obtain permission of the sea land for seaweed cultivation.

The participants from the Mango and Tilapia VCs which are yet to be fully implemented could not provide assessments on the increased income and competitive existence (digital use). The less favourable perception on reduced vulnerability is due to the fact that the producers are ignorant about the arrangements for collection and prices.

Perceptions of the 07 MSMEs met during the evaluation have been cumulatively presented. All of them were self-sufficient and were not in need or favour for expansion of their business, hence could not comment on the competitive existence. Also, they could not perceive a direct relevance of their MSMEs to CSPs.

Case Study: P. Pushparani

Female, 45 years | Female-headed household with disability | Sewing entrepreneur (MSME)

Location: Kanagampihekulam

P. Pushparani is a female-headed household with a physical disability resulting from battle front injuries sustained at the age of 18. Following the injury, she was assigned to office work and acquired basic computer skills. In 2010, she married but later became divorced while caring for a young daughter, further increasing her economic vulnerability.

Seeking a livelihood that would allow her to balance income generation with caregiving responsibilities, she began home-based sewing, initially through informal learning from a local tailor. She later invested in a manual sewing machine, though was difficult to operate due to her disability. Prior to the training received from the Department of Social Services, she relied on sewing orders and irregular daily wage labour.

Through engagement with the Department of Social Services, she received a five-day sewing skills training. Subsequently, the Department of Probation identified her as a female-headed household and provided her with an electric sewing machine, significantly improving her productivity. As a result, she transitioned fully to home-based tailoring and now earns an average monthly income of approximately LKR 20,000.

The training enhanced her technical skills and confidence, enabling her to undertake more advanced stitching work. While she explored opening a shop, mobility constraints and caregiving responsibilities led her to continue operating from home. Market access is currently supported through informal networks, including referrals from family members working in nearby hospital.

Although she received orientation on digital marketing, limited digital literacy and access constraints have restricted uptake. She continues to rely on sewing orders and supplements income with wage labour during periods of low demand. Recently, the government officials have called her to check on the progress.

This case illustrates how targeted skills development, supported with productive assets, and institutional coordination can contribute to inclusive livelihood outcomes for women with disabilities in post-conflict settings, while also highlighting the need for close mentoring and digital usage support to strengthen and sustain her enterprise.

20. How has the climate smart practices and digital solutions promoted by the Project made an impact in the lives of the primary producers, MSMEs, government service providers?

Use of the digital solutions by the VCs and MSMEs:

Both the apps and the WhatsApp groups used for communication has made a significant impact in the lives of the VC producers. Ability to receive firsthand information on real-time has drawn the community into the work with the VC, as the benefits and income are clear.

Women in the VCs stated that this is the first occasion they have received information and their income directly to their phone. As the income is also directly credited to the producers' own bank account, women themselves are able to take decisions on the use of it.

Earlier we used to depend on the husband or a male / younger member of the family to do banking for us. Now that we have our own accounts and ATM cards, we can anytime withdraw the money ourselves. It is also safe to receive the income like that.

Women - Seaweed VC producers - Valaippadu

The transparency of the exchanges has also helped reduce confusions and improved confidence in the VC staff.

As stated above the use of digital solutions were hardly visible among the MSMEs met with.

The SEDD and Dol officials stated that the scale of operations in MSMEs are not yet up to a level to be able to recognise the value or usefulness of the digital solutions. Use of digital media to publish the products for sale could be seen a possible activity that would evolve with time. As of now also, there are few instances where MSMEs use digital advertising to sell their products

Case Study: S. Siyanthini

Female, 40 years | Person with Disability | Sewing Entrepreneur (MSME)

Location: Gurunagr

Siyanthini has lived with a physical disability caused by polio since the age of two. She spent her early years in a disabled care facility, where she completed her education up to Ordinary Level, passing six subjects. She later resided for five years at the Holy Cross Elders' Care Home, where she was engaged in caregiving responsibilities. In 2013/14, the Department of Social Services (DSS) supported her participation in a three-month sewing training programme specifically designed for persons with disabilities. Upon completion, she received a sewing machine through the Divisional Secretariat, enabling her to begin home-based sewing work while residing at the care home.

In 2017, she returned to her family home at the request of her mother and continued sewing activities with the support of her sister. During this period, she also undertook wage employment in a supermarket, where she received a modified bicycle from colleagues, improving her mobility and access to work.

In 2025, DSS facilitated her participation in a further six-day advanced sewing training and a two-day digital marketing orientation. The technical training strengthened her competencies in pattern drafting, precision stitching, new designs, and professional saree blouse production. These skills enabled her to do better quality sewing, and that increased demand.

At present, she receives sewing orders primarily from local clients, facilitated by her sister's fabric sales business, as well as from the Holy Cross Hospital and surrounding community networks. A brief attempt to operate a rented tailoring shop was discontinued due to high rental costs and insufficient demand, highlighting market access and cost constraints. While she has explored institutional orders, low remuneration has limited engagement. Demand increases during festive periods, and she is considering supplementary part-time work during off-peak times.

Although she received basic training in digital marketing, limited confidence in smartphone use and adequate local demand have constrained adoption. Nevertheless, her monthly income has increased from approximately LKR 4,000–5,000 to around LKR 20,000, enabling her to meet household expenses and medical costs independently.

Occasional follow-up visits by DSS, including communication through WhatsApp groups, have provided continued encouragement and access to information.

Overall, the intervention contributed to improved technical skills, income stability, and self-reliance, reflecting outcome-level progress towards inclusive self-employment, improved livelihoods, and enhanced dignity for persons with disabilities.

Use of digital solutions by the state service providers:

There are no plans yet by the SEDD and DoI to use digital media as a formal communication medium to monitor the progress or to follow up with the MSMEs. The DoI has plans to use the existing WhatsApp group of MSMEs managed by the DO of the DS office for communication and follow up with the MSMEs. SEDD is of the opinion that further training on digitalisation needs to be conducted to the MSMEs as they progress through.

The department of PwDs (NP) has initiated a database of the PwDs and the data collection and entry are underway. This is the first ever database on the PwDs, which is a critical requirement in the Northern Province, as there are increased numbers of PwDs due to injured ex-combatants and victims of the civil war.

The accessibility audit, WhatsApp platform by the sign language interpreters to share videos, etc., which was initiated by the LEED+ project has been continued.

21. To what extent and how has the Project contributed to peace and resilience in the Northern Province?

Productive engagement of the vulnerable communities:

Productive engagement of the vulnerable communities in economic activities itself have been a positive integration into the mainstream.

The new knowledge that came in through the capacity building has helped the communities to think new and revive the economic activities differently than before.

We look forward to using the new learning and start the production. The training has given us new hopes for the future. It is different from just being engaged in an income generation activity. We feel we have a responsible job at hand.

Trainees of the processing facility- Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Coop. Society

The space created through the VCs to contribute to the national and international economies has been acknowledged as a great recognition to the local economy.

We feel proud and satisfied to think that our produce goes to the national and international markets. We feel honoured that we do our part to contribute to the national economic recovery.

Gherkin growers - Sundarmpuram

The confidence developed within the communities due to VCs is also a remarkable observation. People talking about the VC engagement with confidence and hope could be stated as a positive move towards greater economic advancement.

We are happy that Cargills, which has a name and market network nationally selected our society to start the project - inland fishery value added production. We hope, one day we will be known and will be in demand nationally and internationally for our product - Iranaimadu Tilapia fish.

Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society

Harmony in the families:

The intensive awareness on gender, inclusion and leadership that has gone into the society at different levels, have created a conducive environment for the vulnerable and women to come forward naturally and be engaged in economic and societal activities. Female leadership in the societies was evident and the

ability of women to express views on an equal platform could be observed during all the FGDs and also in the presence of men.

As we receive the income to our own bank account, now we can decide on the expenses ourselves. we can also contribute to household expenses, children's needs, etc. without merely waiting for our husbands.

Women - Seaweed VC producers - Valaippadu

North-South integration:

In general, both VC and MSME engagement have enabled the reintegration into the mainstream. Since there had been knowledge transfer through resource persons from the South and exchange / exposure visits to the South through the capacity building initiatives of both VCs and MSMEs, a natural space for interaction and integration has been created.

The capacity building which took place at institutional and community level, has enabled both institutional and social interaction.

However, the VC engagement seem to be proactively helping the reconciliation and reintegration at a regional and national level. The private companies which are nationally based, bring in much-needed North-South integration at different levels of the VC. As the markets for products are in the South or out of the country, these linkages have necessarily got established in the supply chain itself.

As a result, the North-South integration has been significantly established through the VCs while positively facilitating the regional economic recovery.

The project generated significant and potentially lasting impacts by institutionalising inclusive public–private–people partnerships in value chains, strengthening community voice, and reshaping MSME capacity-building systems. VC interventions enabled shared ownership, social dialogue, and equitable decision-making, empowering women and vulnerable groups to negotiate working conditions and market arrangements and could be stated as key drivers of sustainability and economic recovery. System-level changes were evident through reformed SYB/IYB delivery, with state BDS providers adopting interactive, inclusive, and locally adapted training models that are likely to continue beyond the project. Digital solutions and climate-smart practices improved transparency, income control (especially for women), and resilience in VCs, while peace and social cohesion were reinforced through productive engagement, women's leadership, and strengthened North–South market linkages.

Sustainability of the intervention (continuity / likely continuity of the benefits of the intervention)

22. To what extent were the processes followed leading towards intervention sustainability? How has the continuation of the introductions such as climate smart practices and digital solutions be assured by the Project?

Link with other partners by the private companies:

The strong and visible collaboration among the private companies, CBOs, BDS providers and other state sector stakeholders in the VCs was commendable and could be stated as a positive way forward move

towards sustainability. The checks and balances that has evolved to complement to each other's roles assure the contribution of all the stakeholders to the process enabling continuity of the VC processes.

Also, as stated above, the continuous update of knowledge, capacity building and exposure visits have helped reintegration of VC and MSME interventions into the mainstream economy.

However, 03 of 04 private companies of the VCs, namely Gherkin, Seaweed and Tilapia being the state of art enterprises with no competitors in production, create a risk, as the VC is solely dependent on the respective companies. Though not evident currently, due to the heavy dependence of the private companies and their markets, a possibility of a monopoly being developed is there.

ILO / PAVE visibility or active existence would be a critical factor in closely monitoring such developments at the onset.

Any specific measures to ensure that the communities would not be exploited or become further vulnerable was not evident.

Introduction of the CSPs:

The climate sensitive initiatives such as reusing and recycling product waste or excess was evident in Tilapia and Mango VCs. The circular economic model that is being introduced through Tilapia cage culture implementation

We have already started recycling fish processing waste to make fish meals for fingerlings. This would help manage the fish waste that gets accumulated when processing. By doing so, the community another income avenue is created and the requirement of fish feed for cage culture is also met.

Agriculture Executive - Cargills Regional Office

The waste created from mango processing is taken for composting and a facility has already been set up for this purpose.

Such preplanned climate resilient practices assure the trouble-free VC implementation with minimum environmental disturbance and are likely to continue without any obstacles. These practices in the long term, would enable a balanced economic growth in the VC interventions.

Acceptance of digital application by the stakeholders:

The VCs have realised the benefits and the competitive advantages of the digital solutions in order to be ahead in the market. The scale of operations and the competitive nature of the macro markets in all 04 VCs could be handled as a result of the organised production processes supported by the digital apps to coordinate, communicate and remunerate production.

As stated above, the MSMEs need to evolve to a level where digital solutions become critical for management and further growth. As of now, most of the MSMEs cater to the immediate local community with a self-sufficient approach, hence the need of digital solutions has not felt.

It is also critical that SEDD and DoI follow up with the MSMEs in a regular and effective manner in order to ensure the development of the MSMEs as planned. However, introduction of digital solutions for communication, follow up and monitor the progress was not evident.

23. What would be an effective exit strategy and next step for the ILO and the relevant stakeholders in helping to ensure the Project's benefits will continue after it ends?

Strengthening partnerships:

As stated above, the most critical exit strategy is the strengthening of the collaboration among the 03 key stakeholders. The accountability of the stakeholders to ensure own contribution towards the VC implementations has been instrumental in the success of the VC implementations.

Established societies taking the responsibility of the community stake has been instrumental in the successful implementation of the 03 VCs except Mango VC. Presence of a CBO taking responsibility of the community stake in Mango VC, which is still at an early implementation stage, was not visible.

Digital orientation:

The digital apps and communication platforms set up by the VCs in reaching out to the primary producers have retained them committed to the VCs. The transparency, inclusion and close collaboration created by these modes of information sharing and communication has been mainly acknowledged by the VC producers.

Introduction of digital solutions by the BDS providers such as databases of MSMEs for communication, follow up and monitor the progress which could have been an effective strategy was not evident.

Case Study: M. Darshan

Male, 35 years | Person with Disability | Sewing Entrepreneur (MSME)

Location: Kodikamam

Darshan lost his leg in March 2009 in a battlefield injury. As the eldest child in the family, he had been compelled to join the battlefield, to prevent his siblings doing so. Following the injury, he came back to the family. They were resettled in a refugee camp for few years and eventually returned to their village of origin. He married in 2020.

He acquired sewing skills through four years of work in a local tailor shop before establishing his own micro-enterprise in the village marketplace. Using personal savings, he rented a small business spot in the market and purchased a manual sewing machine, initiating self-employment despite his mobility constraints.

Seeking to improve his business, he registered with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and participated in a 12-day certified training programme in Jaffna, comprising 10 days of advanced sewing techniques and two days of digital marketing.

The training introduced modern designs, efficient sewing methods, and new sewing techniques, which enhanced both productivity and confidence in sustaining the enterprise.

Following the training, he continues to operate from the marketplace and earns an average monthly income of approximately LKR 30,000.

He has not adopted digital marketing due to vision impairment, previous phone addiction and sufficient local demand.

He reported that the technical training has strengthened his sense of security, self-reliance, and ability to compete despite increased availability of ready-made garments in the local market.

Access to an electric sewing machine remains a critical enabling factor, as manual operation poses challenges given his disability. Overall, the intervention contributed to improved skills, confidence, and livelihood continuity, demonstrating progress towards outcome-level results related to inclusive self-employment, decent work, and economic resilience for persons with disabilities.

Climate smart practices:

As explained above, CSPs being implemented and continued in the VCs was a critical strategy that ensured undisturbed functioning and continuity of the VCs.

24. What funding opportunities could the ILO pursue to support the assistance indicated in the points above?

Continuous learning and improvement:

Continuation of the measures to ensure continuous learning and improvement, capacity building and exposure visits could be stated as a critical requirement in continuing the reintegration into the mainstream economy and collaboration among the key stakeholders.

Drip Irrigation:

Introduction of climate resilient practices in the Gherkin and Mango VCs such as drip irrigation could be stated as an area where funding has to be pursued.

If I have advanced irrigation facilities, managing the production consistently is possible. I have installed drip irrigation system partly with the funds available with me. As I'm disabled from birth, I have to seek help of others in watering the cultivation.

Producer - Gherkin VC, Poosariyakulam

Decent farming and production practices:

Advanced farming practices that were expected to bring in decent working conditions in the Mango VC is also an area where funding shortages could be observed. Shortage of essential items such as pruning gear, ladders, bagging material were mentioned as essentials. It was verified that these issues have been taken into consideration for addressing during the next phase of following PAVE.

Also, the temporary storage and sorting facilities for the Seaweed VC, which requires NAQDA intervention is an intervention where funding support is required.

Digital solutions for institutional monitoring and follow up:

Introduction of digital solutions such as databases of MSMEs for communication, follow up and monitor the progress which could have been an effective strategy that requires technical, manpower and funding support to be developed as fully fledged operation.

The VC apps that are yet being developed also found to be requiring technical and funding support.

25. What is the impact of the Project on other projects, and to what extent can the results be expected to build stakeholder capacity and sustainability in the longer term?

BDS providers role as core facilitators:

DoA, NAQDA, SEDD and DoI are the key institutions that has carried on the knowledge and learning to other projects.

At the stage of the training itself, the officers beyond the scope of the PAVE project have been included in the ToT process enabling a ripple effect.

CSOs / CBOs as catalysts of change at local level:

Engagement of the CBOs / CSOs in the entire process of capacity building, enables them to take the knowledge and skills acquired to other projects and activities carried out by them. They could be considered as having the potential to act as the catalysts of change by applying the knowledge and skills acquired.

The project demonstrated moderate to strong prospects for sustainability, particularly within value chain (VC) interventions, where institutionalised collaboration among private companies, CBOs, BDS providers, and state agencies has created shared ownership, role clarity, and operational continuity. Continuous capacity building, exposure visits, and integration into mainstream markets further reinforced the likelihood of sustained benefits. However, dependence on single private firms in three of the four VCs presents a potential risk of market dominance, underscoring the importance of continued oversight and safeguards to prevent community vulnerability.

Climate-smart practices (CSPs) were effectively embedded in VC operations, notably through circular economy models in Tilapia and Mango VCs, including waste recycling and composting. These practices are technically sound, locally accepted, and economically viable, indicating a high likelihood of continuation without external support.

In contrast, CSP uptake among MSMEs remains limited due to scale and market orientation, suggesting the need for phased and demand-driven integration.

Digital solutions have been widely adopted in VCs for coordination, transparency, and payments, contributing to efficiency, accountability, and women's economic empowerment.

Conversely, digital tools for MSME management and institutional monitoring by SEDD and DoI were not systematically introduced, representing a missed opportunity for sustainability and follow-up.

Formalising the role of CBOs would be an effective exit strategy on strengthening tripartite and community-based partnerships.

Finally, sustainability beyond the project is reinforced by spillover effects: BDS providers have internalised and transferred inclusive and innovative approaches to other initiatives, while CSOs/CBOs are well positioned to act as local catalysts of change, applying acquired knowledge and practices across development interventions.

Conclusions

Conclusions related to Outcome 1: Vulnerable women and persons with disabilities engaged in promising value chains and enterprises enjoy decent employment and better support from public institutions, family members and their community:

Outcome 1 was **largely achieved**, with stronger results observed in value chains where **private sector engagement was mature and community-based organisations (CBOs) was well embedded**. Performance varied across value chains, primarily due to differences in implementation stage, enabling infrastructure, and external constraints.

Overall, the project delivered **credible and meaningful results** in promoting inclusive economic opportunities for vulnerable women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. The project's Theory of Change proved **largely valid**, with strongest performance observed where market readiness, institutional capacity, and private sector engagement aligned, particularly within the selected value chains. The project was **highly relevant** to the post-conflict, post-crisis context of the Northern Province and well aligned with ILO priorities on decent work, gender equality, disability inclusion, and inclusive growth.

The project made **substantial progress in engaging vulnerable women and persons with disabilities in the value chains**, contributing to **improved access to decent employment and enterprise opportunities**, alongside strengthened institutional and community support systems. This reflects a generally effective translation of the project's inclusive value chain model into practice.

The strategic shift from domestic productions to mainstream value-added productions demonstrated **adaptive management**. All four private sector partners initiated the establishment of processing units, though progress differed across value chains.

The **Gherkin VC**, building on an existing processing facility in Mahiyanganaya, effectively established logistical arrangements to transport produce, enabling continuity in production and employment. The **Seaweed VC** experienced delays due to property acquisition challenges following a government transition; however, implementation has resumed with the recommencement of processing centre development.

The **Tilapia VC** demonstrated proactive planning, initiating the establishment of its processing centre while complying with legal and regulatory requirements. The **Mango VC** benefited from the private sector partner's longstanding presence in the Northern region, allowing for the establishment and operationalisation of a fully functional processing facility. Nevertheless, the absence of advanced cold-chain transportation remains a critical constraint, given market-driven distribution requirements. While these delays and infrastructural gaps did not undermine the **relevance of the project design**, they temporarily constrained the full realisation of decent employment outcomes in some value chains.

The establishment of **62 collection centres** across the four value chains in partnership with communities and CBOs, made a significant contribution to improving **accessibility, working conditions, and proximity of services** for primary producers. Value chains that placed CBOs at the core of implementation, particularly **Seaweed and Tilapia**, demonstrated stronger collective voice, negotiation capacity, and ownership, indicating higher levels of institutional effectiveness and local empowerment. In contrast, the **Mango VC**, still at an earlier stage of implementation, requires further institutional structuring to organise producers effectively and ensure equitable access, particularly through an appropriately distributed network of collection centres.

As perceived by primary producers, **decent work environments were largely achieved** across all value chains. Engagement in VC activities contributed to **improved income security, enhanced social recognition,**

and elevated living standards, especially for women, persons with disabilities and youth. Beyond economic gains, participation in value chains enhanced **dignity, social standing and involvement in household and community-level decision-making**, indicating progress toward the project's social inclusion objectives.

The systematic integration of **gender equality and disability inclusion** through training and sensitisation resulted in observable shifts in attitudes and practices at both community and institutional levels.

State institutions and communities have demonstrated improved sensitivity and more favourable attitudes towards vulnerable groups, reflected in more **inclusive work arrangements, improved relations within families, and greater acceptance of women and persons with disabilities as economic actors**.

The integration of these cross-cutting themes was one of the project's most consistent strengths and a clear expression of ILO's comparative advantage.

Overall, the evidence indicates that **Outcome 1 was achieved in a substantive and meaningful manner**, particularly in value chains with stronger organisational arrangements and enabling infrastructure. The **sustainability and equity of outcomes** will depend on consolidating institutional mechanisms in emerging value chains and addressing remaining logistical and structural gaps, particularly in processing and transport systems.

Conclusions related to Outcome 2: New and existing Micro, Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (MSMEs) and the Primary Producers of the VCs are more productive and competitive:

Outcome 2 was **partially achieved**, with **stronger and more consistent improvements observed among value chain producers than among MSMEs**.

Establishment of inclusive and functional partnerships among the tripartite constituents was one of the project's most significant achievements in the value chain interventions. Evidence indicates that the project effectively operationalised **public-private-people partnerships**, enabling shared decision-making, dialogue, and collective ownership within value chain interventions.

Tripartite constituents, particularly state sector institutions, strengthened their facilitative and technical roles, while private sector partners contributed market access, expertise, and investment, alongside improved sensitivity to gender, disability, and vulnerability considerations. The community-based organisations acted as **active partners rather than passive beneficiaries**, demonstrating increased confidence to articulate needs, negotiate with private sector actors, and engage with government institutions.

From an efficiency and sustainability perspective, the project benefited from leveraging private sector investment and public sector service delivery, but **risks remain**. Heavy reliance on single buyers in some value chains pose challenges to long-term sustainability.

To maximise impact and sustainability in future programming, ILO interventions would need to **develop different support mechanisms for value chains and MSMEs**, strengthen financial and market linkages, and institutionalise these interventions through **integration into national and subnational systems**.

The absence of a **formal regional coordination and monitoring mechanism** to institutionalise and manage the partnership model has placed the continuity of these collaborative arrangements at risk. At present, the functioning of the partnership relies largely on ILO's longstanding institutional relationships and informal liaison with key departments such as the Department of Agriculture (DoA), Small Enterprise Development Division (SEDD), National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA), Department of Industries (DoI), and Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). While these informal and operational arrangements have enabled implementation in the short term, they remain insufficient to ensure sustained coordination, accountability, and continuity beyond the project.

Capacity-building support to Business Development Service (BDS) providers contributed to renewed motivation and improved delivery of services, especially in relation to value chain development. Line agencies such as the **DoA and NAQDA** demonstrated proactive engagement and follow-up with value chain producers, reinforcing the application of newly acquired technical skills and improved practices. As a result, producers, particularly in the **Gherkin and Seaweed value chains**, exhibited increased confidence, effective utilisation of skills and improved operational readiness, leading to tangible productivity gains. Although the **Tilapia and Mango value chains** were not fully operational at the time of the evaluation, producers reported a high level of readiness and confidence to apply acquired knowledge and skills once structural, regulatory and logistical constraints are addressed. This suggests positive prospects for future productivity and competitiveness as these value chains become fully functional.

In contrast, follow-up and monitoring by **SEDD and the DoI** in relation to MSME development, and by **MoWA** in relation to gender policy rollout, were more limited. While capacity building interventions significantly strengthened skills, confidence and institutional engagement of MSME BDS providers, the translation of these inputs into sustained productivity and competitiveness was uneven for MSMEs. Limitations in post-training backstopping, mentoring and the absence of structured peer learning or market linkage mechanisms constrained the ability of MSMEs to be proactive and competitive.

Access to finance emerged as a significant constraint across both value chain producers and MSMEs. Financial support was largely confined to project-facilitated mechanisms, with limited evidence of effective linkages to external financial institutions. This reliance on project-mediated financing constrains scalability and poses risks to the continuity of enterprise growth, particularly for vulnerable groups seeking to expand or diversify their economic activities.

Overall, the project contributed meaningfully to **strengthening institutional capacity, service delivery and improved confidence**, with clearer results observed in value chain contexts where follow-up and technical backstopping were more consistent.

Achieving sustained improvements in productivity and competitiveness for MSMEs, would require **stronger and more systematic post-training backstopping, mentoring and the absence of structured peer learning, market linkage mechanisms and enhanced financial linkages** that respond to distinct needs, capacities and stages of development of MSMEs.

Conclusions related to Outcome 3: Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have adopted climate smart practices and/or digital solutions:

Outcome 3 was **partially achieved**, with substantive progress observed in the adoption of climate-smart practices and digital solutions across the value chains, while uptake among MSMEs remained limited.

Value chain interventions demonstrated **effective operationalisation of climate-smart practices**, moving beyond awareness-raising to practical application across production processes.

In contrast, the application of climate-smart practices among MSMEs was **not consistently evidenced**. Although awareness was raised through training activities, the absence of sustained post-training follow-up and the small scale of MSME operations constrained visibility of practical adoptions. As a result, climate-smart approaches among MSMEs largely remained **conceptual rather than operational** at the time of evaluation.

A similar pattern was observed with respect to digital solutions. Within value chains, producers made **consistent and functional use of digital tools**, particularly for information sharing, coordination, communication, and transparency in remuneration. These digital applications contributed to improved

operational efficiency and trust among stakeholders, although their use was largely confined to production management rather than market expansion or innovation.

Among MSMEs, use of digital tools or solutions remained **limited**. Many MSMEs had not yet reached a level of market integration or growth where digital solutions were viewed as essential to business performance. Overall, the evidence indicates that climate-smart and digital innovations are most likely to be adopted where **economic incentives, operational scale, and institutional support converge**, as demonstrated in value chain interventions. Future programming will need to apply **graduated and context-specific approaches** to enable MSMEs to progress from awareness-raising to meaningful and sustained adoption of climate-smart and digital practices.

Good Practices and Lessons Learnt

Good Practices:

Inclusive Value Chain Partnerships for Local Economic Development

This good practice emerged from the PAVE project's implementation of inclusive value chain (VC) interventions in Sri Lanka's Northern Province. It demonstrates how structured collaboration among **Business Development Service (BDS) providers, private sector companies, and community-based organisations (CBOs)/communities** can effectively integrate the private sector into local economic development while advancing decent work, inclusion, and resilience.

The purpose of the partnership model was to move beyond beneficiary-driven programming and position communities, particularly women, persons with disabilities, youth, and female-headed households as **active economic actors and co-partners** in VC development.

Gender Policy Formulation & Rollout in the Northern Province

Under the PAVE project, the formulation and initial rollout of the **Northern Provincial Gender Policy** represents a significant good practice in institutionalising gender equality within provincial governance and local economic development. The intervention directly supports the project's objective of promoting **inclusive economic recovery, decent work, and social cohesion** in a post-conflict context. Its purpose was to move gender equality beyond project-level activities and embed it within a formal provincial policy framework, providing a mandate for gender-responsive planning, implementation, and service delivery.

BDS Providers using Interactive and Inclusive Training Methods in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Capacity Building

This good practice emerged from the project-supported MSME development interventions that strengthened the capacity of **BDS providers** to deliver **interactive and inclusive training** to MSMEs. Linked to the project objective of improving **enterprise competitiveness and decent work outcomes**, the approach moved beyond traditional classroom-based delivery towards **participatory, practice-oriented, and interactive learning**.

Training methods included peer learning, group problem-solving, simulations, coaching, and adapted materials to accommodate **emerging entrepreneurs including women, youth, persons with disabilities**. The purpose was to improve equitable access to business development services through strengthening the capacities of the regional BDS providers, namely, Small Enterprise Development Division (SEDD) and Department of Industries (DoI) officials.

Implementation of Climate-Smart Practices (CSPs) as an integral part of Value Chains

This good practice emerged from project-supported value chain (VC) development interventions that **mainstreamed climate-smart practices (CSPs) across production, processing, and market linkages**, rather than treating climate action as a stand-alone or add-on activity. The approach was directly linked to project objectives on **resilient livelihoods, inclusive economic recovery, and sustainable enterprise development**.

CSPs, including resource-efficient production techniques, climate-resilient inputs, improved waste management, and risk-informed planning were embedded into VC strategies and supported **through coordinated actions** by BDS providers, private sector partners, CBOs and communities.

Use of Digital Media as a Communication, Coordination and Information-Sharing Platform in Value Chains and in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

This good practice emerged from project-supported value chain (VC) and MSME development interventions that **systematically used digital media platforms** (e.g. messaging applications, social media, and basic digital tools) to strengthen communication, coordination, and information sharing among VC actors and MSMEs. The approach was directly linked to project objectives on **inclusive market access**,

enterprise resilience, and improved service delivery, particularly in contexts where physical mobility and access to information were constrained.

Digital media platforms were used to disseminate market information, coordinate production and delivery schedules, share remuneration details, facilitate peer learning, and maintain engagement between **BDS providers, private sector partners and VC producers, VC employees and MSMEs**. The purpose was to reduce information asymmetries, improve transparency, and strengthen trust and responsiveness within value chains, and to ensure continued access to support services for small and vulnerable enterprises.

Annex 08: Good Practices (as per ILO EVAL template)

Lessons Learnt:

Engage Communities as Organised Entities (CBOs/CSOs) rather than as Individuals

engaging communities through organised entities, CBOs/CSOs, rather than as individual producers strengthens participation, accountability, and sustainability in value chain (VC) interventions. Direct engagement with individuals can **weaken collective governance and undermine trust**. This lesson is linked to partnership-building with **private sector actors, BDS providers, and VC actors**, where collective engagement proved more effective than engagement as individuals.

Micro Small and Medium Entrepreneur (MSME) Training should be considered as a process with Inbuilt Backstopping and Follow-Up Support

Evaluation evidence indicates that **MSME training should not be treated as a one-off activity**, but rather as an **ongoing process** that includes structured follow-up, mentoring, and backstopping. Training alone is insufficient to achieve sustainable improvements in enterprise practices, market engagement, and business growth. This lesson emerged from the **MSME capacity-building interventions under the PAVE project**, where the initial training delivered high participation and engagement, but post-training follow-up was limited.

Following Proper Legal Processes in Acquiring Government Properties for Collective Enterprises

Evaluation findings indicate that **adhering to proper legal processes when acquiring government properties for collective enterprises is critical** to ensuring operational continuity, sustainability, and credibility of value chain (VC) interventions. This lesson emerged from the experience where private sector partners **invested in government-owned properties** for VC activities based on an understanding with the BDS provider. With the change of the government the decision was reverted, and the enterprises were unable to operate at full capacity, until an alternative solution was found.

Proper legal processes are essential to **secure infrastructure, safeguard investments, and protect VC producers and implementing agencies from disruptions**.

Annex 09: Lessons Learnt (as per ILO EVAL template)

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (High Priority): Institutionalise the Inclusive Value Chain Partnership Model

The inclusive economic development model that has evolved, collaboration and coordination among the 03 key stakeholders (BDS providers, Private companies and the CBOs / Communities) in VC implementation should be **systematically reviewed, documented, and formalised** as a case study on private sector integration in local economic development.

Future interventions should **formalise these partnerships through tripartite or multi-stakeholder agreements** that clearly define roles, responsibilities, risk-sharing arrangements, decision-making processes, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Formalisation will strengthen accountability, safeguard community interests, and enhance sustainability beyond project timelines.

ILO should support replication of this partnership model in future value chain interventions.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	Medium	Short–Medium term (0–12 months)

Recommendation 2 (High Priority): Establish a Regional Coordination and Monitoring Mechanism at the project Inception

A **regional coordination and monitoring mechanism** (e.g. Project Advisory Committee or a feasible alternative) should be established from the outset of future phases to ensure oversight, coordination, monitoring, risk mitigation, and institutional learning. This mechanism should involve relevant provincial authorities, sectoral institutions, local departments, cooperatives, private sector partners, and community representatives, and be sufficiently formal to address issues such as land acquisition, market dominance, and implementation delays.

There had been discussions that a district level progress review meeting would be a more feasible option in this regard.

It is also critical that the valuable experience, knowledge and success stories generated through the project be widely shared and institutionalised within the institutional context for replication, expansion and continuity.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Office	High	Medium	Short term (0–6 months)

As for PAVE, sharing the outcomes of the project as a learning experience, seems the only possible regional integration at this juncture.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
PAVE	High	Medium	Short term (0–3 months)

Recommendation 3 (Medium Priority): Formalise Collection Centres as the Primary Business Units of Value Chains

Collection centres, which are the primary contact points at local level representing the company, should be **formally recognised and operationalised as primary business units**, strengthening their credibility and

reinforcing their stake in the value chains as a legitimate entity in the economic model. Such an elevation would develop stronger attraction among the VC producers to continue to stay in business.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
PAVE Private sector partners	Medium	High	Medium term (6–12 months)

Recommendation 4 (Medium Priority): Embed Capacity Building as a means in Mobilising Value Chain Implementation

Capacity building of the BDS providers, private sector partners and the CBOs / Communities should be made an **integral part of the value chain implementation and ideally as a starting point** of the process. Evidence suggests that such processes intuitively bring in necessary mobilisation, familiarisation and clearly define the coordination and responsibility lines among the stakeholders. The process being organic, the stakeholders develop a natural buy-in for their stake without having to impose externally.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Office	Medium	High	Immediate and ongoing (from inception)

Recommendation 5 (Medium Priority): Introduce Safeguards against Market Concentration and Community Vulnerability

Preventive measures should be introduced to **mitigate possible risks of private sector dominance and market monopolies**, including monitoring mechanisms, compliance standards, and transparent pricing and procurement arrangements in the value chains.

Active oversight by ILO / PAVE and regional institutional mechanisms would be critical particularly in monitoring such developments during early implementation stages. The establishment of a **compliance and coordination body** that formally binds all stakeholders is essential to safeguard community interests and prevent risks of exploitation or increase in vulnerability, particularly in value chains with strong private sector participation. The **Regional Coordination and Monitoring Mechanism proposed under Recommendation 2** provides a practical and appropriate option to serve this compliance and coordination function, ensuring transparency, accountability, and equitable participation across all stakeholder groups.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
PAVE	Medium	Medium	Short-Medium term (0–6 months)

Recommendation 6 (Medium Priority): Operationalise Gender Equality and Inclusion Framework

Following the formulation of the Northern Provincial Gender Policy, targeted efforts should be made to **build institutional capacity, allocate resources, and Operationalise implementation plans**. Gender equality and disability inclusion should be systematically integrated into value chain governance, MSME development, and institutional practices.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Office Ministry of Women's Affairs	Medium	Medium	Medium term (6–18 months)

Recommendation 7 (Medium Priority): Strengthen MSME Support through Continuous Backstopping and Digital Applications

MSME training should be redesigned as a **continuous support process**, incorporating structured mentoring, follow-up, and interactive backstopping with necessary logistics in place.

Digital platforms for communication, coordination, and information sharing should be progressively promoted, drawing on successful digital practices observed in value chain interventions.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Office Small Enterprise Development Division Department of Industries	Medium	Medium	Short-Medium term (0–9 months)

Recommendation 8 (Low Priority): Sustain and expand Climate-Smart Practices through Knowledge Transfer

Climate-smart practices should continue to be integrated as a **core operational component** of value chains. Knowledge transfer on climate resilience should systematically involve all stakeholders to reinforce shared responsibility and long-term sustainability.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
PAVE Department of Agriculture National Aquaculture Development Authority	Low	Medium	Short-Medium term (0–9 months)

Recommendation 9 (Low Priority): Adherence to proper legal and regulatory processes

Adherence to proper legal and regulatory processes in the acquisition of land, facilities, and infrastructure for value chain functions is essential to **ensure legitimacy, risk mitigation, and continuity of operations**.

Project planning and implementation timelines must therefore explicitly account for the administrative and procedural time required for such processes to avoid delays, compliance risks, and disruptions to value chain activities.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Office Provincial Authorities Private sector partners	Low	Low	Short-Medium term (0–12 months)

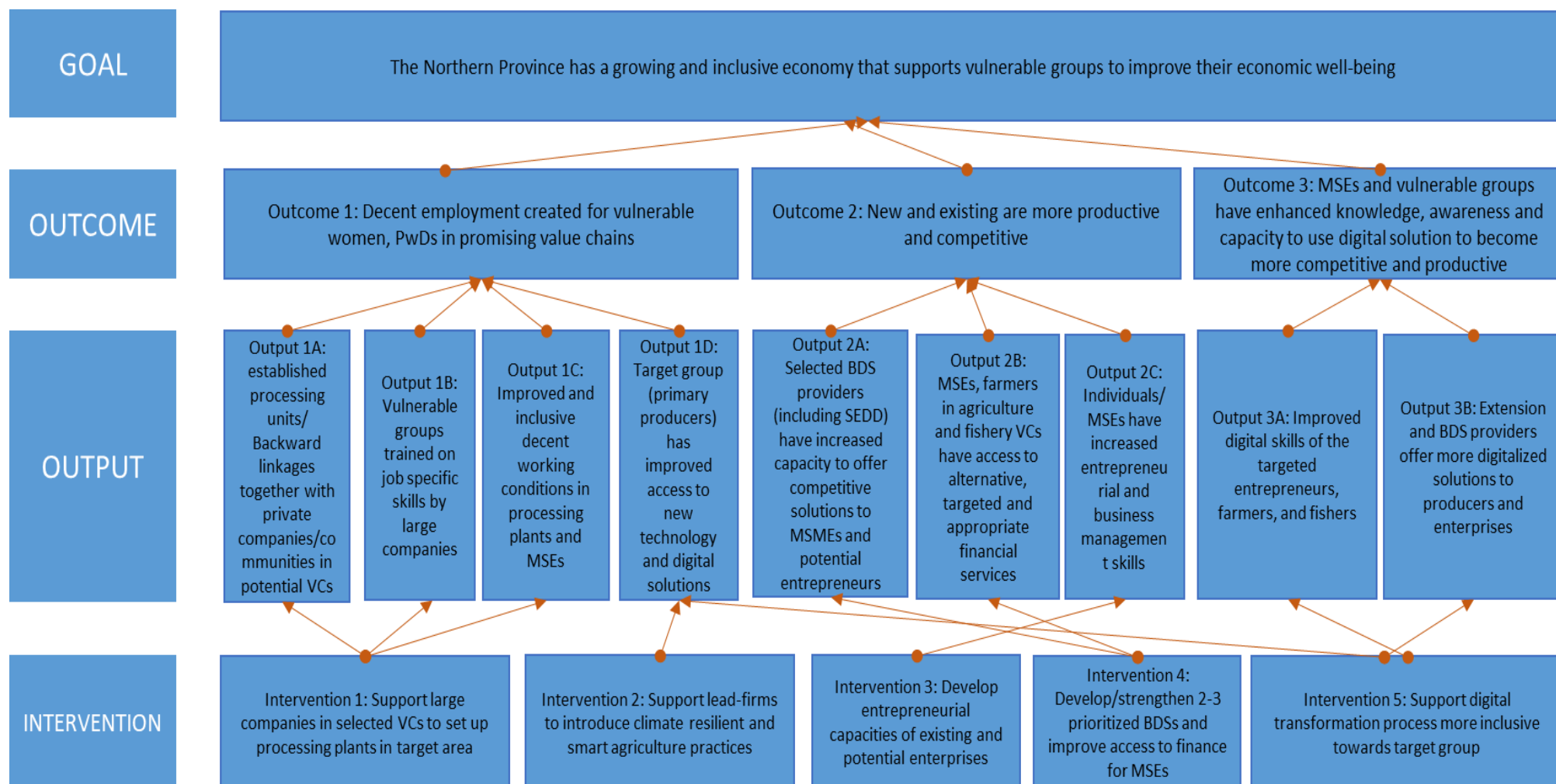
Recommendation 10 (Cross-Cutting): Institutionalise Learning and Knowledge Dissemination

ILO should ensure that the **knowledge, experience, and good practices generated by the project are systematically documented and disseminated** within national and regional institutional systems. In the absence of a formal coordination platform, structured knowledge sharing remains the most viable mechanism for regional integration and future programme design.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Country Office	-	Medium	Short-Medium term (3–12 months)

Annexes:

Annex 01: Theory of Change



Annex 02: Results Framework (Updated on 06.09.2024)

IMPACT: The Northern Province has a growing and inclusive economy that supports vulnerable groups to improve their economic well-being.	
OUTCOME 1: Vulnerable women and persons with disabilities engaged in promising value chains and enterprises enjoy decent employment and better support from public institutions, family members and their community	
Output 1.1 Processing Units and collection centres established together with private companies and communities.	Activities: • Activity 1.1.1 Identify promising value chains (VCs) and sign partnerships with private companies. • Activity 1.1.2 Support partner companies and communities to develop inclusive business models and identify locations for processing units and collection units.
Output 1.2 Improved and inclusive decent working conditions in primary production and in enterprises.	Activities: • Activity 1.2.1 Identify needs related to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), working conditions, and gender and disability inclusion in primary production and support companies and/or government to implement. • Activity 1.2.2 Identify needs related to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), working conditions, and gender and disability inclusion in MSMEs and support MSMEs to implement.
Output 1.3 Families and community members have increased awareness of gender equality, and disability equity for the economic progression of targeted vulnerable groups.	Activities: • Activity 1.3.1 Identify target groups and provide awareness and training to change norms on women's livelihood, leadership and care responsibilities. • Activity 1.3.2 Support government (Ministry of Women Affairs) to finalize their provincial gender policy (and/or other strategies) and build the capacity of the government to implement them.
OUTCOME 2: New and existing MSMEs and primary producers are more productive and competitive.	
Output 2.1 Selected Business Development Service providers have increased capacity to offer competitive solutions to MSMEs and potential entrepreneurs, in an	Activities: • Activity 2.1.1 Identify and select Business Development Service (BDS) providers. • Activity 2.1.2 Design and execute capacity building interventions for selected BDS providers that focus on vulnerable men, women and people with disabilities. • Activity 2.1.3 Initiate and/or support initiatives to promote business and entrepreneurship in the Northern Province.

improved enabling environment for business and entrepreneurship in the Northern Province.	
Output 2.2 Targeted individuals have increased job-specific or entrepreneurial and business management skills.	Activities: • Activity 2.2.1 Assess the entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges of MSMEs in the North especially focusing on women and people with disabilities. • Activity 2.2.2 Contextualize and roll out appropriate ILO entrepreneurship training. • Activity 2.2.3 Support companies to train primary producers on job-specific skills.
Output 2.3 MSMEs and primary producers including vulnerable men, women and persons with disabilities have access to alternative targeted and appropriate financial services.	Activities: • Activity 2.3.1 Assess possibilities of VC financing that will benefit vulnerable men, women and people with disabilities. • Activity 2.3.2 Support financing partners (companies and/or financial institutions) to deliver financial services to target group.
OUTCOME 3: Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have adopted climate smart practices and/or digital solutions.	
Output 3.1 Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have improved access to climate-smart practices.	Activities: • Activity 3.1.1 Identify climate smart practices in VCs and support companies to promote climate smart practices among target group. • Activity 3.1.2 Identify climate-smart practices in agriculture and fisheries sectors (beyond the selected value chains) and support government institutions to promote climate-smart practices among target group. • Activity 3.1.3 Identify climate-smart practices in MSMEs and support MSMEs to incorporate best practices.
Output 3.2 Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have improved digital skills.	Activities: • Activity 3.2.1 Support companies to train targeted group on digital solutions when rolling them out. • Activity 3.2.2 Develop module on digitalisation of MSMEs for SEDD, conduct TOT and roll out in the North.

Output 3.3 More digital solutions are offered to primary producers and enterprises.	Activities: • Activity 3.3.1 Support companies to develop appropriate digital solutions. • Activity 3.3.2 Support BDS providers to inform about and promote digital solutions to enterprises.
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Annex 03: ToR of the Evaluation



Terms of Reference

Final Independent Evaluation of

Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE)

1. Key Facts

Title of Project to be Evaluated	Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE)
Project DC Code	LKA/22/01/NOR
Type of Evaluation	Independent
Timing of Evaluation	Final
Donor	Government of Norway – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)
Project time frame and duration (months)	November 2022 until December 2025
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives (CO-Colombo)
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	DEVINVEST, COOP, ENTERPRISE
P&B Outcome(s) under evaluation	No P&B Outcome(s) indicated in the Project Document.
SDG(s) under evaluation	SDG 8 on ‘Promoting Decent Work’ (Target 8.5: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value). SDG 5 on ‘Supporting Gender Equality’ (Target 5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life). SDG 10 on ‘Reduced Inequality’ (Target 10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status), and SDG 13 on ‘Climate Change’ (Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning).

Total Budget	NOK 20 million
Evaluation manager	Tauvik Muhamad, ILO CO for Indonesia and Timor Leste

2. Introduction

This Terms of Reference (TOR) concerns a final independent evaluation of PAVE (the Project). As per the ILO evaluation policy, the Project requires a midterm internal valuation and a final independent evaluation. The midterm evaluation was conducted in 2024. The final independent evaluation, which is planned between August to October 2025, is to be managed by an independent certified ILO Evaluation Manager, who has no previous involvement with the Project, and conducted by a team of independent evaluators. The evaluation will address the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria including the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Project. Additionally, it will also address ILO crossing-cutting concerns, including gender equality and non-discrimination, promotion of international labour standards and social dialogue. The evaluation will provide strategic recommendations, lessons learned for future projects of similar objectives.

The evaluation is to comply with the United Nations Evaluation Guidelines (UNEG) Norms and Standards, ILO policy guidelines (4th edition). Key stakeholders, including the donor, ILO-Colombo Office, and ILO technical backstopping unit, will be consulted throughout the evaluation process.

3. Project Background Information

3.1. Overview of the project

The Northern Province of Sri Lanka, which is home to 1.3 million Sri Lankans (2021), was one of the worst affected areas during the three-decade long civil conflict that raged in the country until 2009. Even more than a decade after the war, unemployment and poverty rates remain higher than the national average – making it among Sri Lanka’s poorest regions. Livelihoods in the Northern Province are heavily reliant on agriculture and fishing with 83.4 per cent of people living in rural areas. In addition to being marginalized in terms of remote localities, the province is home to many females headed families whose partners were lost due to the war, and men and women with disabilities who find themselves in an especially precarious position, with the stigma from having an impairment intermingling with assumptions of being an ex-combatant. In 2022, 75,600 female-headed households and 21,660 persons with disabilities were recorded in the province. Following the adverse impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent economic crisis in Sri Lanka, PAVE targets these groups with the aim of addressing economic challenges, strengthening gender and disability inclusion, promoting social cohesion, and uplifting the province’s vulnerable communities. **The ‘Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE)’ project, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aims to create lasting employment opportunities for marginalized women, men and persons with disabilities in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.**

3.2. Project Objectives

The objective of the PAVE Project is to create lasting employment opportunities for marginalized women, men and persons with disabilities through developing promising agriculture and aquaculture value chains, and by improving the ecosystem for MSMEs in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

The PAVE Project, that is set to run until December 2025, will be followed by a new ILO joint Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded project ‘Generating Resilient Opportunities for Work’ (GROW) that was launched in June 2025.

The PAVE Project builds on the previous ILO Local Empowerment for Economic Development and Reconciliation (LEED+) project, funded by the Government of Norway and DFAT that ran from 2018 to 2023. Like LEED+, PAVE is going beyond the traditional livelihoods approach to also look at broader market systems. The approach consists of forging partnerships with leading private companies within selected

value chains to adopt and adapt inclusive business models that not only benefit the suppliers-producers but also strengthen their own supply chains. The fundamental principle of the business models is that they are owned by the partner companies through investments in the form of input, technical know-how and technology for its suppliers/producers. The ILO finances part of the initial investments made by the partner companies as a risk-sharing mechanism and to help them adopt the models. Partner companies can therefore source a higher number of products, of better quality, through a secured supply channel and a growing supplier base. In turn, suppliers/producers become more productive and efficient with increased revenue and improved access to new jobs. These incentive driven models, therefore, offer a win-win proposition for all, thus making the impact both sustainable and scalable.

The previous LEED+ project successfully intervened in the groundnut, maize, chili peppers, black gram and coconut husk value chains in the agriculture sector, and in the sea cucumber fishery sector. **PAVE was initially designed to capitalize on the increased volume of production of groundnuts and chilies in northern Sri Lanka**, facilitated by the earlier LEED+ project. The plan aimed to create processing centres (enterprises) in the north to generate employment. However, sudden changes in import regulations led partner companies to withdraw from agreements concerning groundnuts and chilies. The influx of cheaper produce from India made the establishment of processing units financially unfeasible. In 2023, the Project therefore had to change strategy and shifted its focus from value addition in domestic-oriented value chains to primary production in export-oriented value chains. As the new value chains needed to build sufficient supply for it to make financial sense to set up processing units in the Northern Province. To address the enterprise component of the Project Document, the ILO therefore shifted the focus towards capacitating selected stakeholders in the Business Development Service Market.

3.3. Theory of Change

The Project's Theory of Change is stipulated as: IF the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the Northern Province are engaged in decent work – be it primary production, enterprise level, or self-employment – in the most promising value chains and they can access business development services, make use of digital solutions, and develop partnerships and representation at the national level, THEN they are more likely to achieve greater economic well-being, show higher resilience to economic shocks and disasters, and gain a stronger voice in the community, BECAUSE they will be skilled, efficient, productive, competitive and able to make tangible economic and social contributions to the development of the local as well as the national economy.

3.4 Project Outcomes

The table below outlines the overall Project goals, objectives/outcomes, and the key outputs and interventions to achieve the objectives.

IMPACT: The Northern Province has a growing and inclusive economy that supports vulnerable groups by improving their economic well-being.
OUTCOME 1: Vulnerable women and persons with disabilities engaged in promising value chains and enterprises enjoy decent employment and better support from public institutions, family members and their community.
Output 1.1 Processing units and collection centres established together with private companies and communities.
Output 1.2 Improved and inclusive decent working conditions in primary production and in enterprises.
Output 1.3 Families and community members have increased awareness of gender equality, and disability equity for the economic progression of targeted vulnerable groups.

OUTCOME 2: New and existing MSMEs and primary producers are more productive and competitive.
Output 2.1 Selected Business Development Service providers have increased capacity to offer competitive solutions to MSMEs and potential entrepreneurs, in an improved enabling environment for business and entrepreneurship in the Northern Province.
Output 2.2 Targeted individuals have increased job-specific or entrepreneurial and business management skills.
Output 2.3 MSMEs and primary producers including vulnerable men, women and persons with disabilities have access to alternative targeted and appropriate financial services.

OUTCOME 3: Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have adopted climate smart practices and/or digital solutions.
Output 3.1 Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have improved access to climate-smart practices
Output 3.2 Targeted entrepreneurs and primary producers have improved digital skills.
Output 3.3 More digital solutions are offered to primary producers and enterprises.

It is important to note that the PAVE project went through an internal mid-term review in 2024 and updated its Results Framework and Results Measurement Framework to better reflect the changed project circumstance (the shift towards primary production). The evaluation provided a thorough assessment of the Project's progress and effectiveness. The main findings and recommendations from this mid-term evaluation can be found in Annex 1.

3.6. Project alignment with the DWCP, CPO and SDGs

3.6.1. Link to DWCP and CPO:

The Project is contributing to the ILO Decent Work Country Programme for Sri Lanka 2018-2022, Country Priority 1: Creation of sustainable, inclusive, and decent employment. The Project also contributes to the ILO Programme and Budget for 2024-25, in particular: Outcome 4: Sustainable Enterprises for Inclusive Growth and Decent Work and Outcome 5: Gender Equality and Equality of Treatment and Opportunities for All.

3.6.2. The Project closely aligns with the SDGs

The Project is contributing towards the SDGs, in particular SDG 8 on 'Promoting Decent Work' (8.5 Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value); SDG 5 on 'Supporting Gender Equality' (5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life); SDG 10 on 'Reduced Inequality' (10.2 Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status), and SDG 13 on 'Climate Change' (13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning).

The Project is well aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Sri Lanka 2023-27, in particular: Outcome 2: Sustainable and Inclusive, Green-Led Growth, People-Centred Economic Recovery, Livelihoods and Productivity; Outcome 3: Natural Resource Management, Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability; and Outcome 6: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

3.6.3. Synergies and complementarities with other active ILO and Norway projects

The Project also contributes to the ILO's flagship programme "Jobs for Peace and Resilience", 'Recommendation 193' (cooperatives), 'Recommendation 205', (Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience), as well as 'Job Creation in Small and Medium-Size Enterprises Recommendation 1998' (No. 189).

3.7. Project Risks and Assumptions

The following risks are elaborated in more detail in Annex 2: Budget Results Framework, of the PAVE project document:

1. The country's political and economic stability remains unfavourable to achieving Project outcomes, outputs and impact. In addition, unexpected power cuts, limited access to fuel, community unrest may cause delays in completing some of the interventions on time.
2. The limited self-commitment of private companies in mainstreaming people with disabilities and vulnerable women into value chains affects the achievement of outputs and targets.
3. The possibility of vulnerable communities being exploited by private companies affects target achievement.
4. Resistance to purchase business services by the small and medium-scale entrepreneurs affect the achievement of outcomes.
5. Climate-related or induced risks such as flood, drought, pest attacks, crop diseases and cyclones affect primary producers' effect on the achievement of outputs and targets.
6. Risks of corruption, positive and negative bias towards stakeholders, procumbent, and misuse of human, financial and physical resources affect the achievement of Project outcomes and outputs.
7. The possibility of operational and programmatic challenges with engaging in cooperatives affects the achievement of outputs and outcomes.

3.8. Project Management

The Project is managed by the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), based in Colombo. The National Project Officer, based in Colombo, is responsible for supporting and coordinating national level policy dialogue and engagement, and will lead communications and engagements on social media. The National Coordinator for Monitoring and Evaluation, also based in Colombo, was monitoring the Project until early 2024. A Junior Professional Officer, based in Colombo, supported the M&E function of the Project till end October 2025. A field team, based in Vavuniya, is coordinating the implementation of the Project at the local level. The team consists of the National Project Coordinator (NPC), responsible for the technical and financial delivery of the Project, and two Field Coordinators, responsible for implementing field level activities such as identifying and selecting beneficiaries, monitoring, and assessing partners' field activities and providing feedback to management. The field team also consists of a National Gender and Disability Technical Officer, an Admin and Finance Officer, and a driver.

4. Purpose, Scope, and Objective of the Evaluation

4.1. Purpose

The main purpose of this final evaluation is to enhance learning among the Project team and stakeholders and to ensure accountability to the stakeholders, as well as to provide necessary guidance for future projects. The Project is required to conduct an external End Term Evaluation. In line with ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluations, an Evaluation Manager will manage the evaluation.

4.2. Scope

The scope of the final evaluation will cover all the ILO and implementing partners' interventions from the beginning of the Project to date. The evaluation will integrate ILO's cross-cutting issues, including norms and social dialogue, gender equality, disability inclusion, other non-discrimination concerns, and the medium- and long-term effects of capacity development issues throughout the evaluation methodology and all deliverables, including the final report.

Furthermore, the evaluation will give specific attention to how the intervention is relevant to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels, UNSDCF and national sustainable development strategy (or its equivalent) or other relevant national development frameworks, including any relevant sectoral policies or programmes.

4.3. Objective(s)

The objectives of the final evaluation are to:

1. Assess relevance, validity of design, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and the sustainability of processes initiated by the Project.
2. Identify good practices, lessons and key changes in a collective manner.
3. Identify ways forward to strengthen the Project (recommendations).

The users of the final evaluation will be ILO project teams, implementing partners and stakeholders. The final evaluation will ensure that issues and inputs from stakeholders and tripartite constituents are adequately covered.

5. Evaluation questions

Within the above purpose and scope of the evaluation, the following check list of questions are to be addressed by the evaluator. These questions seek to obtain relevant information on the Project's evaluation criteria covering coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and/or sustainability, as well as cross-cutting issues of gender, non-discrimination and social dialogue and tripartism. 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.

Coherence (How well the intervention fits)	▪ How well has the Pave project synergized with work of other ILO and Norway interventions in Sri Lanka, as well as with other international development partners, Government, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and national development frameworks?
Relevance (Is the intervention doing the right things?) and validity of design	▪ To what extent do the project interventions and activities respond to the need of Sri Lanka's tripartite constituents, partners institutions and beneficiaries? ▪ To what extent has the project adapted to remain relevant to the communities, tripartite constituents and other stakeholders? ▪ To what extent is the project theory of change logical and coherent?
Effectiveness (Is the intervention achieving its objectives?)	▪ To what extent has the Project achieved its planned results? Are there any unintended (positive and negative) outcomes? ▪ To what extent and how has the Project supported value chains and led to the creation of decent employment for vulnerable workers and people with disabilities in the target value chains? ▪ To what extent and how have the MSMEs and primary producers become more efficient, productive and competitive because of the interventions supported/introduced by the Project? ▪ To what extent have MSMEs and primary producers adopted climate smart and digital solutions promoted by the Project?
Effectiveness of management arrangement	▪ How effective was the project management, and the support provided to the project team by the ILO (PU of the country office, technical specialists), donors, and tripartite constituents in delivering results? What could have been done differently?

	▪ To what extent was results-based management implemented in the programme put in place support the achievement of the planned results? ▪ Are the direct beneficiaries (primary producers, MSMEs, government service providers) satisfied with the capacity building/technical support from the project and its partners? What are perceived as the most useful?
Efficiency of resource usage/implementation: (How well are resources being used?)	▪ To what extent were the Project's resources (funds, expertise, time, staff, etc) strategically utilised to deliver in a timely and an efficient manner? ▪ To what extent has the Project complemented and/or harmonized or coordinated with other actors and their interventions to maximise the Project's effectiveness and impact?
Impact (What difference does the intervention make?)	▪ To what extent did the project interventions contribute to sustain any lasting changes? ▪ To what extent and how have the actors (e.g. financial institutions, BDS providers, SEDD, government extensions and other government institutions, COOP, private sector as well as value chain actors in the supply chains) behaved/functioned in ways that promote decent employment and an inclusive economy in the target value chains? ▪ To what extent and how has the Project contributed to peace and resilience in the Northern Province?
Sustainability of the intervention (The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue)	▪ To what extent were the processes followed leading towards intervention sustainability? ▪ What would be an effective exit strategy and next step for the ILO and the relevant stakeholders in helping to ensure the Project's benefits will continue after it ends? ▪ What funding opportunities could the ILO pursue to support the assistance indicated in the points above? ▪ What is the impact of the Project on other projects, and to what extent can the results be expected to build stakeholder capacity and sustainability in the longer term?
ILO Cross-Cutting Themes: Gender, disability, and non-discrimination; tripartism and social dialogue	▪ To date, what are the key achievements of the Project in addressing gender equality, women's empowerment, and discrimination, including disability inclusion? ▪ Has the Project allocated sufficient resources in achieving its gender equality activities? ▪ Has the Project been able to leverage the ILO contributions through its comparative advantages including International Labour Standards, social dialogue and tripartism?

6. Proposed Methodology

The evaluation will comply with UNEG evaluation norms and standards, and follow ethical safeguards, as specified in the ILO's evaluation procedures. The evaluation should also address OECD/DAC and UNEG evaluation criteria and concerns. The proposed methodology for the evaluation will be in line with the ILO's guidelines for evaluation (4th edition, 2020).

The evaluation will apply a mix of methods/approaches engaging with key project stakeholders at all levels during the design, field work, validation, and reporting stages. In addition to ensuring triangulation of

information using up-to-date data such as current achievement results, Project annual reports, research studies, etc.

Confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback obtained during individual and group interviews will be maintained. The discussions would begin with an explanation of the purpose of FIE and with a message to the respondents that information would not carry one's identity. Consent of the respondents to take part in the discussions and share information would be sought at the beginning of all the discussions.

To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure maximum freedom of expression for implementing partners, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, project staff will not be present during interviews.

It is the plan to adopt elements of Utilization Focused Evaluation Approaches to enhance the ownership and utility of the review findings. The evaluation will be done through a desk review and discussions (FGD-Focus Group Discussion, KII) via either a virtual platform or by visiting the implementing partners where necessary.

A data collection plan should be developed during the inception and annexed to the inception report. The evaluator will receive input from the project team when preparing the data collection plan.

The methodology should include examining the intervention's Theory of Change, with particular attention to the identification of assumptions, risk and mitigation strategies, and the logical connect between levels of results and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at the global and national levels, as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets.

The methodology should include multiple methods, with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, and should be able to capture the intervention's contributions to the achievement of expected and unexpected outcomes.

The data and information should be collected, presented and analysed with appropriate gender disaggregation even if the project design did not take gender into account.

To the extent possible, the data collection, analysis and presentation should be responsive to and include issues relating to the ILO's normative work, social dialogue, gender equality, diversity and non-discrimination, including disability issues.

The methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods, including those related to the representation of specific groups of stakeholders. The methodology should ensure involvement of key stakeholders in the implementation as well as in the dissemination processes (e.g. stakeholders' workshop, debriefing with project manager, donors and ILO Country Office etc.).

Furthermore, the evaluation should follow non-discriminating factors that allow for a balanced view of the Project's performance. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and the evaluation report. To the extent possible, data collection and analysis should be disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve the lives of women and men as described in the ILO Evaluation Policy Guidelines and relevant Guidance Notes (Annex 5).

The methodology will include an assessment of the intervention logic or Theory of Change of the Project, which links between various levels of the results framework such as DWCP and P&B, and country programme outcomes, to help refine and/or finalize the evaluation questions. Proposed methods of data collection include, but are not limited to the following:

6.1. Data collection

1. Desk review

A desk review of all relevant documents to the project. This includes project documents, work plan and budget, progress reports, activity reports, publications, research, and study report, DWCP, UNSDCF, NAP for 2030 SDGs which are to be made prior to the interviews.

2. Interview

Interview (face-to-face and virtual interviews through MS Team or Zoom) with the PAVE project team in Sri Lanka and relevant ILO staff who are backstopping the Project (ILO CO Colombo, ILO ROAP in Bangkok, and HQ in Geneva, if any) as well as the Evaluation Manager who resides in Jakarta, Indonesia.

3. Survey

The evaluator may use surveys to collect quantitative/qualitative data for the evaluation from the target groups, if applicable.

4. Direct onsite observation/ Field visit

During field visits/missions, the consultant will undertake a number of meetings and consultations with relevant stakeholders, consisting of the government, employers and worker organizations (target beneficiaries). This includes bilateral meetings, brainstorming sessions and stakeholder workshops to present findings, and a draft of the evaluation report for feedback from relevant stakeholders. If the budget permits, the Evaluation Manager will also join in the selected bilateral meeting and stakeholder workshop, debriefing with the Project, ILO CO Colombo Office and donor during the last week of field visits.

5. Focus Group Discussion

FGDs with stakeholder group(s) to validate initial findings. The objective of the FGDs is to present initial findings and receive feedback from stakeholders to triangulate data.

6.2. Data analysis

Based on the data and information gathered from the desk review, interviews, field visits/missions, the evaluator will review the data and make an analysis.

6.3. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the data collection and analysis, as well as the findings presented and discussed, recommendations and conclusions will be formulated with a summarized assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention. Recommendations will be specific and will propose ways to enhance the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of the development intervention. The conclusion should be fair, impartial, and grounded in evidence.

6.4. Generating good practices and lessons learnt.

For evaluation purposes, it is essential to generate insights into good practices and lessons learnt in order to enhance project performance and impact.

Lessons learnt will illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of interventions, facilitating the improvement of delivery quality and the incorporation of previous experiences into the design of future development projects.

Good practices entail proven, tangible results and benefits identified by the evaluator for potential replication and scaling up in future endeavours.

6.5. Reporting and disseminating result of the evaluation.

The draft evaluation report will be prepared and shared with stakeholders to offer them opportunities to clarify and provide feedback before the Project's final evaluation report is completed. The evaluator must strictly adhere to the guidelines outlined by the ILO (2022), which emphasizes respecting the confidentiality of the draft evaluation report. The report should strive to stimulate reader interest, be well-structured, clear, and concisely written.

The task of the evaluator and scope of the final evaluation

The independent evaluator will develop the evaluation framework through consultation with the ILO team and implementing partners. It should detail the key evaluation questions, sub-questions, and expected M&E methods.

Consultant/ Evaluator The evaluator will undertake the evaluation and has the final responsibility for accomplishing the evaluation deliverables.

The consultant / evaluator will report to the evaluation manager. *The evaluator/ consultant* is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the ToR as per the following table:

Consultant/ Evaluator
The Evaluator will be required to: ▪ Review the ToR and propose any refinements to the evaluation questions and methodology during the inception phase. ▪ Review project background materials (e.g., project documents and progress reports). ▪ Prepare an inception report (including Evaluation Questions Matrix (EQM), data collection instruments, and a list of stakeholders to meet/interview, work plan and others). ▪ Develop and implement the evaluation methodology (i.e., Conduct data collection, conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the evaluation questions. ▪ Conduct preparatory consultations with the evaluation manager prior to the evaluation mission. ▪ Conduct key informant interviews and collect information according to the suggested format. ▪ Analyse findings from the desk review, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. ▪ Present the preliminary findings. ▪ Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report with input from ILO specialists and constituents/ stakeholders. ▪ Submit inception report consisted of detailed review framework, challenges and methodology (max five pages) ▪ Submit draft evaluation report ▪ Conduct validation session ▪ Prepare the final report based on the ILO, donor and other stakeholder feedback on the draft report. ▪ Submit Final Evaluation Report (main report should be max thirty-five pages)

6.6. Reporting lines

The consultant will communicate and report to the ILO Evaluation Manager.

7. Main Deliverables

Deliverables expected from the independent evaluator are:

Deliverables	Deadline
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Deliverable 1: Inception Report and workplan (not more than twenty (20) pages excluding annexes) A Brief Inception Report that consists of the evaluation framework with data and information collection details, the field data collection plan, the layout for the final report, and key limitations. The Inception Report will include the details on how the evaluator understands what is being evaluated including the evaluation questions. The report must elaborate the methodology being proposed in the TOR, with changes if applicable, including proposed methods, data sources, and data collection procedures. The report shall also include the selection criteria or the sampling methodology for the selection of individuals for interviews or group discussions, the selection of target area(s) or target beneficiaries/stakeholders to be visited, and a list of stakeholders that will be included in the evaluation. A detailed timeline/ workplan along with a detailed methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation matrix methods, including those related to representation of a specific group of stakeholders. A detailed timeline/workplan will also be part of the inception report.	29 August 2025
Deliverable 2: A first draft of the evaluation report (not more than thirty-five (35) pages excluding annex) The draft evaluation report will be written in English. It should adequately cover the evaluation criteria and questions as finalised in the inception report, along with the recommendations, lessons learned, good practices, and technical recommendations for the key stakeholders. The draft evaluation report should be in the format of the ILO https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf The quality of the report will be assessed against the relevant EVAL checklists. The finalization phase will continue until the evaluator has addressed all the feedback at a satisfactory level and the report has been approved by the evaluation manager. The initial draft report needs to cover initial field mission findings note capturing a result from interviews and consultations with relevant stakeholders of the PAVE Project in the field. The initial findings note (in form of PPT presentation) needs to be circulated (on 12 September 2025) prior to the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) for confirmation. The FGD is planned to be conducted at the end of field mission on 15 September 2025.	3 October 2025
Deliverable 3: Final Evaluation Report including an Evaluation Summary in standard ILO format (not more than thirty-five (35) pages excluding executive summary and annexes) The final Evaluation Report will use the relevant templates for the title page, and the executive summary and annexes, including lessons learnt and emerging good practices, in the ILO template).	31 October 2025

The final evaluation report will consider inception report, field mission findings and feedback from stakeholders' validation workshop. Presentation of initial findings at stakeholders' validation workshop. To validate the initial findings, a PowerPoint presentation is to be submitted by the evaluator and delivered prior to the stakeholder workshop (scheduled to be on 6 October 2025).	
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The final evaluation report will be submitted to the Evaluation Manager, who must ensure that all comments from the project team and the Project's key stakeholders are integrated.

The report's annexes will include the questions matrix, tools used during data collection, field work schedule, a list of interviewees and a list of documents analysed, a lesson learnt template and an emerging good practices standard template, which will be provided to the evaluators in due course.

The quality of the report will be determined based on quality standards defined by the ILO Evaluation Office as per Checklist 4.9 Rating of an Evaluation Report [wcms_746818.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

The final evaluation report approved by the ILO may be converted to a document that will include a detailed summary of the evaluation methodology and findings. This can be in the form of an executive summary document or infographic.

The report and all other outputs of this evaluation must be produced in English. All draft and final reports, including other supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in a format compatible with Microsoft Word for Windows.

The approval of the final evaluation report might take a couple of weeks as it must proceed through three ILO internal control layers (evaluation manager, regional evaluation officer and EVAL).

Additionally, it is imperative to consider the following key areas as integral components of the evaluation and its presentation:

- *Lessons Learned Documentation:* A compilation of valuable insights drawn from project experiences. This documentation aims to capture the knowledge gained and outline practical lessons for future endeavours.
- *Recommendations and Action Plan:* A well-defined set of actionable recommendations based on the evaluation's findings. This action plan will outline steps for enhancing project implementation and performance.
- *Qualitative Stories and Testimonials:* Human stories and testimonials reflecting the impact of the project on its beneficiaries. These narratives will offer a qualitative perspective on the Project's outcomes and benefits.
- *Visual Aids and Infographics:* Enhanced data visualization materials will be designed to make complex data more accessible and understandable for a broader audience.
- *Presentation Materials:* Presentation materials will be tailored for stakeholder presentations, facilitating effective communication of key findings, insights, and recommendations to diverse audiences.

These deliverables collectively form a comprehensive and multifaceted evaluation package that not only assesses the Project's status but also paves the way for a more effective and impactful future.

The gender dimension will be considered throughout the methodology, deliverables, and final report. Data will be disaggregated by gender where possible, addressing diversity and non-discrimination issues. The ILO EVAL Guidance Note 3.2 on integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation will also be followed to assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes.

The evaluator will follow EVAL's Guidance material on methodologies, including the ILO Guidance Note, namely, the [ILO EVAL Guidance Note 3.1 on integrating gender equality and non-discrimination](#); and the [ILO EVAL Guidance Note 3.2 on Integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#).

Several revisions may be expected if the ILO is not satisfied with the quality of the deliverables before the payments can be made. The final evaluation report will also be reviewed and approved by the Evaluation Office in Geneva before the final payment can be made.

8. Work plan and Time Frame and responsibilities

Work on the review should begin by August 2025 and the final report is to be submitted by October 2025. The total effort is expected to be twenty-five working days for the Independent Evaluator to complete the full assignment. The estimated time frame, tasks, and responsibilities of the evaluation is as follows:

No.	Task	Timeframe/ Deadline	Responsibility
1	Selection of consultants/ contractual agreements	22 August 2025	ILO
2	Discussion (MS Team) on Pave and ToR	25 August 2025	ILO & Consultant
3	Desk review (project document, workplan and other relevant documents)	25-29 August 2025	Consultant
4	Submission of inception report (design, method and instrument of evaluation)	29 August 2025	Consultant
5	Feedback on inception report	1 -5 September 2025	ILO
6	Finalization of the inception report	9 September 2025	Consultant
7	Field mission (Data collection, meeting/ consultation, debriefing and validation) Submission of the Field Mission's initial findings on 26 September 2025 Focused Group Discussion to be held on 29 September 2025	15 – 29 September 2025	Consultant [Evaluation Manager will be involved in selected meetings with Stakeholders for interview, validation workshop and debriefing (<i>with the project team, ILO CO Colombo and Donor</i>)]
9	Submission of the Evaluation Report initial draft	3 October 2025	Consultant
8	Validation Workshop and debriefing	6 October 2025	Consultant with the Project Support and Evaluation Manager
9	Submission of evaluation report draft	10 October 2025	Consultant
10	Review the evaluation report draft	13 -17 October 2025	ILO and stakeholders
11	Consolidate input and feedback, and finalize the report (PDF and table version form)	20-23 October 2025	ILO Evaluation Manager
12	Finalisation of the evaluation report	24 to 27 October 2025	Consultant

13	Review final report for quality assurance	28 to 30 October 2025	ILO Evaluation Manager and REO
14	Submission of the final report to EVAL	31 October 2025	Consultant

The evaluation time frame will **be** as per the following:

No.	Activities
1.	Brief by Evaluation Manager and Project Manager Desk Review of project – related documents, preparation and submission of inception report
2.	Field mission for data/ information collection (meeting with number of stakeholders and project sites)
4.	Report drafting
3.	Debriefing, Validation workshop and preparation
5.	Finalizing a final evaluation report (including incorporating feedback and reporting)

9. Consultant qualifications for final independent evaluation

The expected qualifications for the consultants are to be professional, impartial and credible, and abide by the Code of Conduct for an evaluation in the UN system (UNEG 2008). The consultants must have the following competencies:

1. Have no previous/ current involvement or offers of prospective employment in an ILO project/ programme under evaluation, and
2. Have no personal links to the people involved in managing the project/ programme.
3. The external evaluator should adhere to the highest level of technical and ethical standards (Code of Conduct for evaluation in the UN System (UNEG 2008)
4. Exposure to the international context, human rights-based approaches, and inclusion.
5. Experience in using results-based management principles, Theory of Change/LFA analysis for programming.
6. Familiarity with handling virtual platforms for data and information collection.
7. Flexible and responsive to changes and demands; client-oriented and open to feedback.
8. More than 5 years working experience in conducting programme or development project evaluations.
9. Hands-on experience in using participatory tools and methods for qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.
10. An understanding of the ILO mandate, tripartism and social dialogue is an advantage.
11. Experience and ability in conducting gender mainstreaming and non-discrimination, including disability evaluation, including in data collection, analysis and writing.
12. Excellent analytical and communication skills.
13. Fluency in spoken and written English as well as excellent report writing skills (in English).
14. Working in Sri Lanka/a South Asian country would be an advantage.
15. Experience in evaluating local economic development projects/programmes of similar size will be an advantage.
16. Fluency in English (spoken and written), Tamil and Sinhala.

10. Legal and ethical matters

The evaluation will be carried out in adherence with the ILO evaluation policy guidelines, UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance.

Ethical considerations will be considered in the evaluation process. As requested by the UNEG Norms and Standards, the evaluator will be sensitive to local beliefs, manners and customs, and act with integrity and honesty in relationships with all the stakeholders.

The evaluator(s) shall respect the people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality, while ensuring that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source.

Ownership of data from the evaluation rests exclusively with the ILO. All raw data files, consent forms and relevant documentation must be returned to the ILO before the release of the final payment. Copyright of the evaluation report will rest exclusively with the ILO. Use of the data for publication and other presentations can only be made with the written agreement of the ILO. All deliverables will be paid for on satisfactory completion and certification by the ILO Evaluation Manager and in line with the ILO evaluation report checklist.

Annex I:

Governance of the Final Evaluation

1. Evaluation Manager

The independent evaluation will be managed by Mr. Tauvik Muhamad, Programme Coordinator, RISSC Project, ILO Country Office for Indonesia and Timor Leste, and he will be responsible for overall project coordination. A Regional Evaluation Officer based at the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific will provide oversight and quality assurance support to the evaluation. The ILO Evaluation Office will approve the final evaluation report.

The ILO Evaluation Manager, in close consultation with the Regional Evaluation Officer (REO) is responsible for:

- Managing the final evaluation
- Finalizing the ToR for final evaluation with input from ILO colleagues and other stakeholders.
- Selecting and contracting a consultant for conducting the evaluation.
- Providing the consultant with project background materials and documents.
- Assisting the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate (i.e., participate in meetings, review documents).
- Reviewing the inception report, initial draft final report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the evaluator on the inception report and the final report.
- Reviewing and ensuring the quality of the final report.
- Coordinating with the ROAP Evaluation Focal Point and ILO Evaluation Office for the clearance of the final report and submitting the relevant documentation.
- Disseminating the final report to stakeholders.
- Coordinating any follow-up as necessary.
- The evaluation manager will be responsible for coordinating the evaluation process with support from the project team. This includes preparing a term of reference (ToR), commissioning the inception, and the evaluation final report.

2. Project Manager/ CTA

Mr. Thomas King, the PAVE CTA and his team will provide logistical support, and Ms. Pamornrat Pringsulaka, Regional Evaluation Officer, ROAP Bangkok, will provide technical support and oversight including:

- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input.
- Providing project documents and background materials, including studies, previous project phase evaluation reports, analytical papers, reports, tools, publications produced, and any relevant background notes.
- Providing a proposed list of stakeholders.

- Preparing the field for data collection by coordinating and communicating with relevant stakeholders
- Uploading and updating the MS Team space allocated to the Project.
- Updating tracking sheets results
- Participating in the preparatory briefing prior to the assessment missions.
- Scheduling interviews and focus group discussions.
- Ensuring necessary logistical arrangements for the missions.
- Reviewing and providing comments on the initial draft report.
- Participating in the debriefing on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- Providing translation for any required documents: ToR, PPP, mid-term evaluation report, executive summary of the mid-term evaluation report, summary of lessons learnt and emerging good practices, etc.
- Making sure appropriate follow-up action is taken including filling out the management response matrix.

3. Project Team

The PAVE team will provide logistical and administrative support including making contractual agreements with international and local consultants. This includes providing relevant documents and lists of stakeholders, and organizing consultative meetings, field visits, and the workshop during the process of evaluation. The selection process for the consultants will be handled by the EVAL Regional Office for Asia Pacific in Bangkok.

- **The Junior Professional Officer/ Technical Officer**, National Project Coordinator (NPC) / National Gender and Disability Technical Officer / National Project Officer / Field Coordinators / Junior Professional Officer are responsible for providing necessary documentation, information and the lists of contacts/stakeholders/constituents/beneficiaries and provide technical support to the M&E Officer and the consultant within the scope of the assignment, when necessary.
- **The Finance and Admin Officer** are responsible for making sure that the expenditures are realized in accordance with the approved budget, and in compliance with the ILO's financial rules and regulations. They will provide administrative and financial support, which includes, but is not limited to, the preparation of financial documents and following up payments to the consultant.

Annex II: References

1. Relevant ILO guidelines on Development Project Evaluation/ Website EVAL portal on managing and conducting evaluation (all guidance notes, checklist, templates, etc.)
https://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/ed_mas/eval/documents/publication/wcms_853289.pdf
2. ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation, 2020
https://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_571339.pdf
3. Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO: Practical tips on adapting to the situation
https://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/ed_mas/eval/documents/publication/wcms_744068.pdf
4. SDG related materials
<http://www.ilo.ch/eval/eval-and-sdgs/lang--en/index.htm>
5. Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) Review for Sri Lanka
https://www.unevaluation.org/member_publications/sri-lanka-dwcp-review-2018-2024
6. Code of conduct for evaluation/ Code of conduct form (To be signed by the evaluators)
<https://www.ilo.org/media/413876/download>
7. ILO EVAL Gender
[Guidance Note 3.1 on integrating gender equality and non-discrimination](#)

8. ILO EVAL Social Dialogue
[Guidance Note 3.2 on Integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#)
9. Guidance notes 7 Stakeholders participation in the ILO evaluation.
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165986/lang--en/index.htm
10. Guidance notes on evaluation lessons learned and emerging good practice.
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165981.pdf
11. ILO Library guides on gender
<https://libguides.ilo.org/gender-equality-en>
12. Protocol to collect evidence on ILO response to COVID-19
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf
13. ILO EVAL
[Guidance Note 3.1 on integrating gender equality and non-discrimination](#)
14. UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation
<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/548>

Annex III: Structure of the evaluation report.

- Cover page with key project and evaluation data (as per ILO EVAL template)
- Executive Summary (as per ILO EVAL template)
- List of Acronyms
- Table of Contents
- INTRODUCTION and PROJECT DESCRIPTION
- Evaluation Background
 - Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation
- Methodology and limitations
- Main Findings
- Conclusions
- Good practice and Lessons Learnt
- Recommendations
- Annexes:
 1. TOR
 2. Evaluation matrix (questions and indicators)
 3. List of people interviewed
 4. Field work schedule
 5. List of Documents reviewed
 6. Good practices (as per ILO EVAL template)
 7. Lessons learned (as per ILO EVAL template)
 8. Others

Annex 04: Evaluation Matrix

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
Relevance (Is the intervention doing the right things? and validity of design)	1. To what extent do the project interventions and activities respond to the need of Sri Lanka's tripartite constituents, partners institutions and beneficiaries?	- ILO and SDG policies that govern PAVE? - How relevant are these to your work?	- ILO and SDG policies that govern PAVE? - How do these get reflected in your work?	- Final expectations of all the work you are engaged in? - Why do PAVE have stepped in for this work?	- Final expectations of all the work you are engaged in? - Why do PAVE have stepped in for this work?	- ILO and SDG policies that govern PAVE? - How do these get reflected in your work?	- How has PAVE adopted ILO Decent Work Country Programme priorities, P&B outcomes and SDGs?
	2. To what extent has the project adapted to remain relevant to the communities, tripartite constituents and other stakeholders? How has the project adapted to emerging situations / needs during the implementation?	- Was there an increase in the numbers of persons seeking services, change of plans or emerging issues? How has PAVE responded to those?	- Was there an increase in the numbers of persons seeking services, change of plans or emerging issues? How has PAVE responded to those?	- Were there any new activities introduced as the project goes on? Why? How were those carried out?	- Were there any new activities introduced as the project goes on? Why? How were those carried out?	- Was there an increase in the numbers of persons seeking services, change of plans or emerging issues? How has PAVE responded to those?	- Was there an increase in the numbers of persons seeking services, change of plans or emerging issues? How has PAVE adapted to evolving changes, needs, priorities and complexities emerged?
	3. To what extent is the project theory of change logical and coherent? How does the ToC	- What are the most relevant aspects of PAVE that ensure people to become productive,	- What are the most relevant aspects of PAVE that ensure people to become productive,	-	-	- What are the most relevant aspects of PAVE that ensure people to become productive,	- How does the IF & THEN logic in the ToC work in PAVE work? - What are the most relevant

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	reflect in the interventions?	competitive, economically sound, resilient and recognized in their community?	competitive, economically sound, resilient and recognized in their community?			competitive, economically sound, resilient and recognized in their community?	aspects of PAVE that ensure people to become productive, competitive, economically sound, resilient and recognized in their community?
	Methods and tools for data collection:	KII	Desk Review KII with key officials SSI with project level staff	SSI with CSOs / CBOs	FGDs with primary stakeholder groups	Desk Review SSI with BDS providers	Desk Review KII with key staff SSI with project team
Coherence (How well the intervention fits)	4. How well has PAVE synergized with work of other ILO and Norway interventions in Sri Lanka, as well as with other international development partners, Government, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and national development frameworks?	- How do you see PAVE supporting Sri Lanka Peace building Priority Plan (PPP), National SME Policy of creating higher value through cluster production and processing and Government's strategy "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour"?	- Opportunities PAVE provide in linking your company with National SME Policy of creating higher value through cluster production and processing and Government's strategy "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour"? - What is your contribution to the PPP through this work?	-	-	-	- How does the project ensure that no one is left behind? - What provision the project has for women to lead the economic processes in the resettled communities?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
Coherence (Alignment to cross-cutting themes of ILO: gender equality, disability; tripartism and social dialogue)	5. Has the Project been able to leverage the ILO contributions through its comparative advantages including International Labour Standards, social dialogue and tripartism?	- How does the 4 pillars of ILO Decent work Agenda is related to your mandate? - How would your org facilitate partnerships, of empower constituents and reinforce the concept of social justice?	- How would your interventions assure decent work, equality and inclusive growth? -	-	-	-	- To what extent and how successfully the 4 pillars of ILO Decent work Agenda is reflected in the design and implementation of PAVE? - How does PAVE facilitate partnerships, empower constituents and reinforce the concept of social justice?
	Methods and tools for data collection:	- Desk Review - SSI with regional staff	- Desk Review - KII with key officials - SSI with project level staff	-	-	-	- Desk Review - KII with key staff - SSI with project team
Effectiveness (Is the intervention achieving its objectives?)	6. To what extent has the Project achieved its planned results? Are there any unintended (positive and negative) outcomes? Are there any changes /	- Were you able to carry out the activities as planned? - Were there any changes? What are they? Why? -	- Were you able to meet the targets set in the ToR? - Were there any changes? What are they? Why? -		-	- Were you able to carry out the activities as per the ToR? - Were there any changes? What are they? Why? -	- What are the Project activities that were carried out as planned? Were there any changes? What are they? Why? -

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	amendments to the original plan?						
	7. To what extent and how has the Project supported value chains and led to the creation of decent employment for vulnerable workers and people with disabilities in the target value chains?	- Changes (for better) introduced to your work due to PAVE partnership? - Practices - Collaborations - Capacity Building	- Changes (for better) introduced to your work due to PAVE partnership? - Engaged / employed in the VC - Women & PwDs - Capacity Building	-	-	-	- Value Chains worked with? - Reasons for selection of the 4 VCs? - What was the contribution of PAVE?
	8. To what extent and how have the MSMEs and primary producers become more efficient, productive and competitive because of the interventions supported/introduced by the Project?	- What did you do differently in your entrepreneurship dev activities? - How was the buy-in from recipients?	- What have you done differently in increasing participants / engagement of the participants? - How do you access the awareness and training activities help the producers? -	-	-	- What are the new introductions to ILO modules of MSME development? - Other training? - How was the buy-in from recipients? Any follow up done?	-
	9. To what extent have MSMEs and primary producers adopted climate smart and digital	- How have you adopted the new thinking into your outreach activities?	- How do the producers adhere to this new thinking?	-	-	- How have the MSMEs adopted the new thinking / introduction in their activities?	- How did PAVE introduce these concepts into the work plan?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	solutions promoted by the Project?	- How do the MSMEs adhere to this new thinking?				-	- What measures were taken to roll out? - How do the MSMEs & producers adhere to these?
	10. What are the key achievements of the Project in addressing gender equality, women's empowerment, and discrimination, including disability inclusion?	-	-	- What are the new introductions. thinking that came in with these activities? - How do the producers adhere to this new thinking?	- What are the new introductions. thinking that came in with these activities? - How do you adopt this new thinking? - What have you done differently?	-	- How did the VCs adopt the decent work, gender and inclusion aspects into the project design? - What measures taken to ensure implementation as planned? how?
Effectiveness of management arrangement	11. How effective was the project management, and the support provided to the project team by the ILO (PU of the country office, technical specialists), donors, and tripartite constituents in delivering results? What could have	- How do you perceive the role / engagement of PAVE in these activities? - What could have been done differently? -	- How do you perceive the role / engagement of PAVE in these activities? - What could have been done differently? -	-	-	- How do you perceive the role / engagement of PAVE in these activities? - What could have been done differently?	- What was the role of ILO in PAVE? - What are the specific aspects of ILO embedded in PAVE? - What factors helped or hindered the effectiveness of the interventions to achieve the planned results? - How could these be resolved? Who helped?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	been done differently?						- What could have been done differently?
	12. How well the project objectives and its ToC has reflected in the project interventions? To what extent was results-based management implemented in the programme put in place support the achievement of the planned results?	- How did PAVE activities help achieve inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization? Measures taken to address gender, equality & vulnerabilities?	-	- How did PAVE activities help achieve inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization? - How did these achievements help the vulnerable?	-	-	- What are core compliances expected in the ToC and the objectives of the project? Which interventions directly are directly linked to inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization? - What are the key achievements of these?
	13. Are the direct beneficiaries (primary producers, MSMEs, government service providers) satisfied with the capacity building/technical support from the project and its partners? What are perceived as the most useful?	- How do you perceive achievement of the milestones of your intervention? Assess out of 10. - Why do you say so?	- How do you perceive achievement of the milestones of your intervention? Assess out of 10. - Why do you say so?	-	-	- How do you perceive achievement of the milestones of your intervention? Assess out of 10. - Why do you say so?	- How do you perceive achievement of the milestones of the interventions by you / by the different partners? - Assess out of 10. - Why do you say so?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	Methods and tools for data collection:	- KII - Secondary Data Review	- Desk Review - KII with key officials - SSI with project level staff - Secondary Data Review	- SSI with CSOs / CBOs	- FGDs with primary stakeholder groups	- Desk Review - SSI with BDS providers - Secondary Data Review	- Desk Review - KII with key staff - SSI with project team - Secondary Data Review
Efficiency of resource usage/implementation: (How well are resources being used?)	14. To what extent were the Project's resources (funds, expertise, time, staff, etc) strategically utilised to deliver in a timely and an efficient manner?	- What were the assistance received by PAVE to your work? - Timeliness, adequacy, usefulness?	- What were the assistance received by PAVE to your work? - Timeliness, adequacy, usefulness?	-	-	- What were the assistance received by PAVE to the work? - Timeliness, adequacy, usefulness?	- Were you able to meet the project targets as planned? - What factors facilitated / hindered the delivery - Were there any adjustments made? How did you manage them?
	15. Has the Project allocated sufficient resources in achieving its gender equality, disability, and non-discrimination; tripartism and social dialogue activities?	- What provisions / specific measures were there for gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue?	- What provisions / specific measures were there to address issues of gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue?	- What are the most valuable contributions by the project to the vulnerable; women, PwDs and communities at large?	- What do you see as the most valuable contributions by the project to the vulnerable; women, PwDs and communities at large?	- What specific measures were you able to include to address issues of gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue?	- What were the allocations made in the RF for gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue? - Were they met as planned? - Any changes done? Why?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	16. To what extent has the Project complemented and/or harmonized or coordinated with other actors and their interventions to maximise the Project's effectiveness and impact?	- How do you see the collaboration with PAVE? - Which were the most effective / helpful in your work? - What else could have been included?	- How do you see the collaboration with PAVE? - Which were the most effective / helpful in your work? - What else could have been included?	- Which of the PAVE activities were most effective / helpful in your work? - What else could have been included?	-	- How do you see the collaboration with PAVE? - Which were the most effective / helpful in your work? - What else could have been included?	- What were the collaborations planned? - How did you to strategize implementation of these? - What else could have been done differently / included?
	17. Which interventions help achieving the results as planned?	- Which activities of PAVE help achieve inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization? - Which activities were the most effective in addressing gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue?	- Which activities of PAVE help achieve inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization? - Which activities were the most effective in addressing gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue?	- Which activities of PAVE help achieve inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization? - Which activities were the most effective in addressing gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue?	- How did the vulnerable in your community able to benefit economically, socially by the project? - Income, Inclusion, peace, harmony, recognition, etc.	- Did your work help achieve inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization? - Which activities were the most effective in addressing gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue?	- Which activities help achieve inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization? - Which activities were the most effective in addressing gender equality, disability, discrimination, tripartism and social dialogue?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	Methods and tools for data collection:	- KII - Secondary Data Review	- Desk Review - KII with key officials - SSI with project level staff - Secondary Data Review	- SSI with CSOs / CBOs	- FGDs with primary stakeholder groups - Case Studies	- Desk Review - SSI with BDS providers - Secondary Data Review	- Desk Review - KII with key staff - SSI with project team - Secondary Data Review
Impact (What difference does the intervention make?)	18. To what extent did the project interventions contribute to sustain any lasting changes? How has the interventions addressed the problems identified by the project?	- What is the MSC PAVE brought into your work? - What is the MSC in the MSMEs / producers? - What would you suggest to ensure continuity?	- What is the MSC PAVE brought into your work? - What is the MSC in the producers?	- What is the MSC PAVE brought into your work? - What is the MSC in the MSMEs / producers?	- What is the MSC PAVE activities made in your life?	- What measures have been taken to ensure continuity of the inputs? - What else would you suggest to ensure continuity?	- What is the MSC PAVE brought into the MSMEs / producers? - How have the issues of inclusive growth, private sector investment, entrepreneurship, and digitalization been addressed? - What are the measures taken to ensure sustainability / continuity of these?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	19. To what extent and how have the actors (e.g. financial institutions, BDS providers, SEDD, government extensions and other government institutions, COOP, private sector as well as value chain actors in the supply chains) behaved/functioned in ways that promote decent employment and an inclusive economy in the target value chains?	- How have you reached out to the most needy, vulnerable to provide services? - How would you ensure a change for better in their lives?	- How have you reached out to the most needy, vulnerable to provide services? - How would you ensure a change for better in their lives?	- How have you reached out to the most needy, vulnerable to provide services? - How would you ensure a change for better in their lives?	- Who are the stakeholders help you improve your income? - How have they helped? Which of these found to be most useful?	- How have you reached out to the most needy, vulnerable to provide services? - What measure taken to ensure a change for better?	- What are the measures implemented by the project to ensure achievement of the project objectives of decent employment and an inclusive economy?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	20. How has the climate smart practices and digital solutions promoted by the Project made an impact in the lives of the primary producers, MSMEs, government service providers?	- How has the changes / new additions discussed above has benefitted the targeted communities? - And you?	- How has the changes / new additions discussed above has benefitted the targeted communities? - And you? - And the State stakeholders worked with you?	- How has the changes / new additions discussed above has benefitted your community? - And you?	- How has the changes / new additions discussed above has benefitted you?	- How has the changes / new additions discussed above has benefitted the targeted communities? - And the State stakeholders worked with you?	- How has the changes / new additions discussed above has benefitted the targeted communities? - And the State and Private stakeholders of the project?
	21. To what extent and how has the Project contributed to peace and resilience in the Northern Province?	- How has PAVE interventions helped reduce tensions in the community?	- How has your interventions helped reduce tensions / unrest in the community?	- How has PAVE interventions helped reduce tensions in the community?	- How has the interventions helped reduce tensions in the community?	-	- How has your interventions helped reduce tensions / unrest in the community?
	Methods and tools for data collection:	- KII - Case Study	- Desk Review - KII with key officials - SSI with project level staff	- SSI with CSOs / CBOs	- FGDs with primary stakeholder groups - Case Studies	- SSI with BDS providers	- Desk Review - KII with key staff - SSI with project team

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
Sustainability of the intervention (The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue)	22. To what extent were the processes followed leading towards intervention sustainability? How has the continuation of the introductions such as climate smart practices and digital solutions be assured by the Project?	- What are the continuation / sustainability strategies envisaged?	- What are the measures taken to ensure continuity of the interventions? - climate smart practices and digital solutions?	- What are the measures taken to ensure continuity of the interventions? - climate smart practices and digital solutions?	-	- What are the measures taken to ensure continuity of the use of knowledge and skills on MSME, climate smart practices and digital solutions?	- What continuation / sustainability strategies envisaged in the planning and in the implementation? - climate smart practices and digital solutions?
	23. What would be an effective exit strategy and next step for the ILO and the relevant stakeholders in helping to ensure the Project's benefits will continue after it ends?	- What are the steps taken by you to ensure continuity of the learning / collaboration beyond the project?	- What are the steps taken by you to ensure continuity of the interventions beyond the project?	- What are the steps taken by you to ensure continuity of the interventions beyond the project?	-	-	- How do you plan to conclude the project? What are the steps taken to ensure continuity of the work beyond the project?

Criteria	Key Evaluation Questions	Probing Questions to Stakeholders					
		State Sector	Private Sector	Civil Society	Primary Stakeholders	BDS Providers	PAVE Team
	24. What funding opportunities could ILO pursue to support the assistance indicated in the points above?	- How would you plan to support continuation of the above?	- How would you plan to support continuation of the above?	- How would you plan to support continuation of the above?	-	-	- What are your plans to support continuation of the above?
	25. What is the impact of the Project on other projects, and to what extent can the results be expected to build stakeholder capacity and sustainability in the longer term?	- How has the changes / learning of this work helped improve your other work? -	-	- How has the changes / learning of this work helped improve your other work?	- How has the changes / learning of this work helped improve your other work?	-	- How has the changes / learning of this work helped improve your other work? - What are your key learnings? - What measures are taken to ensure long-term sustainability?
	Methods and tools for data collection:	- KII	- Desk Review - KII with key officials	- SSI with CSOs / CBOs	- FGDs with primary stakeholder groups		- Desk Review - KII with key staff - SSI with project team

Annex 05: List of people interviewed

Organisation	Name	Designation	Contact Information	Mode of Interview
National Level				
PAVE/ILO	Thomas Kring	Project Manager / CTA	+94 76 983 8529 kring@ilo.org	Group Interview
	Anishka Wijayarathne	National Coordinator for M&E	+94 77 446 9122 wijayarathne@ilo.org	
	Nora Langguth	Junior Program Officer	langguth@ilo.org	Interview via Zoom
Private consultants				
Curve-up Pvt Ltd	Abdul Shakoor	Director	+94 71 522 4466 shakoor@gocurveup.com	Group Interview
	Audrey Samuel	Programme Manager - Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship	audrey@gocurveup.com	
Private Sector Partners				
Marine Algae Farms Pvt Ltd (MAFP)	Mr. M. Felician	Managing Director	+94 77 732 8697	Personal Interview
Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd (JHC)	Mr. Justin Kumar	Managing Director	+94 77 307 8058	Personal Interview
Cargills Pvt Ltd (Cargills)	Mr. Keerthi Kotagama	Group Manager	+94 74 109 2282	Group Interview
	Mr. Harids Fernando	Group Manager	+94 77 757 9666	
Regional Level				
PAVE Team	Mr. D.M. Nihal Devagiri	National Project Coordinator	+94 77 350 1152	Group Interview - physical + online
	Ms. Ida Jesu	Gender and Inclusion Technical Officer	+94 76 847 9291	
	Mr. Thabesan Sivalinganathan	Field Coordinator	+94 77 196 2199	
	Mr. Semarasa Vasudev	Field Coordinator	+94 77 285 2937	
State Sector Stakeholders				
Small Enterprises Development Division (SEDD)	Ms. S. Kokilavani	Enterprise Development Training Officer - Vavuniya	+94 77 515 1774	Group Interview
	Ms. V. Thevamalar	Enterprise Development Training Officer - Vavuniya	+94 77 515 1774	
National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA)	Mr. B. Nirooparaj	Assistant Director Extension & Monitoring Unit - Northern Province	+94 77 841 5543	Personal Interview
Department of Agriculture (DoA) - Northern Province	Ms. S. Senthilkumaran	Provincial Director	+94 77 768 6887	Group Interview
	Mr. S. Divakharan	Agriculture Instructor	+94 77 253 3206	
	Mr. Lambert Deva	Agriculture Instructor	+94 77 791 3995	Personal Interview
Department of Social Services (DSS) - Northern Province	Ms. Thanuja Lukshantha	Provincial Director	+94 77 692 1421	Telephone Interview
Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) - Northern Province	Ms. K. Dushyanthi	Development Officer	+94 77 968 8315	Personal Interview

Organisation	Name	Designation	Contact Information	Mode of Interview
Department of Industries (Dol) - Northern Province	Mr. P. Raghavan	Industries Promotion Officer	+94 74 228 4176	Group Interview
	Ms. A. P. Kaushi	Development Officer	+94 74 228 4176	
Private Sector Partners				
Reitzel Walker Pvt Ltd (RWPL) -Vavuniya	Mr. K. Saseelan	Manager - Agri Operations (Northern)	+94 77 656 3071	Personal Interview
	Mr. Ragavan	Field Officer	+94 77 471 4419	Personal Interview
	Mr. Priyatharshan	Field Officer	+94 77 224 0621	
Marine Algae Farms Pvt Ltd (MAFP) - Kilinochchi	Mr. S. Suthakar	Field Manager	+94 77 691 4290	Personal Interview
	Mr. J. Japastian	Field Officer	+94 76 326 6980	
Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd (JHC) - Jaffna	Mr. J. Ragavan	Farm Manager	+94 77 471 4419	Group Interview
	Mr. V. Thirumalavan	Factory Manager	+94 76 688 9449	
	Mr. Priyatharshan	Customer Service Manager	+94 77 224 0621	
Cargills Pvt Ltd (Cargills) - Kilinochchi	Mr. M. Krishnakanth	Agriculture Executive	+94 77 757 9532	Personal Interview
Civil Society Stakeholders				
Gherkin Farmer Centre - Kokkuvaili	Ms. S. Vinothini	Centre Coordinator	+94 76 846 3637	Group Interview 06 females
	Mr. K. Theepan	Centre Coordinator	+94 76 082 2172	
St.Anne Seaweed Park Association - Poonakary	Mr. J. Croos	Secretary	+94 77 658 6661	Group Interview 02 females, 04 males
Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen’s Cooperative Society - Iranaimadu	Mr. Sathees	Secretary	+94 77 453 8175	Group Interview 02 females, 04 males
Primary Stakeholder Groups				
Gherkin Producers: Women, Men, PwDs - Sundarampuram	Ms. S. Vinothini	Centre Coordinator	+94 76 846 3637	Group Interview 04 females, 02 males
Gherkin Producers: Women’s Group - Sinnathampennai	Ms. S. Vinothini	Centre Coordinator	+94 76 846 3637	Group Interview 08 females, 02 males
Gherkin Producers: Women’s Group - Olumadu	Ms. S. Vinothini	Centre Coordinator	+94 76 846 3637	Group Interview 06 females
Gherkin Producers: Women, Men, PwDs - Oddusudan	Mr. K. Theepan	Centre Coordinator	+94 76 082 2172	Group Interview 04 females, 03 males
Seaweed Farmers: Women, Men, PwDs - Valaippadu	Mr. J. Croos	Secretary	+94 77 658 6661	Group Interview 08 women, 05 males
Mango Farmers: Women, Men, PwDs - Echalawakkai	Mr. J. Ragavan	Farm Manager	+94 77 471 4419	Group Interview 03 females, 07 males
Mango Farmers: Women, Men, PwDs - Periyamadu	Mr. J. Ragavan	Farm Manager	+94 77 471 4419	Group Interview 05 females, 06 males
Tilapia Growers: Women, Men, PwDs - Iranaimadu	Mr. Sathees	Secretary	+94 77 453 8175	Group Interview 08 females, 02 males

Organisation	Name	Designation	Contact Information	Mode of Interview
Individual MSMEs and VC Producers				
Gherkin VC - Poosariyakulam	Mr. N. Naguleshwaran	VC Producer	+94 76 846 3637	Personal Interview
Gherkin VC - Thattiyamalalai	Mr. M. Ravichandran	VC Producer	+94 76 854 5351	Personal Interview
Gherkin VC - Velanai	Mr. A. Kajendran	VC Producer	+94 76 082 2172	Personal Interview
Gherkin VC - Olumadu	Ms. N. Kavitha	VC Producer	+94 76 222 1571	Personal Interview
Mango VC - Eachchlawakkai	Mr. A. Arulrajan	VC Producer	+94 77 471 4419	Personal Interview
MSME - Kodikamam	Mr. M. Darshan	Tailor	+94 77 692 1421	Personal Interview
MSME - Kanagampihekkulam	Ms. R. Pushparani	Sewing Entrepreneur	+94 77 692 1421	Personal Interview
MSME - Jaffna	Ms. S. Siyanthini	Sewing Entrepreneur	+94 77 692 1421	Personal Interview
MSME - Kodikamam	Ms. M. Anusavani	Sewing Entrepreneur	+94 77 692 1421	Personal Interview
MSME - Saravanai	Mr. T. Rajan	Mechanic	+94 77 692 1421	Personal Interview

Annex 06: Fieldwork Schedule

NOTES: Dates allocated for National Level Discussions: 18th & 30th November 2025

Dates allocated for Project Level Discussions: 20th & 30th November 2025

Time allocation for KIIs / SSIs: 1 - 1.5 hours with .5 hours travel time to institutions

Time allocation for FGDs: 2-2.5 hours with 1 hour travel time to locations. !0-15 participants per group

Location & Stakeholder Category	Stakeholders	Evaluation Tool	Date & Time
National Level:			
PAVE/ILO	Regional Evaluation Officer Evaluation Manager Project Manager / CTA Junior Professional Officer National Coordinator for M&E	KIIs / SSIs	30 th 09.00am - 05.00pm
State sector stakeholders at national level	Small Enterprises Development Division (SEDD)	KIIs / SSIs	18 th 09.00am - 05.00pm
Private consultants	Curve-up Pvt Ltd		
Private Sector Partners	Reitzel Walker Pvt Ltd (RWPL)		
Project Level:			
PAVE Team	Junior Professional Officer Technical Officer National Gender and Disability Technical Officer National Project Officer 02 Field Coordinators	SSI	20 th 10.00am - 05.00pm
State sector stakeholders	Small Enterprises Development Division (SEDD) - Vavuniya	KIIs / SSIs	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA) - Jaffna (Poonakery)	KIIs / SSIs	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Provincial Department of Agriculture - Jaffna	KIIs / SSIs	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Department of Social Services (DSS) - Jaffna	KIIs / SSIs	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) - Jaffna	KIIs / SSIs	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Department of Industries - Jaffna	KIIs / SSIs	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Employers' Federation of Ceylon	KIIs / SSIs	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm

Location & Stakeholder Category	Stakeholders	Evaluation Tool	Date & Time
Private Sector Partners	Reitzel Walker Pvt Ltd (RWPL) -Vavuniya	SSI	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Marine Algae Farms Pvt Ltd (MAFP) - Kilinochchi	SSI	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd (JHC) - Jaffna	SSI	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Cargills Pvt Ltd (Cargills) - Kilinochchi / Colombo	SSI	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
Civil Society Stakeholders	Gherkin Farmer Clusters - Vavuniya	FGD with a mixed group	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	St.Anne Seaweed Park Association	FGD with a mixed group	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society	FGD with a mixed group	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
Primary Stakeholders	Gherkin Producers: Women, Men, PwDs - Vavuniya	FGD with a mixed group FGD with a women's group including FHHs SSI with PwDs & Youth	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Seaweed Farmers: Women, Men, PwDs	FGD with a mixed group FGD with a women's group including FHHs SSI with PwDs & Youth	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Mango Farmers: Women, Men, PwDs - Vavuniya	FGD with a mixed group FGD with a women's group including FHHs SSI with PwDs & Youth	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm
	Tilapia Growers: Women, Men, PwDs	FGD with a mixed group FGD with a women's group including FHHs SSI with PwDs & Youth	20 th - 30 th 09.00am - .05.00pm

Annex 07: List of Documents reviewed

1. PAVE Prodoc 10 2022
2. Updated PAVE Results Framework Sep2024
3. PAVE Indicator Guide_NL_Updated 2025
4. PAVE Indicator Monitoring Database - updated on August 2025
5. Annual Progress Report 2024 - Final, April 2025 - PAVE
6. TOR and project Progress Report, August 2025 - Reitzell Walker Pvt Ltd
7. TOR and project Progress Report, July 2025 - Marine Algie Farms Pvt Ltd
8. TOR and project Progress Report, June 2025 - Jaffna Horticulture Pvt Ltd
9. Feasibility report on "Tilapia cage culture - freshwater fishery" for commercial purposes in selected perennial tanks in the North of Sri Lanka - July 2025
10. TOR and Progress Report, July 2025 - Iranaimadu Freshwater Fishermen's Cooperative Society
11. Progress Report for the Pilot Cage Culture of Tilapia Farming in Iranaimadu Tank, Kilinochchi District, June 2025 - Cargills Pvt Ltd
12. The Needs Assessment Report, March 2025 - Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development
13. Final Report on district-specific mentorship program targeting women-led organizations, June 2025 - Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development
14. Consolidated Training Completion Report: Disability Champion Training, August 2025
15. TOR and Work Final Report - Enhance Disability Inclusion Initiatives, July 2025 - Department of Social Service, Northern Province of Sri Lanka
16. Reports on Basic Gender balance training for selected CBOs and Youth Committees - May 2025
17. Report on Leadership and Effective Communication Skills training - May 2025
18. Report on Home Finance Management training - July 2025
19. Workshop Report on Digital Technology for Sustainable Agriculture/Fisheries, December 2024
20. Project Completion Report - Enhancement and Refinement of the Provincial Gender Policy Activities and Staff Capacity Building for Improved Service Delivery, July 2025 - Ministry of Women's Affairs, Northern Provincial Council
21. Final Report - Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Analysis, September 2023
22. TOR - Climate Smart Agriculture Practices and Innovative Digital Solutions in Agriculture Sector by partnering with the Provincial Department of Agriculture in the North of Sri Lanka
23. Completion Report on PAVE Project Training Programs Conducted in the Northern Province, October 2025 - Small Enterprises Development Division, Ministry of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development
24. Final Report - Introducing 02 New Modules for MSME Development in Sri Lanka, April 2025 - Curve-up
25. Project Completion Report - Enhance the market presence of microenterprises owned by persons with disabilities and women in vulnerable positions by improving their basic business development literacy and enabling their access to Business Development Services, July 2025 - Department of Industries - NP
26. Designed Gender Brief - Championing Gender, Diversity and Inclusion, July 2025
27. Final Study - Inclusive Start-up Ecosystem Mapping in Sri Lanka with a focus on Digital business and e-commerce, July 2025 - Hatch
28. Relevant ILO guidelines on Development Project Evaluation
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/ed_mas/eval/documents/publication/wcms_853289.pdf
29. Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) Review for Sri Lanka
https://www.unevaluation.org/member_publications/sri-lanka-dwcp-review-2018-2024
30. Code of conduct for evaluation/ Code of conduct form (To be signed by the evaluators)
<https://www.ilo.org/media/413876/download>
31. Guidance notes on evaluation lessons learned and emerging good practice.
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/ed_mas/eval/documents/publication/wcms_165981.pdf

Annex 08 Lessons learned



Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE) Project in Sri Lanka- Final Independent Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: LKA/22/01/NOR

Name of Evaluator: Indira Aryaratne

Date: 31 January 2026

The following lesson learned has been identified during the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson can be found in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Engage Communities as Organised Entities (CBOs/CSOs) rather than as Individuals
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Evaluation findings in the PAVE project indicate that engaging communities through organised entities, CBOs/CSOs, rather than as individual producers strengthens participation, accountability, and sustainability in value chain (VC) interventions. Direct engagement with individuals can weaken collective governance and undermine trust . This lesson is linked to partnership-building with private sector actors, BDS providers, and VC actors , where collective engagement proved more effective than engagement as individuals.
Context and any related preconditions	Observed in fragile and post-conflict settings , where community trust is sensitive, the Mango VC experience showed that bypassing CBO structures and dealing with individuals directly aggravated tensions within community groups. Effective engagement requires: • Recognition of CBOs/CSOs as legitimate representatives • Clear agreement on engagement modalities • Orientation of staff and partners to community dynamics and power relations • Consistent adherence to agreed partnerships
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	• Primary: Community members organised through CBOs/CSOs, with emphasis on women, youth, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable households • Secondary: Private sector actors, BDS providers and relevant local authorities
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Direct engagement with individuals challenges CBO autonomy, undermining CBO's authority within the community • Staff previously familiar with communities required orientation to new facilitative roles • Private sector actors needed guidance to prevent unintended disruption of social dynamics • Communities may perceive ILO, private sector, and state actors as a single entity, posing reputational and operational risks

	Causal factors: insufficient role clarity, inadequate orientation, and underestimation of social sensitivities.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Strengthened collective voice and bargaining power within VCs • Improved trust, coordination, and sustainability of interventions Positive outcomes were enabled by clear role definition, respect for community governance, continuous facilitation, and aligned incentives among partners.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	• Staff orientation is critical, particularly for personnel transitioning from prior community roles • Field staff and private sector partners must act as facilitators, not as parallel service providers • Dedicated guidance and monitoring are needed to safeguard community social dynamics • Project design should include community engagement protocols, conflict sensitivity measures, and accountability mechanisms Adequate resources and time must be allocated for initial mobilisation and organisational strengthening.



Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE) Project in Sri Lanka- Final Independent Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: LKA/22/01/NOR

Name of Evaluator: Indira Aryaratne

Date: 31 January 2026

The following lesson learned has been identified during the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson can be found in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Training should be considered as a process with Inbuilt Backstopping and Follow-Up Support
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Evaluation evidence indicates that MSME training should not be treated as a one-off activity , but rather as an ongoing process that includes structured follow-up, mentoring, and backstopping. Training alone is insufficient to achieve sustainable improvements in enterprise practices, market engagement, and business growth. This lesson emerged from the MSME capacity-building interventions under the PAVE project , where the initial training delivered high participation and engagement, but post-training follow-up was limited.

Context and any related preconditions	• Post-training follow-up was observed to lack the same momentum as the training sessions, reducing the overall effectiveness of the intervention. • MSMEs were geographically dispersed, which complicated monitoring and backstopping. • Preconditions for effective follow-up: Availability of communication platforms and strategies to facilitate continuous engagement between the BDSs and MSMEs
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	• Primary beneficiaries: MSMEs, with particular emphasis on women-led enterprises, youth, and persons with disabilities. • Secondary beneficiaries: Business Development Service (BDS) providers, whose capacity to support enterprises is strengthened through structured engagement and mentoring.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Geographical dispersion of MSMEs hindered individual-level monitoring and follow-up. • Limited opportunities / absence of a forum for peer learning among dispersed MSMEs. • Post-training support mechanisms were under-resourced, reducing consistency and effectiveness. • Lack of mindset shift among some BDS providers viewing training as a stand-alone deliverable, rather than as a step in a continuous capacity-building process. Causal factors: logistical barriers, dispersed target groups, insufficient resourcing, and limited institutionalisation of follow-up mechanisms.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Training achieved high initial engagement, providing a foundation for capacity building. • Peer learning and mentoring were particularly effective where small clusters of MSMEs could be supported collectively. Enabling factors: commitment of trained BDS providers, and use of practical, interactive training methodologies.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	• Logistical planning is critical to overcome dispersed MSME locations, including use of digital communication and cluster-based mentoring. • BDS provider mindset shift is essential: training is a means to create enabling environments, not an end in itself. • Adequate allocation of staff time, resources, and tools for follow-up and backstopping is required. Project design should include integrated post-training support frameworks, monitoring mechanisms, structured feedback loops and peer learning forums to ensure sustainability of outcomes.



Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE) Project in Sri Lanka- Final Independent Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: LKA/22/01/NOR

Name of Evaluator: Indira Aryaratne

Date: 31 January 2026

The following lesson learned has been identified during the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson can be found in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Following Proper Legal Processes in Acquiring Properties for Collective Enterprises is Vital
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Evaluation findings indicate that adhering to proper legal processes when acquiring government or other properties for collective enterprises is critical to ensuring operational continuity, sustainability, and credibility of value chain (VC) interventions. This lesson emerged from the experience where private sector partners invested in government-owned properties for VC activities based on an understanding with the BDS provider. With the change of the government the decision was reverted, and the enterprises were unable to operate at full capacity, until an alternative solution was found. Proper legal processes are essential to secure infrastructure, safeguard investments, and protect VC producers and implementing agencies from disruptions .
Context and any related preconditions	• Government decisions may change due to administrative, policy, or political shifts. • Preconditions for success include formal legal agreements and clear ownership or lease arrangements and contingency planning for changes in administrative decisions.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	• Primary beneficiaries: VC producers and VCs that rely on processing infrastructure. • Secondary beneficiaries: BDS providers, private sector partners, and relevant local authorities.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	• Processing delays due to lack of secure legal tenure directly affected VC production at the local level. • Informal property arrangements created operational uncertainty, reducing confidence among producers and investors.

	• High turnover of VC producers occurred as enterprises were unable to function at scale, requiring repeated training and capacity-building investment. • Credibility of the VC initiative was negatively affected, undermining trust among stakeholders. Causal factors: reliance on informal agreements, absence of formal legal processes, and inadequate risk mitigation.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	• Initial infrastructure investment by the government highlighted the importance of collaboration and public-private partnerships in VC development. Enabling factors: strong government engagement, recognition of legal compliance, and proactive planning for continuity.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	• Staff must prioritize formal legal verification before investing in or planning infrastructure on government property. • Adequate resources are needed for legal counsel, documentation, and risk mitigation. • Project design should include contingency plans for administrative changes and potential delays. BDS providers and project staff should be oriented on implications of informal agreements for VC credibility and producer engagement.

Annex 09 Good Practices



Promoting the Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises (PAVE) Project in Sri Lanka - Final Independent Evaluation

Project DC/SYMBOL: LKA/22/01/NOR

Name of Evaluator: Indira Aryaratne

Date: 31 January 2026

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Inclusive Value Chain Partnerships for Local Economic Development
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	This good practice emerged from the PAVE project's implementation of inclusive value chain (VC) interventions in Sri Lanka's Northern Province. It demonstrates how structured collaboration among Business Development Service (BDS) providers, private sector companies, and community-based organisations (CBOs)/communities can effectively integrate the private sector into local economic development while advancing decent work, inclusion, and resilience.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This good practice was implemented in a post-conflict, crisis-affected context characterised by weak local markets, high vulnerability, and limited institutional capacity. Key enabling conditions included ILO's convening role, longstanding institutional relationships with provincial and line departments, early capacity building, and alignment of economic incentives across stakeholders. However, the model relied heavily on informal and project-facilitated coordination , with no formal regional governance mechanism in place. As such, replication would require attention to institutional readiness and the establishment of safeguards to prevent possible market concentration or exploitation.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	If private sector partners provide market access and technical expertise , BDS providers deliver institutional and technical support , and communities are empowered to engage in decision-making , then value chains become more inclusive, efficient, and resilient, resulting in improved livelihoods and social outcomes .
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Measurable impacts include increased income stability, improved working conditions, enhanced bargaining power, and greater social recognition among targeted beneficiaries. Primary beneficiaries included women producers, persons with disabilities, and community-based organisations.

Potential for replication and by whom	The partnership model has strong potential for replication and scaling in similar fragile, post-conflict, or crisis-affected settings. Replication would be most effective if led by ILO and other UN agencies with convening authority and normative mandates, Provincial or local governments responsible for economic development or by Development partners supporting private sector engagement.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This good practice directly contributes to SDG 8 on 'Promoting Decent Work' , SDG 10 on 'Reduced Inequality' and to ILO's Decent Work Agenda . It aligns with Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and with ILO's Strategic Programme Framework , notably the flagship programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience . The model also supports national and donor priorities related to inclusive economic recovery and peacebuilding.
Other documents or relevant comments	This good practice builds on lessons from previous ILO initiatives (e.g. LEED+) and complements ongoing and future programmes such as GROW. Key reference documents include the PAVE Project Document, Results Framework, annual and progress reports, and evaluation findings. While informal coordination proved effective during implementation, long-term sustainability depends on institutionalisation.



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The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Gender Policy Formulation & Rollout in the Northern Province
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Under the PAVE project, the formulation and initial rollout of the Northern Provincial Gender Policy represents a significant good practice in institutionalising gender equality within provincial governance and local economic development. The intervention directly supports the project's objective of promoting inclusive economic recovery, decent work, and social cohesion in a post-conflict context.

Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The good practice emerged in a post-conflict and crisis-affected setting characterised by persistent gender inequalities, high vulnerability among women workers and entrepreneurs, and limited institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming. Key enabling conditions included political willingness at the provincial level, ILO's technical support, and alignment with national gender commitments. However, institutional readiness for full rollout remains uneven, with capacity, resource, and operational gaps that need to be addressed for effective implementation and replication.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The causal logic is clear: embedding gender equality within a provincial policy framework strengthens institutional accountability , enabling public institutions to design and deliver more gender-responsive programmes.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Measurable progress to date includes the formal adoption of the Gender Policy and increased awareness among provincial departments of gender-responsive approaches. Targeted beneficiaries include women workers and entrepreneurs, persons with disabilities, female-headed households, and vulnerable communities engaged in value chains and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
Potential for replication and by whom	The policy formulation and rollout process have strong replication potential across other provinces and decentralised governance contexts. Replication can be led by Provincial Councils and gender machineries, with technical support from ILO and coordination with national ministries. Successful replication requires early capacity building, budget alignment, and phased rollout plans to translate policy commitments into operational outcomes.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This good practice directly contributes to the ILO Decent Work Agenda , particularly rights at work and social dialogue, with gender equality as a cross-cutting priority. It aligns with Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) , the ILO Strategic Programme Framework , ILO Programme and Budget for 2024-25; Outcome 5: Gender Equality and Equality of Treatment and Opportunities for All and the flagship programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience , while advancing SDGs 5, 8, and 10.
Other documents or relevant comments	While policy formulation is a major milestone, sustained impact will depend on structured rollout, institutional capacity building, budget allocation, and monitoring mechanisms. Future programming should prioritise operational guidance and accountability frameworks to ensure that the policy delivers tangible improvements in women's economic participation and protection.



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The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Business Development Service Providers using Interactive and Inclusive Training Methods in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Capacity Building
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	This good practice emerged from the project-supported MSME development interventions that strengthened the capacity of Business Development Service (BDS) providers to deliver interactive and inclusive training to MSMEs. Linked to the project objective of improving enterprise competitiveness and decent work outcomes , the approach adopted participatory, practice-oriented, and interactive learning . The purpose was to improve equitable access to business development services through strengthening the capacities of the regional BDS providers, namely, SEDD and Dol officials.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The implementation enabled the renewal of MSME capacity-building modules and training methodologies , aligning them more closely with current enterprise needs such as competitive marketing and the use of digital media. However, implementation was constrained by limited resources for facilitation and preparation , as well as challenges in providing individual backstopping and follow-up due to the geographical dispersion and accessibility constraints of MSMEs across the region.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	If BDS providers apply interactive and inclusive training methods tailored to MSME contexts, then entrepreneurs are better able to absorb, apply, and sustain business practices, leading to improved enterprise performance and decent work outcomes .
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Impacts included improved business planning, record-keeping and increased confidence and participation of women and other marginalised entrepreneurs. The intervention targeted two primary beneficiary groups: regional BDS providers, and MSMEs, with a specific focus on the vulnerable groups.
Potential for replication and by whom	This good practice has strong potential for replication in low-income, fragile, or transition economies where MSME capacity gaps persist. Replication can be led by ILO and other UN agencies supporting MSME development, National and local governments responsible for enterprise development, Chambers of commerce, BDS networks, and training institutes. For effective replication, the approach should be embedded within national BDS systems , supported by facilitator training, quality assurance and backstopping mechanisms, and sustainable financing models.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	The good practice contributes directly to the ILO Decent Work Agenda , particularly, Job creation through stronger MSMEs, Rights at work through improved enterprise practices and Social dialogue via participatory learning approaches. It aligns with Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) focused on inclusive economic growth, ILO Programme and Budget for 2024-25 ; Outcome 4: Sustainable Enterprises for Inclusive Growth and Decent Work and with the ILO Strategic Programme Framework , including priorities on MSME development, skills, and jobs for peace and resilience.
Other documents or relevant comments	This practice builds on lessons from previous ILO MSME and BDS initiatives and complements ongoing programmes supporting enterprise development, skills upgrading, and inclusive growth . Long-term impact depends on institutionalisation of interactive training and backstopping methodologies within BDS systems .



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The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Implementation of Climate-Smart Practices (CSPs) as an integral part of Value Chains
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	This good practice emerged from project-supported value chain (VC) development interventions that mainstreamed climate-smart practices (CSPs) across production, processing, and market linkages , rather than treating climate action as a stand-alone or add-on activity. The approach was directly linked to project objectives on resilient livelihoods, inclusive economic recovery, and sustainable enterprise development . CSPs, including resource-efficient production techniques, climate-resilient inputs, improved waste management, and risk-informed planning were embedded into VC strategies.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The practice was implemented in contexts marked by high climate vulnerability, recurrent shocks, and dependence on climate-sensitive livelihoods . Technical support and awareness-raising for VC producers and employees enabled Integration of CSPs into VC implementation. Limitations and considerations were upfront investment costs limiting adoption among small producers and continuous technical backstopping.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	If CSPs are systematically integrated into VC operations and supported by market and service actors, the VC actors can better manage climate risks and resource use, leading to more resilient value chains, stable incomes, and sustained employment.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Impacts included improved resilience of production systems to climate variability, Reduced environmental footprint and Enhanced awareness of climate risks and adaptive practices. The targeted beneficiaries were VC producers and MSMEs, particularly women-led enterprises, youth, and persons with disabilities engaged in climate-sensitive sectors.
Potential for replication and by whom	The integration of CSPs into VCs shows strong potential for replication in climate-vulnerable settings, particularly where livelihoods depend on natural resources. Replication can be done by ILO and other UN agencies with mandates on decent work and resilience, National and subnational governments

	responsible for climate action and economic development, Development partners supporting green and inclusive value chains or by Private sector actors committed to sustainable sourcing.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This good practice contributes to SDG 13 on 'Climate Change' and to the ILO Decent Work Agenda . It aligns with Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) focusing on resilience and inclusive growth, ILO Strategic Programme Framework , particularly priorities on Jobs for Peace and Resilience and the Just Transition, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Sri Lanka 2023-27; Outcome 3: Natural Resource Management, Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability and National and donor strategies on climate adaptation, mitigation, and inclusive recovery.
Other documents or relevant comments	The practice builds on lessons from ILO initiatives on climate resilience and value chain development and complements ongoing programmes addressing sustainable livelihoods and enterprise development. Long-term sustainability depends on institutionalising CSPs within VC governance and embedding climate considerations into BDS and private sector engagement strategies .



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The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Use of Digital Media as a Communication, Coordination and Information-Sharing Platform in Value Chains (VCs) and in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	This good practice emerged from project-supported VC and MSME development interventions that systematically used digital media platforms (e.g. messaging applications, social media, and basic digital tools) to strengthen communication, coordination, and remuneration and technical information sharing among VC actors and MSMEs. The approach was directly linked to project objectives on inclusive market access, enterprise resilience, and improved service delivery , particularly in contexts where physical mobility and access to information were constrained.

	The purpose was to reduce information asymmetries, improve transparency, and strengthen trust and responsiveness within value chains, and to ensure continued access to BDS services.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The practice was implemented in contexts with mobility constraints, limited institutional outreach, and increasing digital penetration. Enabling conditions included user-friendly digital platforms and provision of basic digital literacy support for producers and MSMEs. Limitations and considerations were uneven digital literacy and access, particularly among older entrepreneurs and persons with disabilities, dependence on mobile connectivity, risks related to data privacy and exclusion if safeguards are not in place.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	If digital media are used as regular communication and information-sharing tools within VCs, then coordination, access to information, and service delivery will improve, leading to more efficient, inclusive, and resilient MSME participation.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Impacts included Improved access to timely market, price, and service information, enhanced transparency and trust, reduced transaction and coordination costs, Increased coordination and engagement of VC actors and MSMEs with BDSs and private sector partners. Primary targeted beneficiaries were MSMEs and VC producers, with emphasis on women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The secondary targeted beneficiaries were BDS providers and private sector actors.
Potential for replication and by whom	The use of digital media in VC and MSME implementation has high potential for replication and scaling, particularly in settings with basic mobile connectivity. Replication can be supported by ILO and other UN agencies promoting inclusive enterprise development and decent work, National and local governments, BDS providers, chambers of commerce, responsible for digital inclusion.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This good practice contributes to the ILO Decent Work Agenda by improving MSME productivity, access to markets, and continuity of services, thereby supporting job creation and income stability. It aligns with Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) focused on inclusive growth, resilience, and innovation, ILO Strategic Programme Framework, including priorities on MSME development, digitalisation, and Jobs for Peace and Resilience, National strategies on digital inclusion and economic recovery
Other documents or relevant comments	This practice builds on ILO experience in digital tools for VC and MSME implementation and service delivery . Sustainability depends on institutionalising digital communication practices , strengthening digital skills among MSMEs and VC actors.

ILO EVALUATION

This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office

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