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Independent Final Evaluation of the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work Programme

ILO DC Symbol: GLO/21/16/MUL

Type of evaluation: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Evaluation nature: Independent

Countries: Global, South Africa, Ghana, Viet Nam

P&B Outcome(s): Outcome 4

SDG(s): 8 and 9

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 29 May 2026

Date when evaluation was approved by EVAL: 15 June 2026

ILO Administrative Office: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Branch

ILO Technical Office: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Branch

Project duration: January 2022 - July 2026

Donor and budget: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD); 17,383,584 USD

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Evaluation Office oversight: ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL)

Evaluation budget: USD 49,825 + travel costs (up to 9,690)

Key Words: Decent work, Employment promotion, Employment services, Small and Medium Enterprises, Sustainable enterprises, Productivity

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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Abbreviations

AGAM	Association of Ghana Apparel Manufacturers (Ghana)
AIDC	Automotive Industry Development Centre (Gauteng, South Africa)
APED	Agency for Private Sector and Cooperative Economic Development (Ministry of Finance, Viet Nam)
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
CMMS	Computerised Maintenance Management System
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEL	Department of Employment and Labour (South Africa)
DOWA	Dong Nai Wood Processing Association (Viet Nam)
DTIC	Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (South Africa)
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
FDI	Foreign Direct investment
GAWU	General Agriculture Workers' Union (Ghana)
GEA	Ghana Employers' Association
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GRATIS	GRATIS Foundation (Ghana)
GSAC	Global Strategic Advisory Committee
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HAWA	Handicraft and Wood Industry Association of Ho Chi Minh City (Viet Nam)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IoT	Internet of Things
IPSS	Institute for Policy and Strategy Studies (Viet Nam)
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDPI	Management Development and Productivity Institute (Ghana)
MELR	Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment (Ghana)
MFP	Multi-factor productivity
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs (Viet Nam)
MoTAI	Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness and Industry (Ghana)

NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions (South Africa)
NAACAM	National Association of Automotive Components and Allied Manufacturers (South Africa)
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission (Ghana)
NEP	National Employment Policy
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NREC	Natural Resources and Environment Consulting Center (University of Natural Resources and Environment HCMC) (Viet Nam)
NSO	National Statistics Office (Viet Nam)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	Programme and Budget
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PES	Public Employment Services (Viet Nam, under MOHA)
QALI	Quality Adjusted Labour Input
RIDE	Research Institute of Digital Organisation and Economy (Viet Nam)
SAFLEC	South African Footwear and Leather Export Council
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SEDFA	Small Enterprise Development Finance Agency (South Africa)
SIPPO	Swiss Import Promotion Programme (Viet Nam)
STSG	SCORE Training Solutions Ghana
STWG	Shea Technical Working Group (Ghana)
TCDA	Tree Crop Development Authority (Ghana)
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TUC	Trades Union Congress (Ghana)
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
VASI	Viet Nam Association for Supporting Industries
VGCL	Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour
VNPI	Viet Nam Productivity Institute

Executive summary

The International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned an independent final evaluation of the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme, Phase I (2022-2026). The evaluation was conducted between January and May 2026.

Evaluation methodology

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess the programme against five OECD DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact) and provide lessons learned and forward-looking recommendations for the design and implementation of the next phase. The evaluation is intended for the ILO, programme donors (SECO and NORAD), and key programme stakeholders, including governments and social partners.

The evaluation followed OECD DAC and ILO guidelines, applying a theory-based approach grounded in the programme's Theory of Change to assess progress at macro, meso, and micro levels, with a focus on contribution rather than attribution.

The methodology combined qualitative and quantitative methods. The key components of the evaluation approach include:

- **Document review:** Design documents, country strategies, work plans, progress reports, budget data, and analytical studies were reviewed to inform evaluation questions and contextualise findings.
- **Data review:** The M&E framework and existing datasets, including partner and enterprise surveys, were analysed to assess progress and identify patterns of change; availability of 2025 outcome data avoided the need for additional primary data collection.
- **Interviews:** 108 stakeholders (39% women) were consulted through 65 interviews, conducted both face-to-face during visits to Ghana, South Africa, and Viet Nam (16–20 March 2026) and virtually with global stakeholders.
- **Triangulation and analysis:** Findings were substantiated through systematic triangulation across documents, programme data, surveys, and interviews, alongside internal cross-checking within the evaluation team.
- **Assessment of evidence:** The strength of findings was rated using qualitative confidence levels based on consistency, credibility, and sufficiency of data.
- **Validation and reporting:** Stakeholder feedback was integrated throughout, including debriefings, a sense-checking workshop, structured review of the draft report, and a sharing session with broader stakeholders.

Milestones of the evaluation were the kick-off meeting (28 January 2026), approval of the inception report (11 March 2026), the sense-checking workshop (31 March 2026), submission of the draft report (23 April 2026), and submission of the final report (29 May 2026).

Evaluation findings

Relevance – Highly satisfactory

The programme is highly relevant across all three pilot countries, with interventions closely aligned to national priorities, ILO frameworks and donor objectives around private sector development, employment, green growth, and decent work. Its demand-led and consultative design fostered strong stakeholder ownership and enabled interventions to respond to country-specific needs. Productivity proved to be a pragmatic and politically viable entry point for advancing decent work, while sector selection was grounded in rigorous diagnostics and stakeholder consultation. Stakeholders also valued the programme's focus on addressing key structural constraints to productivity and decent work across policy, sectoral and enterprise levels. However, concerns remained regarding the translation of productivity gains into broader decent work outcomes, with evidence of improvements in wages, worker representation and job quality remaining mixed. The broad scope and responsiveness of the programme contributed to perceptions of fragmentation, with activities dispersed across multiple actors and levels, sometimes obscuring the overall strategy and reducing strategic focus. Overall, the programme is highly relevant and well positioned, but would benefit from sharper prioritisation, stronger coherence, and a more explicit focus on demonstrating and communicating decent work outcomes.

Efficiency – Satisfactory

Efficiency is overall high, supported by improving financial delivery, a lean and effective decentralised management structure, strong technical support from programme staff, and productive coordination across global and country levels. Stakeholders consistently praised the quality, responsiveness and expertise of programme teams, while trust-based partnerships with national institutions and development partners helped extend reach and maintain momentum. Governance structures, particularly the Programme Advisory Committees (PACs), were widely valued for fostering dialogue, alignment and stakeholder ownership. The programme also benefited from effective knowledge sharing and technical backstopping across ILO levels, while its monitoring system evolved into a useful tool for tracking progress and supporting adaptive management. However, resources remained weighted towards enterprise-level interventions, building on the programme's comparative advantage in generating visible results at firm level. Achieving more durable and systemic change in Phase II will require stronger investment in the policy and sectoral dimensions. Efficiency was also constrained by heavy reporting and compliance requirements, which increased transaction costs for programme teams and partners. While monitoring systems captured early results, evidence of higher-level systemic impact remained limited. External factors, including administrative procedures, institutional fragmentation, economic uncertainty and country-specific political dynamics, further increased transaction costs and required continuous adaptation to sustain implementation.

Effectiveness – Satisfactory; Impact – Not rated; emerging contribution only

The programme has over-achieved most of its formal targets and generated tangible results, particularly at enterprise level, where improvements in management practices, productivity systems, and working conditions are well evidenced. Sector-level results are more uneven: Ghana's shea sector stands out as a strong example of institutional development, while in South Africa and Viet Nam progress has been more incremental, focusing on strengthening institutional

capacities, enterprise support systems and sector coordination. Policy-level achievements represent important contributions to reform processes and more evidence-based dialogue on productivity and decent work. In Ghana, the programme strengthened productivity and labour policy discussions; in South Africa, it informed employment and industrial policy processes; and in Viet Nam, it supported employment and productivity reforms. However, across all three countries, the translation of these achievements into enacted, implemented and sustained policy change remains ongoing and dependent on broader political, institutional and administrative processes. A central limitation across countries is the weak integration between policy, sectoral, and enterprise-level interventions. While early linkages are emerging, they are not yet systematically operationalised, limiting the programme's ability to generate compounding, system-wide effects. Systemic impact is therefore not yet evident, which is consistent with the programme's pilot nature, though early signals of change are present. Gender equality has been well integrated, with strong results in terms of women's participation, inclusive workplace practices, and targeted support to women in key sectors. Environmental sustainability has been more unevenly addressed. Viet Nam demonstrates more advanced and measurable progress through green productivity, energy efficiency and digital transformation initiatives.

While the programme has laid strong foundations for sustainable change, Phase II should place greater emphasis on deliberate cross-level integration to strengthen coherence, scaling and systemic impact.

Sustainability - Moderately satisfactory

Sustainability prospects are generally positive across the three countries, underpinned by strong stakeholder ownership, institutional capacity building and the embedding of tools, approaches and practices within national institutions and partner organisations. At enterprise level, improvements in productivity, management practices and working conditions are likely to endure, as many firms have internalised new approaches and, in some cases, are independently investing to sustain and deepen improvements, signalling embedded behavioural change. At sector level, the institutional foundations established, particularly in Ghana's shea value chain, provide a credible basis for continuity, but many interventions are not yet sufficiently institutionalised within sector structures to support wider diffusion. Sector actors and business support organisations require stronger capacity to aggregate enterprise demand, provide services, coordinate collective action and feed learning into policy processes. Policy-level sustainability is most contingent, dependent on the completion of pending reform processes and sustained political commitment. Across all levels, the defining challenge is the same: interventions have achieved demonstrable depth within supported firms, sectors and institutions, they have not yet generated the institutional, market-based or policy mechanisms needed to drive adoption at scale. The programme has demonstrated that its approach works; Phase II must focus on institutionalising and scaling to achieve broader systemic change.

Overall conclusion

The programme has demonstrated clear value. Its conceptual framework, linking enterprise performance to sector institutions and national policy within an ecosystem model, is validated as analytically sound and operationally relevant, and the evidence confirms real improvements for supported enterprises and workers. In Phase I, the programme has built relationships, generated evidence, and tested approaches that provide a solid foundation for Phase II. The key challenge for Phase II is to move from breadth to depth: while Phase I successfully established relevance

across multiple levels and actors, this breadth limited the focus and continuity needed for scaling; meanwhile weak integration across policy, sectoral and enterprise interventions reduced the programme's systemic impact.

Lessons learned and emerging good practices

The evaluation highlights a set of key lessons that reflect both the strengths of the programme's design and the challenges encountered in translating its systemic ambitions into practice:

1. Productivity is an effective and politically viable entry point for advancing decent work, but translating productivity gains into decent work outcomes requires deliberate design.
2. A demand-led approach builds ownership but requires a strong strategic framework to prevent fragmentation.
3. Pilot-phase breadth is necessary for learning, but depth and focus are prerequisites for systemic impact.
4. Systemic change requires deliberate integration across levels — it does not emerge automatically from results at each level.

The evaluation also identifies a number of promising good practices that demonstrate effective approaches to achieving results across different contexts and may inform future scaling efforts:

1. Building worker and employer organisations simultaneously in informal sectors – Ghana, shea sector
2. Training of trainers to embed productivity approaches within national institutions – South Africa
3. Integrating digital and green transformation at enterprise level – Viet Nam

Recommendations

The report provides recommendations at strategic and project-level, in line with the evaluation's overall scope:

1. Rebalance towards policy and meso-level engagement for sustainability
2. Develop and sharpen country-level ToCs based on Phase I learning
3. Prioritise deeper, more focused engagement on a limited number of priority constraints, alongside more targeted support to fewer high-potential partners, with stronger cross-level linkages
4. Prioritise capacity building and institutional strengthening of sector actors

1. Introduction

The International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned Orange & Teal to conduct the independent final evaluation of the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme (Phase I). This report presents the evaluation's findings, conclusions, and recommendations, responding to the evaluation questions defined during the inception phase.

Aligned with the requirements of the Terms of Reference and the Inception Report, the report is divided into six chapters: Introduction, Programme background, Evaluation background, Findings, Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Good Practices, and Recommendations. Together, Sections 1–3 provide the introductory framing for the report, presenting the programme context, evaluation purpose, scope, and methodology. The report's annexes provide additional information, including selected lessons learned and good practices.

2. Programme background

The Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme is a global initiative of the ILO aimed at addressing persistent constraints to productivity growth while ensuring that productivity gains translate into improved working conditions and decent work outcomes. It pilots a *systems-oriented* and *diagnostics-led approach*, recognising productivity and decent work as outcomes shaped by interrelated dynamics at policy (macro), sectoral (meso), and enterprise (micro) levels.

The programme is jointly implemented by the ILO's Sustainable Enterprises, Productivity and Just Transition Department and the Employment Policy Department. It is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Implementation of Phase I commenced in January 2022 and is planned through July 2026, with a total approved budget of approximately USD 17 million.

It is implemented in three pilot countries: Ghana, South Africa, and Viet Nam; and includes a global component responsible for coordination, communication, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management. Programme governance is ensured through Project Advisory Committees (PACs) in each country, bringing together government, employers, workers' organisations, and key partners to provide strategic guidance and oversight. At the global level, a Global Strategic Advisory Committee (GSAC) ensures overall coherence and strategic alignment across country components.

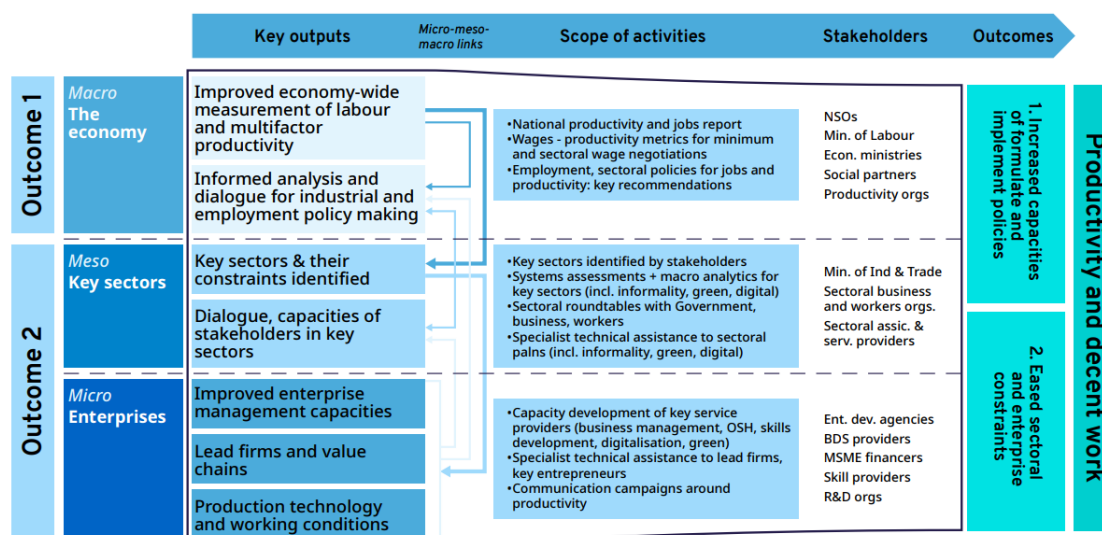
The programme is structured around two outcomes:

1. Increased capacity of ILO constituents and key ministries to formulate and implement national employment policies and productivity frameworks.
2. Sectoral and enterprise constraints to productivity and decent work addressed and relaxed.

Gender equality and environmental sustainability were mainstreamed across programme design and implementation.

At country level, implementation was preceded by inception and diagnostic phases in 2022. These included stakeholder consultations, policy and institutional reviews, and systemic sector assessments. Based on these diagnostics, priority sectors were selected in each country and country strategies were developed within a common global theory of change (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Theory of Change (ToC)



Specifically, the selected sectors were: textile and garment, and shea butter processing in Ghana; leather and footwear, as well as automotive in South Africa; and wood and furniture, and machine component manufacturing in Viet Nam.

The programme operated in three diverse country contexts which differ significantly in their levels of economic development, institutional capacity, and labour market structures.

- **Ghana** is navigating the aftermath of a macroeconomic and debt crisis, characterised by high inflation, declining productivity growth, and widespread informality, which constrains enterprise upgrading and decent work outcomes.
- **South Africa** faces persistently high unemployment, alongside deep structural inequality rooted in a dualistic economy, where a capital-intensive formal sector coexists with a large, low-productivity informal segment, compounded by infrastructure and energy constraints.
- **Viet Nam** is undergoing rapid industrial transformation, with strong integration into global value chains; however, productivity gaps, skills mismatches, and working conditions challenges remain, particularly in upgrading towards higher value-added production.

Despite these differences, all three countries face common challenges: low or uneven productivity growth, incomplete structural transformation, and gaps in translating economic performance into decent work outcomes. These contextual factors underpin the programme's systems-oriented approach and the focus on addressing constraints at different levels.

3. Evaluation background

The main objectives of the evaluation are three-fold:

- Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the programme.¹
- Provide actionable recommendations on strategic priorities, design features, and implementation approaches to inform the potential design of a Phase II.
- Identify and document good practices, innovations, and lessons learned for future ILO programming.

The evaluation responds to ten evaluation questions, as specified in the inception report and annex 2. The evaluation matrix, detailing the evaluation questions and probes as well as the sources of information, is available in Annex 2.

The evaluation covers all programme components, including the three country components (Ghana, South Africa, and Viet Nam) and the global component, over the implementation period 2022–2026.

The intended audiences of the report are the ILO, SECO, and NORAD, and national implementing partners in Ghana, South Africa, and Viet Nam. The analysis responds to the main objectives of the intended audiences: institutional learning for the ILO, accountability for the donors, and strategic guidance for national partners in Ghana, South Africa, and Viet Nam.

3.1. Methodology

The evaluation was guided by the OECD DAC Standards (including the Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, “Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully”, and “Protection of people involved in evaluation” guidelines) as well as ILO guidelines for evaluations.

A theory-based approach was applied, using the programme’s ToC (Figure 1) to structure the assessment of progress across the macro (policy), meso (sectoral), and micro (enterprise) levels. Given the programme’s early stage and the long-term nature of systemic change processes, we did not seek to measure impact in a causal sense but rather assessed the plausibility of the programme’s contribution to observed changes and identified early signals of progress along the intended pathways. We also examined key assumptions underpinning the programme design and assessed whether interventions addressed major systemic constraints to productivity growth and decent work.

We used a mixed methods approach, with the following key components:

¹ The ToR refer to all six DAC criteria, but since there was no evaluation question on the compatibility of the programme with other interventions, the Coherence criterion was not covered.

Document review: A comprehensive review of programme documentation was undertaken, including design documents, country strategies, annual and country work plans, progress reports and budget expenditure sheets, and various research products and analytical studies. This served to find answers to the evaluation questions and to contextualise the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Data review: The programme's M&E framework and existing datasets, including partner and enterprise survey results, were analysed to assess progress against intended outcomes and to identify patterns of change at enterprise and institutional levels. The availability of 2025 outcome survey data provided sufficient quantitative evidence, allowing the evaluation to avoid additional primary data collection via an evaluation-specific survey while ensuring coverage of key indicators.

Interviews: 108 stakeholders (39% women) were consulted across 65 interviews. These were conducted both face-to-face during country visits to Ghana, South Africa, and Viet Nam between 16 and 20 March 2026, and virtually with global stakeholders and those not available on site. Interviewees (see Annex 3) were purposively identified by the evaluation team together with the PE4DW country teams to ensure coverage across the programme's main intervention levels (policy, sectoral, and enterprise) and stakeholder groups, including government institutions, employers' and workers' organisations, enterprises, development partners, technical institutions, and ILO staff. More detail on the sampling approach is provided in the Inception Report, which is included in the annexes. While representation across stakeholder groups was not fully even in all countries, triangulation across interviews, programme documents, survey data, and different stakeholder perspectives was used to mitigate potential imbalances and selection bias.

Table 1: Interviews

Level	Inter-views	Govern-ment	EMBOs*	Workers' organi-sations	Enter-prises	Develop-ment partners	ILO	Techn. institu-tions	Virtual	Face-to-face
Global	10	0	0	0	0	3	7	0	10	0
Ghana	18	6	3	2	3	1	2	1	6	12
South Africa	19	5	3	2	2	1	5	0	8	11
Viet Nam	18	5	4	0	3	2	2	2	3	15
Total	65	16	10	4	8	7	11	3	27	38

**Employer and Business Membership Organisations*

Triangulation and analysis: Data were collected from multiple sources and perspectives, providing a solid basis for analysis. Qualitative data from interviews and document review were analysed using thematic analysis structured around the evaluation questions and DAC criteria, while quantitative programme and survey data were analysed primarily through descriptive statistics and comparison against targets and reported outcomes. Findings were substantiated through systematic triangulation across data sources (documents, programme data and surveys, and interviews) and methods (qualitative and quantitative). Cross-checking among evaluation

team members across countries further strengthened the consistency and robustness of findings.

Assessment of evidence: For each evaluation criterion, the strength of evidence underpinning key findings was assessed using a qualitative confidence rating, based on the consistency, credibility, and sufficiency of available data (see Annex 5). This helped distinguish between well-substantiated findings and more tentative ones.

Validation and reporting: Opportunities for validation and stakeholder feedback were integrated throughout the process, including debriefings with country teams during and after field visits, an online sense-checking workshop with the programme team on 31 March 2026, and a structured review of the draft evaluation report. These steps supported factual accuracy, strengthened interpretation, and enhanced the credibility of the evaluation findings.

Milestones of the evaluation were the kick-off meeting (28 January 2026), the approval of the inception report (11 March 2026), the sense-checking workshop with the ILO teams (31 March 2026), the submission of the draft report (23 April 2026), the results sharing session (27 May 2026), and the submission of the final report (29 May 2026).

3.2. Limitations

The evaluation was implemented in line with the inception report. Planned meetings were largely carried out as scheduled, with only minor deviations, such as changes in institutional representatives and some interviews conducted online rather than in person.

However, the following limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting the evaluation results:

- **Response bias:** While practically all interviews took place as planned, and interviewees responded to all questions, some interviewees may have been reluctant to express critical views due to partnerships, funding sensitivities, or general meeting dynamics. **Mitigation:** Anonymity was ensured, perspectives were triangulated across sources, and the learning-oriented purpose of the evaluation was emphasised.
- **Attribution, timing, and systemic complexity:** The programme's multi-level and systems-oriented nature, as well as the absence of explicit counter-factual cases or situations makes it difficult to directly attribute policy or institutional changes to specific interventions. In addition, the recent and ongoing nature of activities limits the assessment of impact and sustainability. **Mitigation:** A theory-based approach was applied, focusing on contribution rather than attribution, assessing the plausibility of linkages between interventions and observed changes, and highlighting early indicators and contributing factors where longer-term effects have yet to materialise.
- **Variability across country components:** Differences in context, implementation progress, and data availability across Ghana, South Africa, and Viet Nam limit direct comparability. **Mitigation:** Each country component was analysed independently before undertaking cross-country synthesis, clearly distinguishing context-specific findings from programme-level conclusions.

Despite these limitations, we believe that our data, gathered from diverse sources and perspectives, provides a solid foundation for this review. We adhered to **ethical guidelines** by implementing measures for informed consent, ensuring anonymity, and maintaining data security in the following ways:

- Interview participants received information on the purpose of the final evaluation, their involvement, and their rights.
- Recordings, transcripts, and other memos and contact information were deleted upon completion of the review.

4. Findings

This chapter contains the findings of the evaluation questions (EQ) as presented in the evaluation matrix in Annex 2 **Error! Reference source not found.** As set out in the inception report, the analysis is structured by evaluation criterion. Relevance and efficiency are assessed primarily at programme level, as they are largely shaped by overall design and planning, while drawing on illustrative examples from the three countries. In contrast, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability are analysed by country component to better capture context-specific results, emerging effects, and to improve readability.

4.1. Relevance (programme-wide)

This section assesses how well the programme responds to national priorities on productivity and decent work in the pilot countries (EQ 1); the extent to which it aligns with the ILO's strategic frameworks (DWCPs, P&B, SDGs) and donor priorities (EQ 2); and how effectively the Phase I design addresses the key drivers and barriers of productivity and decent work (EQ 3).

The programme is strongly aligned with national priorities and institutional mandates across all three countries, though this alignment manifests differently depending on context. In Ghana, the programme fits well with priorities around industrial development, labour market reform, and productivity enhancement². In South Africa, it directly responds to the central policy focus on employment creation and the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty, with stakeholders noting that *"the government priority is around jobs for South Africans"* and that interventions contribute to these objectives³. In Viet Nam, productivity is firmly embedded in national development strategies and seen as *"always a priority"*, linked to ambitions for structural transformation and sustained high growth, with the programme aligning closely with national productivity reforms and broader socio-economic development planning⁴.

² Including the Ministry of Trade's industrial transformation agenda, the 24-hour economy policy direction, the National Employment Policy (2015), and relevant sector strategies in trade, industry, agribusiness, and textiles.

³ Including the National Development Plan (NDP 2030) and related sectoral master plans.

⁴ Including the Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) 2021–2030, the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2021–2025, and the National Programme on Labour Productivity (2023).

A defining feature of the programme is its demand-led approach, with interventions closely tailored to country needs and stakeholder priorities, thereby strengthening relevance and ownership. Interventions are shaped through consultation and iterative learning, with emphasis on *“bring[ing] constituents on board”* and *“finetun[ing] what they expect the project to do”*. In Viet Nam, this is particularly pronounced, with government counterparts stressing that *“if it doesn’t serve our mandate, we will not do it”*, reflecting strong ownership and selectivity. In Ghana, initial scepticism gave way to strong buy-in as activities adapted to sector needs and institutional realities. In South Africa, the approach has been effective in anchoring the programme within key institutions and mobilising stakeholders around shared challenges. **This flexibility, however, comes with trade-offs: responsiveness can lead to dispersion across multiple activities and actors**, with several stakeholders noting risks of fragmentation and reduced strategic focus, weakening alignment. Many highlighted the need of managing expectations and maintaining realistic scope, given the programme’s broad systemic ambition.

The programme also demonstrates strong alignment with ILO strategic frameworks and broader development agendas. Its focus on productivity, sustainable enterprises, and decent work reflects core priorities of the ILO Programme and Budget and is well anchored in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs)⁵. Across contexts, it contributes most directly to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), particularly targeting productivity growth (8.2), decent job creation and enterprise development (8.3), and labour rights and safe working environments (8.8), while also supporting SDG 9 (industrial upgrading), SDG 5 (women’s economic participation), and SDG 13 (green transition). At the global level, stakeholders consistently emphasise the programme’s strong fit within the ILO’s evolving mandate, highlighting its role in elevating productivity as a central pillar of the organisation’s agenda. It has also strengthened the visibility of productivity within the ILO’s global policy engagement, including through collaboration with partners such as the World Bank, OECD and UNIDO in the GSAC.

From donors’ perspective, the programme is well aligned with their core priorities: private sector development, employment, green growth, and decent work. Donors valued its integrated, ecosystem-based approach, and emphasised the ILO’s comparative advantage in linking productivity with decent work, social dialogue, and labour institutions, with clear expectations that this added value is realised in practice. At the same time, tensions persist in balancing systemic ambitions with demand for tangible, enterprise-level results, and in making decent work outcomes as visible as productivity gains. Differences in emphasis among donors across several areas also highlighted the need for sharper prioritisation and positioning in the next phase.

In terms of design, productivity is recognised by interviewees as an effective and pragmatic entry point for advancing decent work across diverse political and institutional contexts, as it allows engagement to focus on concrete, measurable issues at sector and enterprise levels. In Ghana, particularly in the shea sector, productivity served as a bridge between economic and labour objectives, enabling dialogue between workers and employers and linking productivity improvements to negotiation processes. In South Africa, the programme supported more solution-oriented social dialogue around productivity, but structural labour market dynamics, particularly the rise of precarious and short-term employment, limit the extent to which gains translate into improved wages and working conditions. In Viet Nam, productivity provided a politically acceptable entry point for engaging key stakeholders and introducing decent work

⁵ Ghana Decent Work Country Programme (2023–2027); South Africa Decent Work Country Programme (2018–2023) which is extended to 2025; Viet Nam Decent Work Country Programme (2022–2026).

considerations, enabling dialogue on labour issues in a context where worker voice and collective bargaining mechanisms remain relatively constrained.

Across contexts, however, stakeholders raised **concerns about the extent to which productivity gains are translating into tangible decent work outcomes**, particularly in relation to wages, representation, and overall job quality. Emerging evidence from enterprise surveys points to strong positive trends, with around 90% of firms reporting improvements in working conditions alongside higher levels of worker satisfaction⁶. In the interviews, at least some stakeholders were more critical in this regard. The difference could be due to the fact that survey findings are based on self-reported data and may partly reflect positive response bias, as enterprises experiencing stronger results may have been more likely to participate in the surveys. It could also mean that meaningful progress is taking place at enterprise level but the translation of gains may not yet be consistent across all contexts or visible at system level, while broader systemic decent work outcomes remain less consistently evidenced across contexts. It highlights the need for continued and more explicit focus on decent work outcomes within programme design and implementation. The contrast between stakeholder perceptions and available evidence also emphasises a need for clearer communication and more systematic documentation of these outcomes.⁷

Sector selection is generally appropriate and grounded in national context, supported by rigorous diagnostics and stakeholder consultations. In Ghana, the focus on sectors such as shea is viewed as highly relevant, targeting under-served value chains with strong employment potential, described as *“low hanging fruits”*. In South Africa, the selection of automotive and leather and footwear sectors aligns with national industrial priorities and employment objectives, although stakeholders note uncertainties about long-term growth potential given structural constraints. In Viet Nam, sector choices build on the previous ILO SCORE programme⁸ and align with government priorities, particularly in wood processing and supporting industries, ensuring continuity and relevance. While the analytical rigour of the selection process is widely appreciated, some stakeholders in South Africa and at the global level found it complex and time-consuming, contributing to early implementation delays. However, the upfront investment in diagnostics has since provided a stronger foundation for more relevant implementation.

The ecosystem approach is conceptually strong but operationally challenging. It is regarded as one of the programme’s most relevant conceptual contributions, with stakeholders consistently recognising the need to act across policy, sectoral and enterprise levels to address interconnected productivity constraints. The approach is also seen as aligned with broader international thinking and is seen as capturing the right set of linkages and entry points. However, translating this conceptual strength into coherent implementation has proven difficult. The combination of a broad scope and demand-led approach has led to perceptions of fragmentation, with activities sometimes appearing as *“a very scattered project where you struggle to see the overall strategy”*, as one interviewee put it. While the ecosystem approach enhances strategic

⁶ Enterprises Annual Outcome Survey Reports 2025 in Ghana, South Africa, and Viet Nam.

⁷ At the same time, more systematic outcome measurement and data collection also require additional programme resources and reporting capacities, which need to be balanced against implementation priorities and stakeholder burden.

⁸ The Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme is a global ILO initiative that supports SMEs in improving productivity and working conditions through a combination of classroom training and in-factory consulting, with implementation across more than 30 countries and funding from SECO, NORAD, and other partners. In Vietnam, the programme ran between 2011-2021.

relevance, it requires clearer prioritisation, sequencing, and coordination mechanisms to translate into coherent implementation.

Evidence from programme documents and interviews indicates that the programme design addresses core structural constraints to productivity and decent work across levels, including weak policy coordination, limited productivity data, weak sector institutions, and SME capability gaps. In Ghana, interventions addressed constraints in sectors such as garments and shea, including weak production organisation, limited market access, outdated equipment, and underdeveloped sector governance, while also enabling more structured productivity dialogue in previously fragmented sectors. In South Africa, the programme responded to systemic challenges such as fragmented policy frameworks, weak SME integration into value chains, and over-reliance on financial incentives, introducing approaches focused on enterprise upgrading, sector coordination and social dialogue in the leather, footwear and automotive sectors. In Viet Nam, it aligned with efforts to address structural productivity gaps between high-performing FDI firms and low-productivity domestic SMEs, including weak management systems, limited digital and green transformation capacity, and fragmented sector support mechanisms in wood processing, and machine components.

However, across countries, stakeholders consistently noted that while the programme is broad in scope, **many individual interventions remain relatively small and uneven in depth**. This dispersion across multiple activities and actors has limited cumulative impact and contributed to perceptions of fragmentation. More complex structural constraints, particularly at policy and sectoral levels, require sustained engagement and stronger coordination than could be achieved in Phase I, with stakeholders highlighting a gap in translating strong policy alignment into implementation and behavioural change, and limited feedback loops between enterprise-level interventions and higher-level reforms.

4.2. Efficiency (programme-wide)

This section assesses how effectively the programme's management, coordination, and governance structures function at global and country levels (EQ 6); and how efficiently the programme has delivered its results, including the use of financial, human, and technical resources (EQ 7).

Overall efficiency is perceived as high across countries, supported by progressively improving financial delivery despite early-stage constraints. The steady increase in cumulative expenditure (USD 1.3 million in 2022, USD 4.2 million in 2023, USD 9.0 million in 2024, and USD 13.5 million in 2025)⁹ reflects a transition from set-up to full implementation, with **an initially slower phase focused on design, staffing, and partner onboarding followed by stronger delivery**. This trajectory is most pronounced in South Africa, where stakeholders described a shift from slow initial progress, affected by early staffing gaps and turnover, to intensive delivery, with *"a lot of activities... pushed"* in later stages to meet targets. While the acceleration enabled delivery, it also compressed timelines and limited space for strategic reflection. In Ghana, the transition was more gradual, with early implementation shaped by staffing delays, with key project personnel only in place from September 2022, alongside some ILO internal procedures, and occasional

⁹ Source: ILO PE4DW financial statements 2022-2025

delays in fund disbursement, delaying implementation before giving way to steady expansion as partnerships and implementation mechanisms strengthened. In Viet Nam, progress was more iterative, shaped from the outset by institutional complexity and coordination across multiple actors, requiring constant adjustments rather than linear acceleration. The no-cost extension was widely seen as critical in consolidating delivery and translating earlier groundwork into tangible results.

This efficiency is underpinned by a largely effective division between global coordination and country-level implementation. Over 90% of expenditure was channelled to country-level implementation, while global spending remained lean (3–9%, depending on year), driven mainly by increased management and oversight, with policy and technical functions stable at 1–2%¹⁰. Stakeholders highlighted that the decentralised model, combining global coordination with country-led delivery, supported both consistency and contextual adaptation. At the same time, the internal distribution of resources shows a balanced emphasis: excluding management costs, sectoral and enterprise interventions accounts for around 64–68% of spending in each country, while policy work represents roughly one-third¹¹. This distribution is weighted towards micro-level delivery, reflecting its higher cost intensity. Interviewees noted that this also reflects an operational reality, as staff tend to gravitate towards enterprise-level work, while policy engagement requires greater effort and coordination to sustain. This emphasis was generally seen as appropriate in a pilot phase, allowing the programme to build on its strengths while exploring policy engagement. Going forward, the implication is less about rebalancing allocations than about strengthening the sectoral and policy dimensions to support systemic change.

The quality of programme staff emerged as a central efficiency driver. Across all three countries, stakeholders consistently praised the quality of technical support, highlighting the competence, responsiveness, accessibility, and practical orientation of programme teams. For example, in Ghana, partners emphasised strong working relationships and accessibility, noting that communication was smooth and support readily available. In South Africa, technical expertise was reflected in the quality of implementation, with visible improvements at enterprise level and effective collaboration with national institutions. In Viet Nam, the team was described as experienced and capable of navigating complex institutional environments while delivering practical solutions. Overall, stakeholders emphasised that **current staffing levels, strengthened following a recommendation of the mid-term evaluation, are appropriate**, warning that reductions could undermine delivery quality and the programme's ability to operate effectively across multiple levels.

Another key driver is strong coordination across ILO levels. Interviewees highlighted the effectiveness of coordination between global, regional, and country teams, particularly through shared systems, technical support, and knowledge exchange. Cross-country exchanges and regular knowledge-sharing platforms enabled teams to learn from each other, with countries "*leverag[ing] others' experience*" to improve delivery. Technical backstopping was widely seen as accessible and of high quality, with specialists providing support when needed and reinforcing implementation.

Coordination was not uniformly strong in early stages and described by some as "*suboptimal*" with delayed or inconsistent engagement across some ILO departments (notably ACT/EMP and ACTRAV) and national actors. In South Africa, interviewees highlighted initial difficulties in

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

engaging organised labour, including challenges in identifying appropriate counterparts and establishing effective modalities for collaboration within a complex institutional context. In Ghana, coordination challenges were more operational, linked to administrative and bureaucratic processes within government that slowed approvals and required navigating multiple layers of decision-making, as well as uneven engagement across stakeholders in some areas. In Viet Nam, coordination constraints were more structural, reflecting institutional fragmentation across ministries and strict mandate boundaries. While coordination improved over time, particularly with country partners as relationships and mechanisms matured, some integration challenges within the ILO persisted, notably inconsistent engagement with ACT/EMP at country level.

The programme also benefited from constructive partnerships, particularly with national partners and other development partners, which helped maintain momentum and efficient delivery. Across contexts, relationships with partners were described as highly collaborative, trust-based, and solution-oriented. In Ghana, for example, partnership with organisations such as GIZ allowed the programme to extend reach and linked beneficiaries to additional support; in South Africa, close collaboration with institutions such as Productivity SA enabled efficient delivery through existing capacity; and in Viet Nam, cost-sharing with enterprises and collaboration with initiatives such as the Swiss Import Promotion Programme (SIPPO) supported resource sharing, and access to specialised expertise, particularly in export promotion, market access, and sustainable production, not available within the programme. However, interviews also reveal **trade-offs**: working with many partners sometimes diluted focus and increased coordination costs, prompting calls for more selective partnerships and deeper engagement to prioritise depth over breadth.

In terms of governance, **the PAC functioned as a useful platform, supporting alignment, dialogue, and shared ownership among stakeholders**. In Ghana and South Africa, the PAC were widely perceived as effective coordination platforms that bring together government, employers, and workers, reinforcing the programme's tripartite nature. They were also seen as spaces for structured dialogue and strategic steering, with one participant noting that *"there are always all relevant stakeholders present... that's been very effective"*, and another highlighting that the ILO acts as a *"listening management"* responding to stakeholder input. However, some areas for improvement were noted, with interviewees highlighting that participation was not always at decision-making level, and meetings could be dominated by a few voices. In Viet Nam, complex Official Development Assistance (ODA) procedures prevented formal PAC establishment, leading to more fragmented, bilateral coordination and fewer systemic linkages. At global level, the GSAC provided a useful platform for strategic alignment, visibility, and engagement with international partners and donors, contributing to the programme's credibility. However, it was sometimes perceived as less dynamic, with limited substantive exchange and influence on technical direction.

Several structural and operational challenges affected efficiency. Across countries, stakeholders pointed to **heavy reporting and compliance requirements as a major constraint**, with reporting systems often fragmented across multiple layers, combining project-level monitoring, ILO institutional requirements linked to contract size, and partner-specific reporting formats. This resulted in repeated data requests, parallel reporting streams, and the need to reformat similar information for different purposes. In Viet Nam, lengthy reporting templates, detailed data requirements, and language constraints (e.g. reporting in English) further increased the burden. Stakeholders questioned the necessity of such requirements and warned that they could

discourage engagement. While strengthening oversight, these systems increased workload and reduced operational efficiency, particularly for implementing partners.

Monitoring works for early results, but systemic impact remains difficult to evidence. The programme's M&E system has evolved from a deliberately light design to a broadly functional framework that supports progress tracking and adaptive management. Strengthened over time, particularly through outcome surveys, it captures multi-dimensional data on enterprise performance, working conditions, and service delivery, alongside early institutional and sector-level changes, including improvements in capacity, coordination, and policy engagement. However, it relies heavily on self-reported data and remains limited in demonstrating higher-level impact, especially at policy and systemic levels where impact is long-term and difficult to measure. At the same time, there is demand for more robust and verifiable evidence at enterprise level to support evidence-based scaling. As suggested by some interviewees, targeted case-based evidence offers a practical way to strengthen enterprise-level validation, demonstrate pathways of systemic change, and inform scaling. Given the long-term nature of productivity and systemic change, stronger impact measurement would require additional resources, longer timeframes, and agreement among stakeholders on the trade-offs between evidence generation and implementation priorities.

Beyond internal factors, efficiency was also shaped by external constraints across contexts. **Cross-cutting challenges**, including the lingering effects of COVID-19, disruptions to supply chains, and broader economic uncertainty, affected implementation timelines and enterprise engagement. These were compounded by **structural constraints, notably persistent coordination challenges across government actors**, reflecting fragmented institutional mandates, multi-layered approval processes, and limited alignment across ministries. These dynamics interacted with **country-specific conditions**: in Ghana, leadership changes within government slowed policy processes; in South Africa, stringent procurement and compliance systems, together with sectoral dynamics and partner alignment challenges, introduced delays; and in Viet Nam, administrative reforms alongside complex ODA procedures made coordination and stakeholder engagement particularly demanding. Largely outside the control of programme teams, these factors raised transaction costs and required continuous adaptation to sustain delivery.

4.3. Country findings: effectiveness, impact and sustainability

For each country, the evaluation assesses effectiveness by examining the extent to which the programme has achieved its intended outcomes at the policy, sectoral, and enterprise levels (EQ 4), and how effectively it has contributed to gender equality and environmental sustainability (EQ 5). It then explores impact by analysing how, and to what extent, the programme has contributed to creating a more enabling environment for productivity and decent work (EQ 8). This includes examining early indicators of change, such as tangible improvements in productivity, working conditions, and enterprise behaviour, as well as shifts in incentives, practices, and decision-making among key actors, including ministries, social partners, and enterprises. Finally, the evaluation considers sustainability, assessing the likelihood that results and changes will be

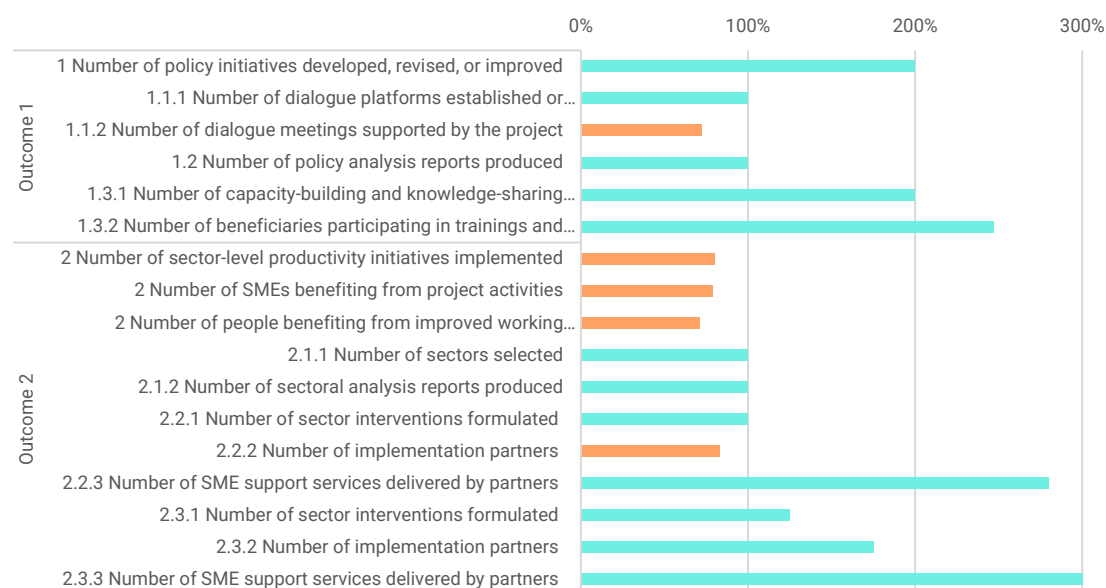
maintained beyond Phase I, particularly in terms of national ownership, institutional capacity, and behavioural change (EQ 9).

4.3.1. Ghana

Effectiveness and Impact

Figure 2 summarizes the progress achieved to date by comparing current achievements against the overall phase targets in Ghana. Performance is particularly strong under Outcome 1, where most indicators have met or exceeded targets. Policy-related outputs are fully achieved or overachieved, while capacity-building activities (200%) and participation levels (247%) significantly surpass initial targets, indicating high demand and effective delivery. Dialogue platforms are on track (100%), although the number of meetings supported remains somewhat lower (72%), reflecting more moderate progress in sustained engagement.

Figure 2: Achievements measured against the LogFrame targets for Ghana (status December 2025)



Note: Percentage progress is estimated as the ratio of current achievements to end-of-phase targets ($\text{Actual} \div \text{Target} \times 100$).

*Indicators numbered 1 and 2 represent outcome-level indicators, while sub-indicators (e.g. 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2, 2.1.1, etc.) represent output-level indicators measuring specific activities, deliverables, or implementation results.

**It is important to note that progress against outcome indicators does not always reflect systemic change. These indicators focus on outputs (e.g. workshops, participants), while behavioural and institutional changes are captured through complementary tools such as Outcome Surveys (see Efficiency section).

Under Outcome 2, implementation shows a mixed but overall positive pattern. Several delivery-oriented indicators, such as SME support services (280% and 300%) and partnerships, have substantially exceeded targets, demonstrating strong activity-level performance. At the same time, indicators related to outreach and scale remain below target, with SMEs supported reaching

79% and individuals benefiting from improved working conditions at 71%¹². Sector-level initiatives also show slightly lower progress (80%). **Overall, the results point to strong performance in activity delivery and institutional strengthening, although progress in expanding reach and scale remains comparatively more gradual.**

Policy-level engagement has generated meaningful institutional influence and evidence-based dialogue. A key programme output was the production of Ghana's first productivity statistics report linking productivity, employment and growth, alongside contributions to industrial and trade policy reviews and the development of Ghana's first Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) profile. These outputs provided government, employers and workers with a shared evidence base and strengthened the legitimacy of productivity as a labour and industrial policy issue. This has been particularly important for wage-setting debates, including the 2027 minimum wage, as the data gave labour actors, particularly trade unions, concrete evidence that productivity gains had not translated into wages, thereby reinforcing their negotiating position. Stakeholders consistently viewed this as a *"breakthrough"* in elevating productivity within national policy discussions and strengthening engagement with institutions such as the Ghana Fair Wages and Salaries Commission. The programme also contributed to ongoing reform processes, including the 2025 Labour Bill, with one stakeholder noting that *"without the project we wouldn't have come this far honestly"*, as well as future OSH legislation. However, these reforms remain ongoing and subject to broader political and institutional dynamics. More broadly, the programme helped shift policy debates from fragmented measures towards a more systemic understanding of productivity, industrial development and decent work, including through industrial and trade policy review processes highlighting how such policy areas shape *"fiscal incentives, grants, trade facilitation."* However, stakeholders emphasise that results remain largely process-driven: **policy change is inherently slow, difficult to attribute, and dependent on political dynamics, with key reforms still pending and progress uneven.**

Sector-level results were among the programme's strongest, showing that systemic change is possible when support to sector institutions, worker and employer organisation, and concrete productivity improvements are delivered together. This was most evident **in the shea sector**, where the programme supported the emergence of coordinated structures and dialogue mechanisms, including the Shea Technical Working Group (STWG), Ghana Shea Employers Association (GSEA), and Ghana Shea Workers Union (GSWU), and enabled a first collective bargaining agreement in a largely informal value chain, described as *"pioneering"* in showing that formalisation and social dialogue can be built from a low institutional base. These efforts were reinforced by practical tools such as the pricing mechanism framework, another major meso-level result, which introduced more transparent and standardised price-setting in the shea value chain, reducing the scope for intermediaries to set prices unilaterally and improving returns for women pickers and processors. Stakeholders noted that this mechanism has already been taken up by government actors, indicating early institutional adoption and potential for wider scaling beyond direct project support.

In textiles and garments, results were more modest and focused on incremental strengthening rather than systemic shifts. The programme supported the Association of Ghana Apparel

¹² Giving feedback to the draft evaluation report, the project team noted: Targets were established during the design phase of a pilot programme and should be interpreted with caution. The programme operates across policy, sector, and enterprise levels, with results reflecting deliberate design choices in how interventions were sequenced and prioritised, rather than issues of implementation efficiency. In a pilot context, target-setting is inherently uncertain, and while some outreach indicators remain below target, the targets overall provided a useful framework to guide implementation and assess progress.

Manufacturers (AGAM)'s engagement, including its strengthened alignment with the Ghana Employers Association (GEA), which enhanced its leverage and voice in policy dialogue. It also contributed to a sector productivity manual, and facilitated exposure through trade fairs and local procurement advocacy. Importantly, this advocacy contributed to an initiative by the Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness and Industry (MoTAI) to encourage public institutions procuring large volumes of uniforms and apparel to source from AGAM members. At the same time, the programme contributed to important foundational steps in standard-setting, including the reactivation of the Textile Standards Bureau Unit within the Ghana Standards Authority, the development of standard specifications for fabric production and garment manufacturing (including uniforms), and the appointment of AGAM to the National Technical Committee on Textiles and Garments overseeing this process. However, these did not yet translate into the same level of structured coordination or sustained service provision seen in the shea sector. This is consistent with sector starting points, where gains in more mature industries tend to be more incremental than in less organised value chains.

Sector-level gains were substantial, but their consolidation remains uneven due to coordination challenges, market constraints and varying institutional maturity. In both sectors, collective platforms brought together actors with differing capacities and incentives, complicating decision-making and follow-through. In shea, strong institutional innovation did not fully overcome persistent market bottlenecks, particularly reliance on intermediaries and limited access to end buyers, with stakeholders noting that *"a lot of shea butter ended up in warehouses"* partly reflecting a mismatch between increased production and slower market development. While external market conditions contributed to these constraints, the findings also point to an important limitation in the Phase I design, which placed stronger emphasis on production and institutional strengthening than on downstream market access and commercial integration. In textiles and garments, progress in advocacy, exposure and compliance readiness remained incremental, with firms improving productivity and capabilities, but with commercial gains remaining uneven and not yet fully consolidated. The core challenge is therefore less about generating results than about whether these structures can sustain momentum, expand services and translate institutional gains into broader competitiveness and decent work outcomes across the sector. Persistent market constraints and structural shifts such as mechanisation continue to put the durability of these gains at risk, especially in more informal settings.

At enterprise level, the programme delivered the most immediate results by improving management practices, productivity systems, workplace conditions and compliance readiness. Interviewees highlight that enterprises moved away from *"intuitive"* operations towards more structured management systems, reflected also in 98% of enterprises reporting improved business processes and widespread adoption of productivity tracking in the enterprise survey implemented by the project¹³. Productivity gains were widespread with 95% of enterprises reported increased production with the same or fewer inputs¹⁴. While these findings are based primarily on self-reported programme monitoring and survey data and do not constitute causal attribution or rigorous impact measurement, they nevertheless point to perceived operational improvements among participating enterprises. In shea processing, equipment support played a catalytic role in reducing labour intensity and increasing throughput, addressing a key constraint

¹³ Ghana Enterprises Annual Outcome Survey Report 2025. The enterprise survey covered 47 enterprises, out of a broader group of approximately 52 enterprises supported in 2025, across the shea (43%) and textiles and garments (57%) sectors, representing small (45%) and medium-sized (34%) firms. Findings are based on self-reported data from participating enterprises and reflect outcomes among supported firms rather than the wider sector.

¹⁴ Ibid.

where, as one interviewee noted, without such support the programme would be “*sitting on the sidelines*,” i.e. unable to meaningfully influence enterprise behaviour or investment.

These gains were accompanied by strong improvements in decent work outcomes. Enterprises reported significant advances in occupational safety, worker communication and conditions, with 62% noting major improvements in working conditions and 89% increased worker satisfaction¹⁵. In garments, strengthened compliance and quality systems improved firms’ readiness to meet buyer requirements, as highlighted in interviews, while survey results point more broadly to gains in market access and customer growth. At the same time, **financial constraints remained a binding limitation**: while the programme facilitated some access to finance, through support to equipment acquisition, pre-financing and investor linkages, these efforts remained limited and did not fundamentally ease firms’ ability to invest and scale. Similarly, although trade fairs and exposure activities helped connect firms to potential buyers, access to stable markets continued to lag, with 64% of enterprises reporting no or slight improvement in market linkages, 23% reporting moderate improvements, and relatively few (13%) reporting significant gains.

Across cross-cutting areas, progress was more consistent on gender than on environmental sustainability. Gender considerations were well integrated in targeting and participation, reflected in high female employment and ownership among supported enterprises, as well as the adoption of inclusive practices such as equal pay policies, flexible working arrangements and safer workplaces. This suggests that gender was embedded in enterprise-level interventions rather than treated as an add-on. By contrast, environmental sustainability was more uneven and less systematically developed. While the programme introduced concrete initiatives, including solar energy pilot (with one enterprise equipped with solar systems), collaboration with technical partners such as the Gratis Foundation on equipment upgrading, and support for resource efficiency and cleaner production, most enterprise-level changes remained relatively incremental. These included adoption of basic practices such as waste reduction (78%), energy efficiency (71%) and water conservation (44%)¹⁶. However, these efforts did not consistently address more complex or systemic challenges such as emissions management, sector-wide waste systems or green value chain transformation, indicating that environmental sustainability, while present, was not yet developed to the same depth¹⁷.

Sustainability

Sustainability at policy level is increasingly anchored in institutional uptake and growing ownership but remains dependent on political commitment and completion of reform processes. The programme strengthened technical capacity within core institutions (e.g. Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Management Development and Productivity Institute (MDPI) and line ministries) and embedded productivity topics into policy processes, most notably through the introduction of national productivity statistics, which stakeholders indicated were already being used for planning and expected to continue as a routine output. This reflects growing ownership within key institutions, further reinforced by the internalisation of tools such as the OSH profile and policy development processes. However, sustainability remained contingent on implementation of pending reforms, including the Labour Bill and OSH legislation, with

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ The ILO team noted that this reflected a deliberate focus on more immediate priorities, such as production capacity, quality, and market access, given the early stage of sector development and the needs expressed by beneficiaries. More advanced environmental interventions were not yet a primary constraint and are likely to become more relevant at a later stage.

stakeholders warning that policy outputs risk remaining unused without follow-through: *“if you just produce it and they don’t follow it through, then that is it—it is lost.”*

Sector-level sustainability is evidenced by institutional anchoring and early independent uptake of key interventions. The programme established and strengthened sector institutions in the shea value chain, including the STWG, GSEA and GSWU, with functioning governance structures, representation in national bodies (e.g. GSEA on the Tree Crops Development Authority (TCDA) board), and emerging capacity to coordinate activities and advocacy. **Strong ownership among sector actors is reflected in the independent continuation of key interventions**, particularly the pricing mechanism framework, which had been adopted and implemented by national actors, alongside continued application of OSH practices. However, **in the shea sector, sustainability remained constrained by limited membership coverage, weak financial bases, market access and uneven capacity to expand services beyond core geographic areas.** While the sector has mobilised a substantial number of stakeholders and established functioning representative structures, interviewees noted that coverage remains concentrated in specific areas, particularly with limited operational presence in the north. Financial viability depends on scaling membership and services across a broader geographic base. At the same time, some stakeholders emphasised that expansion is both feasible and expected in a next phase, as strong national foundations and existing structures provide a solid base for scale. The priority is therefore less about redesign and more about consolidation and growth. **In garments, by contrast, constraints were less about basic institutional viability and more about sustaining higher-cost functions**, such as market access, international exposure and compliance systems, which continue to rely on external resources and partnerships.

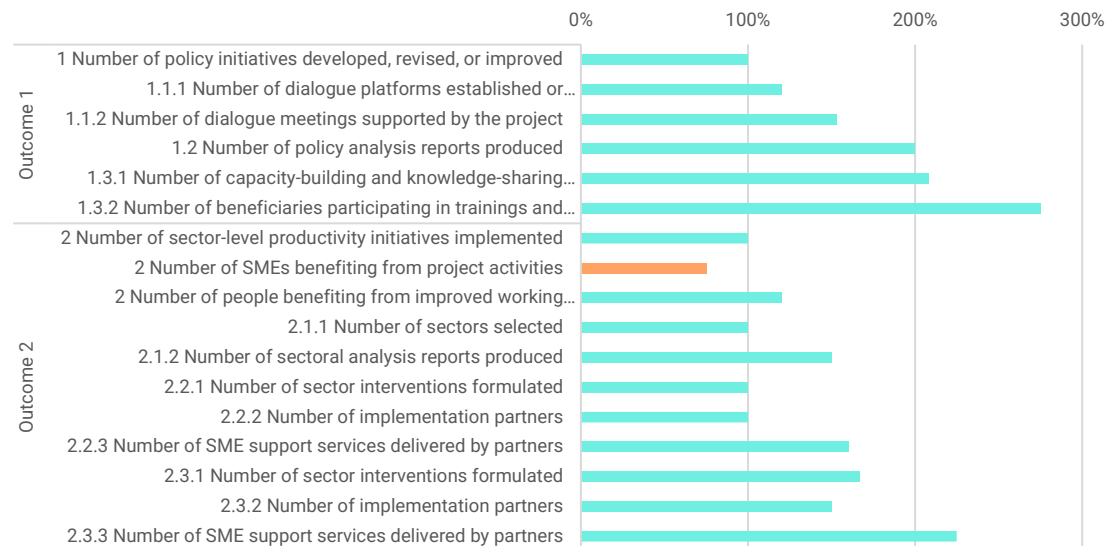
Enterprise-level sustainability is strongest in embedded management and compliance practices but constrained by limited finance and weak scaling beyond supported firms. The programme introduced structured management systems, which enterprises had internalised and were continuing to apply, as these directly supported operational efficiency, cost reduction and access to buyers. However, sustainability was weaker for capital-intensive improvements, particularly machinery, infrastructure and energy solutions, where firms continued to face financial constraints and limited access to credit. Stakeholders also noted that some behavioural changes (e.g. OSH and environmental practices) required continued reinforcement to be fully sustained. As a result, while practices are sustained within supported firms, their diffusion to a wider base of enterprises remains limited, indicating that scaling mechanisms beyond direct support are not yet fully in place. There were some concerns that **local service ecosystems are not yet sufficiently developed to sustain or scale these functions independently.** The core challenge going forward is therefore no longer demonstrating that enterprise support works, but ensuring that the practices, incentives and support systems required to sustain it are more deeply institutionalised within markets and institutions.

Across all three levels, sustainability is reinforced by relatively strong co-ownership among government institutions, social partners and sector actors, reflected in joint engagement in policy processes, institutionalisation of tools, and the independent continuation of key interventions.

4.3.2. South Africa

Effectiveness and Impact

Figure 3: Achievements measured against the LogFrame targets for South Africa (status December 2025)



Note: Percentage progress is estimated as the ratio of current achievements to end-of-phase targets ($\text{Actual} \div \text{Target} \times 100$).
 *Indicators numbered 1 and 2 represent outcome-level indicators, while sub-indicators (e.g. 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2, 2.1.1, etc.) represent output-level indicators measuring specific activities, deliverables, or implementation results.
 **It is important to note that progress against outcome indicators does not always reflect systemic change. These indicators focus on outputs (e.g. workshops, participants), while behavioural and institutional changes are captured through complementary tools such as Outcome Surveys (see Efficiency section).

Figure 3 indicates that performance in South Africa is consistently strong, with most indicators either meeting or exceeding their targets, particularly under Outcome 1. Policy-related results are fully achieved or surpassed, with especially high progress in analytical outputs (200%), capacity-building activities (208%), and beneficiary reach (275%). Dialogue platforms (120%) and meetings (153%) also show solid overachievement, pointing to sustained engagement and effective coordination among stakeholders. Under Outcome 2, implementation is well advanced across most indicators. Sector interventions and partnerships have reached planned levels, while several delivery-related indicators, such as SME support services (160% and 225%) and automotive sector interventions (167%), have progressed well beyond targets. Improvements in working conditions have also exceeded expectations (120%). In contrast, the number of SMEs benefiting from project activities stands at 75% of the target, indicating comparatively slower expansion in enterprise outreach. Taken together, **the results reflect a strong and well-balanced implementation trajectory, with most indicators achieved or exceeded, though further expansion in enterprise outreach remains an area for continued progress within the remaining period of Phase I.**

Policy-level work demonstrates strong technical quality and has supported more evidence-based policy dialogue, though its ultimate impact depends on implementation. The National Employment Policy (NEP) is widely regarded as technically sound and aligned with international

good practice, including the high-level coordination mechanisms and a balance of demand- and supply-side measures. The policy is seen as an important mechanism to bring coherence to a landscape characterised by multiple, disconnected programmes across government. The industrial policy workshops and engagement around sectoral Master Plans were also valued, particularly for encouraging more critical and employment-oriented perspectives. These processes helped shift stakeholder thinking from treating policy documents as fixed to questioning their assumptions and implementation pathways, *“it moved from just seeing it as a key document... to showing what was lacking”*. The institutionalisation of more advanced productivity methodologies, such as Quality Adjusted Labour Input (QALI), are seen as enabling more evidence-based engagement. However, at this point **the policy impact remains largely prospective**. While stakeholders have primarily shared optimistic views about the adoption of the NEP, the policy has yet to be publicly consulted, approved and implemented, with delays attributed to political processes, institutional silos, and coordination challenges across ministries. Similarly, follow-up actions from the five work streams related to the Master Plan engagements have been limited or slow to materialise, reflecting both staffing constraints and different ideas how to move forward. Overall, while the policy work has strengthened dialogue and analytical foundations, its translation into concrete policy change and tangible results on productivity and decent work issues remains uncertain.

At the meso level, the project has been effective in strengthening institutional capacities, social dialogue, and sectoral coordination, though uptake and institutionalisation remain uneven. Capacity building was seen as a major strength, combining large-scale training and targeted technical support. Training initiatives for trade unions (in particular the “Economics for Workers” training programme) have strengthened the ability of union representatives to engage with macroeconomic, industrial, and productivity issues, enabling more informed and constructive participation in negotiations. This has contributed to a **shift away from adversarial, zero-sum dynamics toward more solution-oriented engagement**, with one interviewee describing this evolution as *“Social Dialogue 2.0.”* This shift is seen as particularly significant in the South African context, where productivity has historically been viewed with suspicion by labour representatives. The project appears to have helped reframe productivity as compatible with workers’ interests, with one stakeholder noting that *“this is a game changer... the unions have bought into productivity.”* However, interviewees have also pointed to limitations: The diffusion of knowledge within organisations, particularly from trained individuals to leadership levels, is uneven, and while stakeholders are positive about improved knowledge, there is still uncertainty as to whether these changes will fundamentally alter policy processes or outcomes.

The programme’s support for analytical studies generated mixed feedback. On the one hand, several stakeholders emphasised the value of research in informing policy dialogue and strengthening the evidence base, particularly in areas where sector-specific insights are limited. Research processes were often participatory and brought together diverse stakeholders, contributing to broader engagement and shared understanding. Interviewees shared how findings were actively used in strategic discussions and training platforms. On the other hand, some raised questions regarding the added value, cost-effectiveness, and actionability of some studies. A recurring concern was not necessarily the quality of analysis, but the limited ownership and uptake by partner institutions. As one stakeholder put it, *“it’s like... a wish list... someone should*

take these up,” pointing to unclear responsibility for implementation. While follow-up actions do exist, they often depend on partner institutions¹⁸.

At the micro level, the SME support stands out for generating the most visible results. Firms and business development service providers reported efficiency gains, reduced waste, improved quality, and in some cases business expansion and job creation. Enterprise survey data confirm these positive outcomes, with 90% of firms reporting increased production and 61% reporting reduced costs and over 80% improved business processes and management practices following support¹⁹. Interventions combining training, diagnostics, and hands-on support were seen as particularly effective. The adaptability of approaches, including the integration of international methodologies with local context (e.g., Productivity for Decent Work), was a key strength. As one implementing partner emphasised, *“we don’t believe in one size fits all,”* highlighting the importance of tailored solutions for firms of different sizes and sectors. Despite these successes, **challenges remain around scale, sustainability, and evidence.** Some stakeholders suggested that effectiveness could be enhanced through increased funding, stronger follow-up support, and more flexible participation pathways. However, due to the diversity of delivery models and the lack of systematic outcome data per training format, there is limited evidence to substantiate these claims or to compare different approaches. Some stakeholders highlighted constraints related to short implementation periods, limited guidance regarding the training formats, limited funding, insufficient follow-up and pathways (firms moving from one support activity to the next one, e.g., from training to market access) as key constraints reducing depth and sustainability.²⁰

Gender equality has been meaningfully embedded across the project, while environmental sustainability gained importance over time but remains relatively limited in scale. Concrete gender outcomes raised included support for women’s participation in value chains, the formation of women-led cooperatives, and targeted efforts to support vulnerable groups such as survivors of gender-based violence. Participation data and stakeholder perceptions suggest that gender inclusion has been taken seriously. However, **structural constraints**, particularly in male-dominated sectors such as automotive, continue to limit outcomes, and gender interventions have been more focused on inclusion and tracking than on transformative change. Environmental sustainability, by contrast, was not a central focus in the initial design but became more prominent during implementation. It has been integrated into training and sector work, for example through green productivity modules, discussions on decarbonisation, and a research study on the transition to new energy vehicles and its labour market implications, but remains relatively small in scale.

Across all levels, a key limitation relates to weak linkages between policy, sectoral, and enterprise interventions, both in design and in practice. As most interviewees discussed the activities they were involved in, relatively few examples were provided of how the integrated

¹⁸ Giving feedback to the draft evaluation report, the ILO team noted that more broadly, commissioning studies can become a default response to complex challenges, particularly when externally funded, without sufficient mechanisms to ensure prioritisation, ownership, and use. This points to the need for clearer criteria for supporting studies and stronger agreements with partners on follow-up and implementation responsibilities.

¹⁹ South Africa Enterprises Annual Outcome Survey Report 2025. The enterprise survey covered 36 enterprises, out of a broader group of approximately 94 enterprises supported in 2025. Of which 50% are micro, 36% small, and 11% medium-sized firms; 81% operate in the leather and textile sector and 19% in automotive value chains, with 44% women-owned enterprises.

²⁰ The ILO team explained that many of the training interventions were designed as pilots to test approaches. The intention was that once approaches are tested and institutions trained, partners would scale them up independently. The team further noted that it’s important to keep in mind that optimising and expanding the training alone is unlikely to drive systemic change. Without stronger integration with market systems, sector institutions, and policy frameworks, firm-level gains remain isolated.

ecosystem approach differed from a string of smaller projects focusing on specific items within the ecosystem. Some stakeholders did comment on this limited integration, with evidence that policy-level work, sector initiatives, and firm-level interventions often operate in parallel rather than reinforcing each other, limiting systemic impact. This might, at least to some degree, also reflect this phase's pilot nature, where components were tested and developed in parallel. The programme has laid important foundations, particularly in terms of partnerships, capacities, and evidence, but **its long-term impact will depend on stronger integration across levels in the next phase, alongside clearer ownership and sustained follow-through.**

Sustainability

At the policy level, sustainability is underpinned by growing institutional ownership and alignment with national processes, although it remains dependent on effective implementation and follow-through. A notable strength is the strong stakeholder ownership, driven by a demand-led and contextually grounded approach, which increases the likelihood that interventions will endure. This is further reinforced by alignment with national policies and sector plans, providing a credible pathway towards longer-term impact, particularly if frameworks such as the National Employment Policy are formally approved and operationalised. However, sustainability at this level is also constrained by broader systemic challenges. **Key institutions, especially those expected to lead and coordinate efforts, remain under-resourced**, which already affects implementation, particularly in relation to follow-up actions stemming from workshops and research. In addition, siloed mandates across departments continue to limit shared ownership and coherence in employment and productivity agendas. That said, several interviewees noted the positive experiences of interdepartmental collaboration, which may contribute to more sustained coordination over time. Overall, sustainability at the policy level remains conditional: many policy processes are still ongoing, and without formal adoption, adequate resourcing, and consistent implementation, there is a risk that achievements remain aspirational and unevenly supported across government.

At the meso level, sustainability is relatively strong due to institutional embedding and capacity building, though constrained by uneven capacities and coordination challenges. The programme has focused on strengthening sectoral organisations and social partners, integrating approaches into their existing systems and programmes. In some cases, tools have been *"branded and owned"* by partners, for example, the integrated productivity programme combining SCORE and the Workplace Challenge has been absorbed into Productivity SA's core service offer, while training-of-trainers models enable partners to continue delivery independently. As a result, delivery systems and stakeholder engagement are likely to persist. Many interviewees highlighted these positive signs and the continuation of activities, formats or approach elements by institutions beyond direct project funding. However, sustainability is uneven across institutions. Key actors remain under-resourced, with even Productivity SA described as a *"small entity"*, limiting its ability to lead and scale interventions, and approaches are not yet systematically embedded across actors. While this reflects broader structural capacity limitations rather than a project-specific shortcoming, it directly affects the sustainability and scaling of results. Importantly, results are not spreading organically across the system: as one stakeholder noted, *"it doesn't diffuse naturally... you would expect it to, but it doesn't"*. Sustaining impact therefore depends on consolidating current approaches into a replicable blueprint and pursuing more deliberate scaling strategies.

At the micro level, there are clear signs of sustained behavioural change, but long-term sustainability is constrained by limited follow-up support, funding, and structural conditions. Interviewees consistently described shifts in mindset and practices, with firms becoming more disciplined, data-driven, and proactive, and in some cases continuing to invest in skills independently (e.g., pursuing further training at their own cost). Others emphasised that improvements could become embedded where internal ownership is strong, pointing to emerging organisational change beyond the initial intervention. However, sustainability depends on whether these changes translate into viable and growing businesses. Stakeholders highlighted gaps in post-training support, including limited access to finance, equipment, and mentoring. While some partners have extended support, these efforts remain selective and resource dependent. More broadly, structural constraints within sectors, such as market access limitations and competitiveness pressures, continue to affect firm viability. Some stakeholders emphasised that sustainability depends on whether firms become *“profitable companies that can employ more people”* and highlighting the need to link productivity improvements to market access and commercial outcomes.

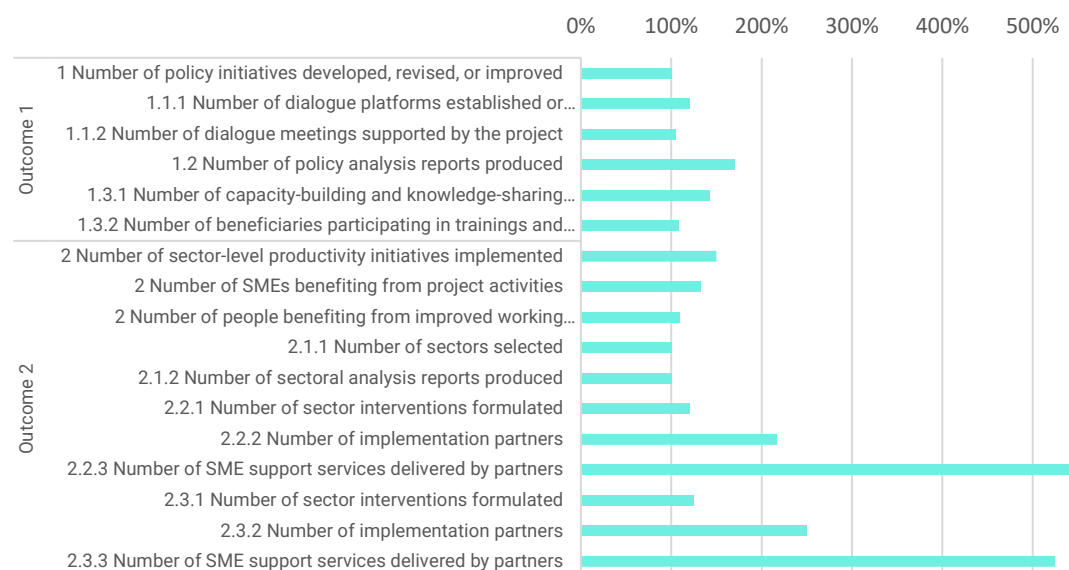
Across all levels and project components, there is a strong sense of ownership which is driven by the demand-led approach and perceived relevance of the activities. Stakeholders further emphasised the programme’s facilitative approach, *“locals... in the lead”*, which has strengthened capacities and led to sustained engagement.

4.3.3. Viet Nam

Effectiveness and Impact

Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. shows that Viet Nam is performing strongly across all indicators, with all targets already met or exceeded. Under Outcome 1, policy-level results are fully achieved or surpass expectations, with policy analysis reports reaching 170% and capacity-building activities at 142%. Dialogue platforms (120%) and meetings (105%) indicate steady engagement, while participation in trainings is slightly above target (108%), suggesting solid but more moderate expansion compared to other areas. Under Outcome 2, performance is particularly strong, with all indicators meeting or exceeding targets. Sector-level initiatives (150%), SME outreach (132%), and improvements in working conditions (109%) all demonstrate good progress in both delivery and reach. Output-level indicators show especially high overachievement, notably in the number of implementation partners (217% and 250%) and SME support services delivered (540% and 525%), reflecting extensive partner engagement and a high volume of service provision. Overall, **the results point to a very strong implementation trajectory**, reflecting particularly effective scaling through partner engagement.

Figure 4: Achievements measured against the LogFrame targets for Viet Nam (status December 2025)



Note: Percentage progress is estimated as the ratio of current achievements to end-of-phase targets ($\text{Actual} \div \text{Target} \times 100$).

*Indicators numbered 1 and 2 represent outcome-level indicators, while sub-indicators (e.g. 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2, 2.1.1, etc.) represent output-level indicators measuring specific activities, deliverables, or implementation results.

**It is important to note that progress against outcome indicators does not always reflect systemic change. These indicators focus on outputs (e.g. workshops, participants), while behavioural and institutional changes are captured through complementary tools such as Outcome Surveys (see Efficiency section).

Policy-level effectiveness stands out as particularly strong, influencing national policy processes and shaping key reforms in employment and productivity. Stakeholders consistently emphasised the programme's contribution to the revised Employment Law (2025), regarded as “really progressive” for integrating productivity, decent work, inclusivity, and labour market functioning within a single framework, including provisions on anti-discrimination, recognition of private employment services, and the introduction of a labour market information system (LMIS). Beyond legislative reform, the programme also contributed to **building the foundations for stronger public sector capability**: addressing fragmented coordination through the proposed National Productivity Committee, enhancing analytical capacity for the National Statistics Office (NSO) with the introduction of a multi-factor productivity (MFP) approach, and expanding the policy scope beyond labour law to SME development and sustainable business. This points to a systemic ambition, even if the institutionalisation of these elements is still ongoing²¹.

All stakeholders pointed out that **the programme's added value lay in its technical role**, providing evidence-based analysis, international benchmarking, and structured policy dialogue, rather than donor-led agenda setting, positioning it as a trusted partner, often filling a gap where few other development actors were active. However, **administrative reforms significantly affected policy-level work** by disrupting institutional continuity and slowing engagement processes. Interviewees

²¹ While the revised Employment Law was adopted in 2025, several other reforms and coordination mechanisms referenced here remain at different stages of development or operationalisation. For example, Resolution 06/NQ-CP and the National Programme on Increasing Labour Productivity to 2030 have been formally adopted and are under implementation, whereas coordination mechanisms such as the proposed National Productivity Committee remain under development and not yet fully operational.

point to the merger and reallocation of ministerial mandates (e.g. merger of Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) into Ministry of Finance (MOF), and merger of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) into Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)). This created uncertainty over ownership and stalled collaboration, for example, delaying decisions on the proposed National Productivity Committee and the institutional anchoring of the National Labour Productivity Programme, thereby slowing implementation and weakening the coherence of otherwise stronger policy-level achievements.

At the meso level, the programme has contributed to incremental but meaningful changes in how public and private enterprise support organisations understand and perform their roles, particularly in digitalisation and green transformation. Interviews pointed to a shift from initial scepticism to active engagement, as these abstract agendas became tangible and linked to “*real efficiency for companies*.” This has been enabled in part by the programme’s effective identification and engagement of relevant sector actors, allowing it to work through organisations with both convening power and operational potential. As a result, these actors are increasingly repositioning themselves as connectors within the ecosystem, bridging policy priorities and enterprise needs, linking firms to relevant external expertise, and supporting more demand-driven adoption. This shift is reflected in the emergence of more practical, service-oriented functions and tools (e.g. e-learning, green productivity training, greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting, and digital pilots such as computerised maintenance management systems (CMMS) and Internet of Things (IoT)-based monitoring), alongside stronger facilitation of peer learning and firm, provider linkages.

However, interviews consistently noted that **the associations are still not fully performing their intermediary role.** While their capacity to support enterprises has strengthened, partly thanks to the programme, few associations are yet able to deliver advanced services, aggregate enterprise demand effectively, translate this demand into sectoral strategies, and feed them into policy processes remains limited. As a result, while associations are becoming more effective in supporting firms, their role as a bridge between micro-level learning and macro-level reform remains partial. This reflects not only internal capacity gaps but also political and institutional dynamics in Viet Nam, where intermediary organisations operate with constrained mandates and limited space to influence policy, leaving a persistent gap in bottom-up feedback and system-wide learning. At the same time, **the observed shift towards more active, service-oriented roles represents meaningful progress, particularly given the starting point and the programme’s scope,** with further consolidation of these functions likely requiring sustained support over a longer time horizon and likely across multiple programme phases or complementary initiatives.

Some initial linkages between national and provincial actors are emerging, particularly in the wood sector, and are already supported by existing coordination structures. For example, the Viet Nam Timber and Forest Product Association (VIFOREST) operates at the national level, while the Handicraft and Wood Industry Association of Ho Chi Minh City (HAWA) represents a key provincial/city-level actor. Their collaboration includes joint organisation of industry events, participation in policy dialogues, and shared initiatives such as trade promotion platforms. These interactions reflect a degree of structured, sector-wide coordination across levels. However, interviews suggest that these linkages are not yet fully institutionalised into formal policy integration mechanisms, limiting their ability to systematically translate local experience into national policy and sector strategies. Strengthening and institutionalising these connections could provide a pathway to better integrate local experience into national policy and sector

strategies, while also pointing to a role for the programme in supporting provincial actors to articulate longer-term sector visions, beyond short-term enterprise support.

At the enterprise level, the programme was clearly effective, generating visible and measurable improvements in both sectors. Stakeholders highlighted tangible improvements in productivity, management practices, and working conditions, particularly in relation to digitalisation and green transition²². This is strongly corroborated by survey data, with all responding enterprises reporting increased production using the same or fewer inputs and 94% indicating improvements in worker productivity, alongside near-universal gains in cost reduction and management practices, while 99% of enterprises reported higher employee satisfaction and 77% reported wage increases²³. However, several partners emphasised that **the duration and intensity of support were insufficient to achieve deeper and more sustained transformation at enterprise level**. Short intervention timelines limited the depth of change, particularly for more complex operational or behavioural shifts. As one partner noted, *“the time was short... how can we change?”*. This is especially relevant for areas such as lean production, digital transformation, and management systems, which require not only technical adjustments but also changes in mindset and organisational culture.

Another strength of the programme is the strong integration of cross-cutting issues. At policy level, gender diagnostics informed legislative reforms and broader employment policies, while at enterprise level, environmental sustainability was operationalised through concrete interventions such as GHG accounting, energy efficiency, and sustainable materials. Importantly, these themes were not treated as standalone objectives but integrated into productivity and competitiveness narratives. This integration is reflected in measurable results: in 2025, a targeted energy management intervention with 10 pilot enterprises achieved verified annual electricity savings of 798,195 kWh and estimated emissions reductions of 526.17 tonnes of CO₂.

Sustainability

Strong government and technical ownership at policy level provides a solid basis for sustainability, but implementation remains the key risk. Interviewees attributed policy-level sustainability to the government’s prioritisation of its productivity agenda, its demand for high-quality technical inputs, and enhanced technical ownership of key government agencies. Many programme-supported reforms and systems were already anchored in national institutions, including the new Employment Law adopted in June 2025 and productivity measurement frameworks are in the process of institutionalisation. At the same time, interviews highlight continued reliance on external expertise, *“we have not yet fully mastered the calculation and processing techniques.”*, indicating sustainability will depend on deepened knowledge transfer and ongoing capacity development.

The key challenge going forward is no longer policy formulation but implementation. As one stakeholder noted, *“implementation is where Vietnam remains weak”*, with gaps only becoming visible once policies are operationalised. Interviewees pointed to institutional fragmentation, unclear coordination mandates, and the critical need to identify where implementation fails and

²² In the wood sector, the CMMS pilot at Lam Viet reportedly reduced breakdown time by 40%, cut maintenance costs by 20%, and generated estimated annual savings of US\$72,000, with investment recoverable within five months.

²³ Viet Nam Enterprises Annual Outcome Survey Report 2025. The enterprise survey covered 87 enterprises, out of a broader group of approximately 206 enterprises supported in 2025. The majority of respondents are medium-sized firms (69%), with the remainder primarily small enterprises (31%), concentrated in machine manufacturing (76%) and wood processing (24%).

to support practical solutions to mitigate the respective challenges. This suggests that macro-level effectiveness is high, but its ultimate impact and sustainability remain contingent on stronger downstream translation.

At the meso level, the sustainability of results remains uncertain as recent improvements have not yet translated into fully functional and strategically oriented sector actors. Although supported associations and support organisations increasingly operate with defined mandates, plans, and service models, interviews suggest these are largely focused on member services rather than higher-order sector functions like market intelligence, strategic coordination, and policy linkage, which are critical for sustaining and scaling systemic change. There was unanimous agreement that capacity constraints persist at a strategic level, with priorities often skewed towards short-term delivery rather than longer-term sector development²⁴. In addition, limited mandate and space to influence policy constrain their intermediary role, weakening feedback loops between enterprise experience and policy processes. This points to a need for the programme to move beyond individual organisational support towards fostering collaborative management at sector level, bringing actors together around shared priorities, and longer-term development pathways, while continuing to strengthen the capacities of sectoral partners to effectively perform these roles over time.

Enterprise-level sustainability is strong, particularly where interventions align with business incentives. Interviews highlight continued uptake in the wood sector, especially in energy efficiency, GHG management, and digital tools such as CMMS, and in the machinery sector, where firms were adopting basic digitalisation, process improvements, and productivity-enhancing technologies. Survey evidence indicated that all respondents considered it likely or very likely that they would sustain the practices introduced over the next two years²⁵, and interviews reflected a shift in mindsets, with firms increasingly investing their own resources to sustain improvements even in challenging economic conditions, as one interviewee noted, “*we invest even when revenue doesn’t increase*”, a signal that externally initiated support is giving way to internally motivated upgrading. However, sustainability depends on the degree to which improvements are fully embedded into enterprise systems. While practices with clear financial returns are likely to be maintained, more incremental or process-oriented changes may weaken over time if not standardised or reinforced, particularly under ongoing market pressures.

The initial embedding of services through private partners points towards more sustainable, market-based models, though these remain nascent. The programme has supported the emergence of new services by reducing risk and linking enterprises with providers, “*ILO played a catalytic role... buying down the risk*”, with some evidence of increased demand for digitalisation consultancy and productivity-related support. However, uptake remains limited and uneven, reflecting the still underdeveloped nature of the SME-focused enterprise support market, where few providers offer viable, SME-oriented services at scale. This reflects structural constraints in the market itself, with the programme appropriately playing a catalytic role in reducing initial risk and stimulating early demand within an emerging ecosystem.

²⁴ Notwithstanding these constraints, the programme has contributed to important strategic shifts among sector partners. In the wood sector, green transformation has been integrated into the strategic agendas of several associations, alongside increased engagement with the Ministry of Industry and Trade. In the machinery sector, partners such as VASI have strengthened their role in knowledge accumulation and transfer, supporting member firms’ integration into global supply chains. These developments indicate emerging foundations for more strategic sector engagement.

²⁵ Ibid.

Scaling beyond pilots, however, remains limited due to behavioural and systemic constraints.

While the programme has helped foster the emergence of enterprise-level ‘agents of change’ and encouraged participating firms to become more receptive to new practices, this momentum has yet to translate into wider sector-wide adoption, even where peer learning activities have begun to generate interest among other firms. Interviews suggested that this was not only due to structural constraints but also reflected how firms adopt change: many remain cautious, prioritising short-term production pressures and acting only when benefits are clearly quantified or externally driven. They emphasised the importance of framing interventions in concrete, business-relevant terms, for example, emphasising cost reduction, energy savings, efficiency gains or export readiness rather than abstract notions such as green transition. Together, this highlights the need not only to showcase successful pilots but to articulate their financial value clearly and provide concrete, actionable pathways for wider adoption.

Overall, **the breadth of support across levels, sectors, and themes has limited the depth and sustainability of the programme.** Stakeholders consistently noted that sustainability requires sustained engagement and repetition, *“it has to be repeated again and again for people to really absorb it”*, whereas one-off activities or short interventions are unlikely to generate lasting change. At the same time, this breadth reflects the evolving nature of both demand and supply in an underdeveloped market system, where priorities are not always clearly defined from the outset. This suggests that while greater focus and continuity will be important in future phases to consolidate gains, such focus will need to be applied flexibly and adapted over time in response to changing market conditions and emerging opportunities. For example, in practice, this implies a stronger emphasis on implementation support at policy level (e.g. with Agency for Private Enterprise and Collective Economy Development (APED) and Institute for Policy and Strategy Studies (IPSS) to translate reforms into enterprise-level impact), more strategic, sector-wide engagement at meso level, and deeper, more structured pathways at enterprise level, focusing on scalable approaches to dual transformation (digitalisation and green) rather than fragmented, firm-by-firm support²⁶.

5. Conclusions

This chapter presents the overall conclusions of the evaluation, drawing on the evidence from the findings to assess the programme’s performance and strategic direction. Given the pilot nature of the programme, the evaluation assesses plausible contribution rather than direct causal attribution of productivity gains, based on triangulation across programme monitoring data, surveys, interviews, and documentary evidence. It examines the programme’s key achievements, identifies where its added value is most significant, and highlights the main strategic issues that require further attention. These conclusions provide the basis for the recommendations set out in the following chapter.

Relevance – Highly satisfactory

²⁶ According to the ILO team, while enterprise-level support has often taken the form of firm-by-firm interventions, this partly reflects an adaptive approach in an evolving market context, where diverse pilots were necessary to test solutions and build the foundation for future scaling.

The programme is highly relevant across all three pilot countries, with interventions closely aligned to national priorities, ILO frameworks and donor objectives. Its demand-led and consultative design fostered strong stakeholder ownership and enabled interventions to respond to country-specific needs. Productivity proved to be a pragmatic and politically viable entry point for advancing decent work, while sector selection was grounded in rigorous diagnostics and stakeholder consultation. Stakeholders also valued the programme's focus on addressing key structural constraints to productivity and decent work across policy, sectoral and enterprise levels. However, concerns remained regarding the translation of productivity gains into broader decent work outcomes, with evidence of improvements in wages, worker representation and job quality remaining mixed. The broad scope and responsiveness of the programme contributed to perceptions of fragmentation, with activities dispersed across multiple actors and levels, sometimes obscuring the overall strategy and reducing strategic focus. Overall, **the programme is highly relevant and well positioned, but would benefit from sharper prioritisation, stronger coherence, and a more explicit focus on demonstrating and communicating decent work outcomes.**

Efficiency - Satisfactory

Efficiency is overall high, supported by improving financial delivery, a lean and effective decentralised management structure, strong technical support from programme staff, and productive coordination across global and country levels. Stakeholders consistently praised the quality, responsiveness and expertise of programme teams, while trust-based partnerships with national institutions and development partners helped extend reach and maintain momentum. Governance structures, particularly the Programme Advisory Committees (PACs), were widely valued for fostering dialogue, alignment and stakeholder ownership. The programme also benefited from effective knowledge sharing and technical backstopping across ILO levels, while its monitoring system evolved into a useful tool for tracking progress and supporting adaptive management. However, resources remained weighted towards enterprise-level interventions, building on the programme's comparative advantage in generating visible results at firm level. Achieving more durable and systemic change in Phase II will require stronger investment in the policy and sectoral dimensions. Efficiency was also constrained by heavy reporting and compliance requirements, which increased transaction costs for programme teams and partners. While monitoring systems captured early results, evidence of higher-level systemic impact remained limited. External factors, including administrative procedures, institutional fragmentation, economic uncertainty and country-specific political dynamics, further increased transaction costs and required continuous adaptation to sustain implementation.

Effectiveness – Satisfactory; Impact – Not rated; emerging contribution only

Results are real and meaningful but insufficiently integrated across levels to generate systemic change. Across all three countries, the programme has achieved most of its formal LogFrame targets. Enterprise-level results are the most consistent and tangible achievement. Management practices, productivity systems, and working conditions have improved measurably, with strong survey evidence confirming behavioural change at firm level. At sector level, Ghana's shea sector stands out, with the establishment of employers' and workers' organisations, a first collective bargaining agreement, and a transparent pricing mechanism framework, as a genuine example of meso-level institutional innovation. In South Africa and Viet Nam, sector-level work has strengthened capacities and dialogue but in these more mature systems, systemic change is harder to observe. Policy-level results, including the revised Employment Law in Viet Nam,

Ghana's Labour Bill, and South Africa's National Employment Policy, are meaningful process achievements, but their translation into enacted reform and sustained institutional change remains largely prospective. **The central structural limitation is the same across all three countries: linkages across policy, sectoral, and enterprise interventions are weak, stakeholders frequently lack visibility of activities at other levels, and teams have tended to prioritise deliverables within each level rather than investing in coordinated action across them.**

Early signs are visible, but systemic impact is not yet evident and will take time to materialise. Beyond individual results, the programme's contribution to systemic change remains limited at this stage, and this is to be expected. Systemic impact, understood as durable shifts in incentives, institutional behaviour, and structural constraints that generate further change beyond the programme, operates over timeframes that exceed those of a pilot phase, and cannot be reasonably assessed at this point. What we can observe are early signs. Some cross-level linkages are emerging: policy-sector connections in Ghana through collective bargaining, enterprise-association linkages in Viet Nam through policy-translated service delivery to firms, interinstitutional dialogue in South Africa. These offer promising models, but they are not yet systematically operationalised. The programme has generated results at each level; it has not yet generated the compounding effects across levels that its ecosystem ambition requires. Phase II must make cross-level integration a deliberate design feature, building vertical feedback loops that connect enterprise experience to sector strategy and policy reform.

Gender equality and environmental sustainability are reflected unevenly across the programme's results. Gender has been more consistently mainstreamed: female participation and ownership are high among supported enterprises, inclusive workplace practices have been adopted at firm level, and in Ghana the shea sector's workforce composition and the economic empowerment of women pickers and processors represent meaningful advances. In Viet Nam, gender diagnostics informed legislative reforms, while in South Africa targeted interventions supported women-led cooperatives and survivors of gender-based violence. Environmental sustainability tells a more differentiated story. In Viet Nam, it has been a strength: GHG accounting, energy efficiency measures, and digital-green integration have been operationalised at enterprise level, with results that are concrete, measured, and embedded in a broader sustainability narrative. In Ghana and South Africa, progress has been more incremental: solar installation and waste reduction practices in Ghana, and green productivity modules in South Africa, represent positive steps but remain limited in scale and depth. Their strategic relevance is established; the challenge for Phase II is to integrate them more deliberately into programme design, and the sectoral and policy processes that shape incentives and standards.

Sustainability - Moderately satisfactory

Sustainability prospects are generally positive across the three countries, underpinned by strong stakeholder ownership, institutional capacity building and the embedding of tools, approaches and practices within national institutions and partner organisations. **At enterprise level, improvements in productivity, management practices and working conditions are likely to endure, as many firms have internalised new approaches and, in some cases, are independently investing to sustain and deepen improvements, signalling embedded behavioural change.** At sector level, the institutional foundations established, particularly in Ghana's shea value chain, provide a credible basis for continuity, but many interventions are not yet sufficiently institutionalised within sector structures to support wider diffusion. **Sector actors and business support organisations require stronger capacity to aggregate enterprise demand, provide**

services, coordinate collective action and feed learning into policy processes. Policy-level sustainability is most contingent, dependent on the completion of pending reform processes and sustained political commitment. Across all levels, the defining challenge is the same: interventions have achieved demonstrable depth within supported firms, sectors and institutions, they have not yet generated the institutional, market-based or policy mechanisms needed to drive adoption at scale. The programme has demonstrated that its approach works; Phase II must focus on institutionalising and scaling to achieve broader systemic change.

In short, the programme has demonstrated clear value. Its conceptual framework, linking enterprise performance to sector institutions and national policy within an ecosystem model, is validated as analytically sound and operationally relevant, and the evidence confirms real improvements for supported enterprises and workers. In Phase I, the programme has built relationships, generated evidence, and tested approaches that provide a solid foundation for Phase II. The key challenge for Phase II is to move from breadth to depth: while Phase I successfully established relevance across multiple levels and actors, this breadth limited the focus and continuity needed for scaling; meanwhile weak integration across policy, sectoral and enterprise interventions reduced the programme's systemic impact.

Table 2 provides an overview of the evaluation ratings across the six DAC criteria, together with the strength of evidence underpinning each assessment.

Table 2: Evaluation ratings

DAC Criterion	Rating	Sources of Evidence	Strength of Evidence
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	Stakeholder interviews, outcome surveys, programme documents across all three countries	High – convergent evidence across multiple methods and all three countries; findings are consistent and mutually reinforcing
Efficiency	Satisfactory	Financial expenditure data, progress reports, stakeholder interviews	Moderate – financial data is reliable and well-documented; governance and reporting inefficiencies are well-observed but difficult to quantify precisely
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	Outcome surveys, logframe data, progress reports, stakeholder interviews, field observations	Moderate – evidence is strong at enterprise level but relies more heavily on process indicators and qualitative testimony at sector and policy levels
Impact	N/A	Stakeholder interviews, outcome surveys, field observations of early outcome indicators	Limited – systemic attribution is inherently difficult within a pilot phase timeframe; evidence rests largely on early indicators and stakeholder projections rather than measured systemic change
Sustainability	Moderately Satisfactory	Outcome surveys, progress reports, stakeholder interviews, field observation of behavioural change indicators	Limited – enterprise-level evidence is reliable and well-grounded; sector and policy-level assessments rely more on stakeholder projections than demonstrated continuity

Note: The rating scale applied in this evaluation uses a six-point performance scale ranging from Highly Unsatisfactory to Highly Satisfactory. Full definitions of each rating level, together with the strength of evidence scale, are provided in Annex 5.

6. Lessons learned and emerging good practices

This section summarises key lessons learned and good practices that emerged during the programme implementation. They are intended for the programme as a whole and are applicable to all three countries. The full details of each lesson are included in ILO's template format in Annex 6 and Annex 7.

Lesson learned 1: Productivity is an effective and politically viable entry point for advancing decent work, but translating productivity gains into decent work outcomes requires deliberate design.

The programme has validated productivity as a pragmatic and politically acceptable entry point for engaging governments, employers, and workers across diverse institutional contexts. It has enabled dialogue and collaboration where a more explicit decent work framing might have met resistance. However, while enterprise-level evidence points to improvements in areas such as working conditions, worker satisfaction, and workplace practices among supported firms, the translation of productivity gains into broader and sustained decent work outcomes, including wages, inclusiveness, and systemic labour market improvements, has remained uneven and not automatic across contexts. The lesson is that the entry point works, but the connection to decent work outcomes must be deliberately designed into interventions, through explicit linkages, for instance, to wage-setting mechanisms, OSH standards, or worker voice, rather than assumed to follow from productivity improvements alone.

Lesson learned 2: A demand-led approach builds ownership but requires a strong strategic framework to prevent fragmentation.

The programme's demand-led design has been a genuine strength, generating stakeholder ownership and contextual relevance across three diverse country contexts. However, without a sufficiently strong system-wide strategy to guide it, responsiveness to stakeholder demand has led to activities being spread too widely, unclear prioritisation, and perceptions of fragmentation. The lesson is not to abandon demand-led engagement, as its contribution to ownership and relevance is real and valuable, but to anchor it within a clear Theory of Change that defines boundaries, sequences activities, and ensures that individual responses to demand reinforce rather than dilute the overall strategic direction.

Lesson learned 3: Pilot-phase breadth is necessary for learning, but depth and focus are prerequisites for systemic impact.

Phase I has served its purpose as a pilot: testing approaches, building relationships, generating evidence, and establishing credibility across multiple levels and sectors. This breadth was appropriate and necessary. The lesson, however, is that breadth alone cannot generate systemic change. Results have been strongest where engagement has been sustained, relationships deep, and support intensive, as in Ghana's shea sector and Viet Nam's enterprise-level digital and green transformation work. Where support has been broad but shallow, results have remained fragmented and difficult to scale. Moving from pilot to systemic impact requires a deliberate shift:

fewer priorities, deeper engagement, and a sustained focus on the mechanisms – institutional, financial, and policy – that allow proven results to spread beyond the cohort of directly supported actors.

Lesson learned 4: Systemic change requires deliberate integration across levels – it does not emerge automatically from results at each level.

Phase I generated meaningful results at enterprise, sector, and policy levels across all three countries, yet these did not compound into the reinforcing, cross-level effects the ecosystem approach envisages. Stakeholders lacked visibility of activities at other levels, feedback loops were weak, and teams tended to prioritise within-level deliverables over coordinated cross-level action. Where cross-level linkages did emerge – collective bargaining connecting policy and sector in Ghana, service delivery linking enterprises and associations in Viet Nam, PAC facilitating coordination in South Africa – they did so because of deliberate investment, not by default. The lesson is clear: cross-level integration must be treated as a design and management responsibility from the outset, not left to emerge. Phase II must build on these models and make it a non-negotiable feature of programme architecture.

Good Practice 1: Building worker and employer organisations simultaneously in informal sectors – Ghana, shea sector

The parallel establishment and strengthening of both the GSWU and the GSEA, culminating in a first collective bargaining agreement in a largely informal value chain, demonstrates that social dialogue and formalisation can be built from a very low institutional base when both sides of the labour relationship are developed together. Rather than focusing exclusively on employer organisation or worker voice in isolation, the programme invested in both simultaneously, creating the conditions for genuine negotiation. This approach, and the sequencing of institutional development with practical tools such as the pricing mechanism framework, offers a replicable model for other informal sectors where formalisation and decent work are intertwined challenges.

Good Practice 2: Training of trainers to embed productivity approaches within national institutions – South Africa

The development of expert trainers and the integration of the combined SCORE-Workplace Challenge methodology into Productivity SA's core service offer represents an effective model for institutionalising programme approaches within national delivery systems. Rather than delivering training directly and repeatedly, the programme invested in building internal capacity within a national institution, enabling independent and sustained delivery beyond the project cycle. The approach has created a replicable, locally owned service model that does not depend on continued external support and offers a practical template for embedding productivity and decent work approaches within existing national infrastructure in other country contexts.

Good Practice 3: Integrating digital and green transformation at enterprise level – Viet Nam

Viet Nam's approach to combining digitalisation and green transition within a single enterprise support offer, rather than treating them as separate thematic workstreams, has proven effective in generating concrete, measurable results. Tools such as GHG accounting, energy efficiency measures, CMMS, and IoT-based monitoring were introduced in an integrated way, framed around productivity and competitiveness rather than abstract sustainability goals. The result was

strong enterprise uptake, with verified energy savings and emissions reductions, and growing independent investment by firms in sustaining and deepening improvements. This integration model offers a practical template for embedding dual transformation into enterprise support programmes.

7. Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this chapter have been formulated based on the findings and the conclusions of the evaluation team.

Recommendation 1: Rebalance towards policy and meso-level engagement for sustainability

<i>Addressees:</i> ILO (global and country teams), Donors <i>Supported by:</i> National partners	<i>Priority:</i> High	<i>Resources:</i> Moderate	<i>Timing:</i> Short term (Phase II design)
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Rationale: Phase I has demonstrated that enterprise-level support works. The evidence base is strong, behavioural change is real, and results are largely sustained within supported firms. However, enterprise-level results have not yet compounded into systemic change, in large part because policy and sector-level engagement has been insufficient in depth, consistency, and strategic focus. Sustainability and scale depend on structural conditions, such as functioning sector institutions, enabling policy frameworks, and feedback loops between levels, that enterprise-level support alone cannot create. Phase II would benefit from a better balance in focus, without abandoning the enterprise-level strengths that give the programme its credibility and reach.

Possible actions²⁷:

- Review and rebalance resource allocation across levels at the outset of Phase II, including budget allocation, staff time, management attention, and sequencing. This should explicitly increase the share directed at policy engagement and sector-level institutional development, while maintaining sufficient enterprise-level support to continue generating practical evidence, piloting scalable approaches, and demonstrating results that can inform broader systemic change. Use this rebalancing as a deliberate signal of strategic intent to partners and donors.
- Identify and prioritise the structural constraints – weak policy frameworks, fragmented sector governance, limited institutional mandates – that enterprise-level support cannot address, and develop targeted strategies to tackle them at the appropriate level.

²⁷ These possible actions represent inputs and reflections from the evaluation team derived from the evidence gathered, stakeholder consultations, and cross-country analysis. They are intended as illustrative operational directions rather than prescriptive implementation measures, which would need to be further refined and agreed during Phase II design and planning.

- Strengthen policy engagement by moving beyond analytical contributions and capacity building towards active support for implementation: identifying where policies stall after formulation, and providing targeted technical assistance to translate reform ambitions into practice.
- Deepen engagement with sector-level actors as intermediaries between policy and enterprise, investing in their capacity to aggregate demand, coordinate stakeholders, and feed enterprise experience into policy processes.
- Ensure that enterprise-level interventions are explicitly designed to inform and connect upward — generating evidence, demonstrating models, and creating demand for the policy and sector changes needed to sustain and scale results.

Recommendation 2: Develop and sharpen country-level ToCs based on Phase I learning

<i>Addressees:</i> ILO (global and country teams)	<i>Priority:</i> High	<i>Resources:</i> Low	<i>Timing:</i> Short term (Phase II design)
<i>Supported by:</i> Donors			

Rationale: Phase I has revealed a persistent tension between demand-led responsiveness and strategic coherence, with activities dispersed across multiple levels, sectors, and actors, limiting cumulative impact. While country-level ToCs were developed and have been used to monitor progress, they have not been sufficiently detailed and were less consistently applied as active management tools to guide prioritisation, sequencing, and strategic focus. Phase II design offers a critical opportunity to correct this: narrowing priorities, strengthening cross-level linkages, and ensuring that demand-driven engagement is anchored within a coherent, country-specific strategic framework.

Possible actions:

- Develop country ToC based on Phase I evidence, narrowing sector and thematic priorities to where the programme has the strongest comparative advantage.
- Explicitly map and sequence linkages across policy, sector, enterprise, and worker levels, identifying who connects what, when, and how.
- Use revised Theories of Change as active management tools, reviewed regularly and used to guide resource allocation and strategic dialogue with partners and donors.

Recommendation 3: Prioritise deeper, more focused engagement on a limited number of priority constraints, alongside more targeted support to fewer high-potential partners, with stronger cross-level linkages

<i>Addressees:</i> ILO country teams	<i>Priority:</i> High	<i>Resources:</i> Medium	<i>Timing:</i> Short–Medium term
<i>Supported by:</i>			

ILO global team, National partners			
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Rationale: Phase I experience shows that the programme has engaged across a wide range of issues, levels, and partners within the system, increasing coordination costs, diluted focus, and limited depth of engagement. While the demand-led approach has strengthened relevance and ownership, it has also contributed to a proliferation of activities and partnerships not always anchored in a clear set of strategic priorities. Results have been strongest where relationships are sustained, trust-based, and operationally close. Moving from breadth to depth - concentrating on a smaller number of priority constraints, fewer partners, stronger relationships, more deliberate cross-level linkages - is essential to generate the compounding effects across levels that systemic change requires.

Possible actions:

- Identify a limited number of priority constraints or sector transformation pathways at the outset of Phase II, and use these to guide all subsequent engagement.
- Conduct a structured partner review at the outset of Phase II, assessing each partner's strategic relevance, capacity, and potential to generate cross-level linkages, and use this to inform a more selective engagement strategy.
- Develop partnership agreements that explicitly define cross-level roles and responsibilities (e.g. enterprise–sector–policy linkages), while recognising structural constraints; where mandates or capacities are limited, use pragmatic solutions (e.g. pilots, informal coordination, or designated intermediaries) to enable functional linkages.
- Invest in fewer, deeper technical assistance relationships, prioritising partners with the mandate, motivation, and organisational capacity to sustain and scale results independently.
- Develop and scale tools, methodologies, and service models that enable broader enterprise uptake beyond individualised support, reducing reliance on direct delivery.

Recommendation 4: Prioritise capacity building and institutional strengthening of sector actors

<i>Addressees:</i> ILO country teams	<i>Priority:</i> High	<i>Resources:</i> Moderate	<i>Timing:</i> Medium term
<i>Supported by:</i> ILO global team, National partners			

Rationale: Sector actors like associations, intermediary organisations, and tripartite bodies – are the missing link in the programme's ecosystem. Phase I has demonstrated that enterprise-level results exist but do not scale organically, and that policy-level outputs do not consistently reach firms. Sector actors are the institutional layer that should bridge these levels: aggregating enterprise demand, delivering services, coordinating stakeholders, and feeding learning into policy. In all three countries, these actors remain under-resourced, with limited mandates and

insufficient capacity to fulfil this role. Strengthening them is a prerequisite for sustainability and scale.

Possible actions:

- Develop tailored institutional strengthening plans for priority sector actors in each country, addressing strategy, governance, service delivery capacity, financial sustainability, and policy engagement functions.
- Support sector actors to develop and operationalise service models that are demand-driven, financially viable, and explicitly linked to both enterprise needs and policy priorities.
- Facilitate peer learning and exchange across sector actors within and across countries, enabling them to learn from each other's experience and build a shared understanding of effective intermediary functions within the productivity and decent work ecosystem.
- Where relevant, advocate with government and donors for improved resourcing and mandates for key sector institutions, recognising that their capacity constraints are not only organisational but also structural.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference and Inception Report



ILO EVAL_Terms of
Reference_PE4DW fin



ILO_PE4DW_Inception
Report_09.03.26.pdf

Annex 2: Evaluation question matrix

In the evaluation matrix, we added sub-questions to each evaluation question. The focus of the evaluation was on the lead questions while the sub-questions merely provided a lens or direction for inquiry. The sub-questions were therefore not explicitly answered in the evaluation report. We used document review (doc), interviews (int), and data (including ILO M&E data and survey results) as sources and methods for data collection. Priority source/methods indicated with ●, secondary with ○.

EQ #	Evaluation questions and sub-questions	Measures or Indicators	Information Sources	Doc	Data	Int	Informants	Analysis
	Relevance							
1	How well has the programme responded to national priorities on productivity and decent work in the pilot countries? - Was the programme designed in line with national policies and reform agendas? - Did it adapt to evolving priorities during implementation? - Do national actors perceive it as relevant?	Alignment with national productivity and employment policies. Evidence that sector diagnostics informed programme priorities. Stakeholder perceptions of programme relevance to national and sector needs. Evidence that the programme adapted	Country strategies Project design document (Prodoc) Programme partners and stakeholders	●		●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Identification of relevant plan & policies Synthesis of responses of interviewees Triangulation based on different data sources

		to changing priorities.						
2	To what extent are the programme aligned with the ILO's strategic frameworks (DWCPs, P&B, SDGs) and donor priorities? - How clearly is the Programme reflected in the relevant DWCPs, and how does it contribute to specific P&B outcomes and SDG targets? - How well does the Programme reflect SECO's and NORAD's strategic objectives on private sector development, employment or green growth?	Alignment with DWCP and ILO Programme and Budget outcomes. Consistency with SECO and NORAD strategic priorities. Evidence of integration within national DWCP frameworks.	ILO P&B and DWCPs Programme partners and stakeholders	●		○	Programme teams Donors	Identification of relevant outcomes and targets Synthesis of responses of interviewees Triangulation based on different data sources
3	To what extent did the Phase I design focus on the real drivers and barriers of productivity and decent work? - Are the ToC and results framework clearly defined, with realistic pathways from policy to enterprise level and well-specified links between productivity and decent work? - Which assumptions in the design have proven correct, and which less so? - Were any important drivers or constraints underestimated or overlooked? - Did diagnostics meaningfully shape sector selection and intervention design? - Did the macro-meso-micro approach reflect the actual structure of constraints in each country?	Clarity and coherence of the Theory of Change and results framework. Evidence that diagnostics informed sector selection and interventions. Extent to which interventions address key productivity and decent work constraints.	Prodoc ToC Programme partners and stakeholders	●		●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Analysis of design documents Synthesis of responses of interviewees Triangulation based on different data sources

		Plausibility of macro-meso-micro linkages in the design.						
	Effectiveness							
4	To what extent has the programme achieved its intended outcomes at the policy, sectoral, and enterprise levels? - What tangible results have been observed in institutions, enterprises, and workplaces as a result of programme interventions? - Did the programme effectively target the main systemic bottlenecks to productivity growth and decent work at policy, sectoral, and enterprise levels?	Progress towards planned outputs and outcomes. Evidence of policy or institutional changes linked to the programme. Evidence of sector initiatives addressing productivity constraints. Evidence of changes in enterprise practices or working conditions.	Progress reports Programme partners and stakeholders M&E data Survey results	○	●	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Analysis of progress reported Synthesis of responses of interviewees Triangulation based on different data sources
5	To what extent did the programme effectively contribute to gender equality and environmental sustainability? What tangible changes can be observed at policy, sectoral or enterprise level in relation to gender equality and environmental sustainability?	Integration of gender equality in programme activities. Evidence of gender-related workplace improvements.	Progress reports Programme partners and stakeholders M&E data Survey results	○	○	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Analysis of progress reported Comparison of baseline, target, and achievement values Synthesis of responses of interviewees

		Integration of environmental sustainability considerations.						Triangulation based on different data sources
	Efficiency							
6	To what extent have the programme's management, coordination, and governance structures at global and country levels been effective? - How effective has coordination been between ILO departments (e.g. ENTERPRISES, EMPLOYMENT), regional teams and country offices? - To what extent were the Global and National Advisory Committees effective in guiding implementation and fostering ownership? - How well have monitoring and reporting systems supported learning, adaptation and decision-making?	Effectiveness of coordination across ILO units and country teams. Functioning of global and national advisory structures. Use of monitoring systems for learning and decision-making.	Prodoc Progress reports Programme partners and stakeholders	○		●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Synthesis of responses of interviewees Triangulation based on different data sources
7	How efficiently has the programme delivered its results? - Were financial, human and technical resources appropriately allocated across countries and levels of intervention? - Were implementation approaches and delivery mechanisms cost-effective?	Adequacy of resource allocation across countries and levels. Perceived cost-effectiveness of implementation approaches.	Prodoc Programme partners and stakeholders Financial reports Progress reports	●	○	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Analysis of financial reports Synthesis of efficiency related information Synthesis of responses of interviewees Triangulation based on different data sources
	Impact							

8	To what extent and how has the programme contributed to a more enabling environment for productivity and decent work? - What tangible changes in productivity, working conditions or enterprise behaviour can be linked to these policy or institutional reforms? - Have the reforms altered incentives, practices or decision-making among key actors (e.g. ministries, social partners, enterprises)?	Evidence of policy or institutional influence. Changes in behaviour or practices of sector actors or enterprises. Early indications of productivity or working condition improvements.	Programme partners and stakeholders Progress reports M&E data Survey results		●	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Analysis of data reported Synthesis of responses of interviewees Triangulation based on different data sources
Sustainability								
9	To what extent are the programme's results and changes likely to be sustained beyond Phase I, in terms of national ownership, institutional capacity and behavioural change? - Have national institutions allocated resources, responsibilities or mandates to continue the supported reforms or interventions? - Do partner institutions and stakeholders have the capacity and incentives to maintain changes without continued project support? - Which results appear most robust and institutionalised, and which remain dependent on external funding or technical assistance?	Evidence of institutionalisation of programme-supported reforms. National ownership and resource commitment. Capacity of partners to continue activities independently.	Prodoc Progress reports Programme partners and stakeholders	○		●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Synthesis of responses of interviewees
Recommendations								

10	What strategic recommendations would strengthen the Programme's design, impact, sustainability and integration of cross-cutting issues in a second phase?		Prodoc Programme partners and stakeholders	○		● Representatives of tripartite constituents Programme teams Partners	Synthesis of responses of interviewees
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Annex 3: Interviewees

Interviewees are listed in chronological order.

Table 3: List of interviewees

Institution	Name	Position	Location
Ghana			
Tiyumtaba Shea Processing Centre	Ms. Mary Naab	CEO	Tamale
Tree Crop Development Authority	Mr. Sumaila Alhassan Dubie	Deputy Director (Shea Sector)	Tamale
Ghana Agriculture Workers Union and Ghana Shea Workers Union	Mr. Wumbei Abdulai	Regional Officer – Northern Ghana (GAWU)	Tamale
	Ms. Joana Naab	President (GSWU)	
	Mr. Abdulai Mang	Vice-President (GSWU)	
	Mr. Adam Alhassan Tahidu	GSWU	
Ghana Shea Employers Association	Mr. Zakaria Adam P. Laceera	President	Tamale
	Ms. Hajia Rablatu Abukari	GSEA Vice President	
	Ms. Esther Biile Naanbui	EBM	
	Mr. Zakaria Kande Tungteeya	Administrator	
Gratis Foundation	Mr. Haruna Haleem	Regional Manager (Northern Ghana)	Tamale
Ministry of Trade and Agribusiness and Industry (MoTAI)	Ms. Abena Manso-Howard Gyamfi	Senior Commercial Officer	Accra
Ghana Statistics Services	Mr. Anthony Oduro-Denkyirah	Head, Labour Statistics Unit and Focal Person (PE4DW)	Accra
Management Development Institute	Prof. Elijah Yendaw	Director General	Accra
Ghana Employers Association	Mr. Kingsley Laar	Senior Research Officer	Accra
Trade Union Congress	Mr. Richard Achaempong	Head of Administration	Accra

Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment	Ms. Carolyn Ansoah Kuuzegh	Projeject Officer (Policy, Planning, M&E)	Virtual
SECO	Ms. Charlotte Esenam Afudego	Private Sector & Trade Specialist	Accra
STSG	Mr. John Willson	CEO	Virtual
	Mr. William Kagya	Trainer	
	Ms. Bernice Wilmont Oppong	Trainer	
	Mr. Emmanuel Asamani	Deputy CEO	
National Development Planning Commission	Ms. Eugenia Donkor	Programme Specialist	Virtual
Norwegian Embassy	Ms. Silje S. Vevatne	Counsellor	Virtual
Charisma Fashion	Ms. Faustina Kwakye Asong	CEO	Accra
	Mr. Stephen Tofa	HR Manager	
	Mr. William Hallo	Compliance Manager	
Association of Ghana Apparel Manufacturers	Ms. Nana Poquah	National Coordinator	Virtual
ILO	Mr. Aymen Chahloul	Technical Advisor	Accra ILO Office and Virtual
	Mr. Enoch Cudjoe	PE4DW, National Project Coordinator Outcome 1	
	Mr. Onoma Asiedu	PE4DW, National Project Coordinator Outcome 2	
	Mr. Emmanuel Wullingdool	Project Officer – Northern Ghana	
South Africa			
ILO	Mr. Teklu Kidane Aleme	PE4DW, Project Manager	Pretoria
	Mr. Monde Nyangintsimbi	PE4DW, National Project Coordinator Outcome 1	
	Mr. Caleb Gwaindepi	PE4DW, National Project Coordinator Outcome 2	
	Ms. Nombasa Twantwa	PE4DW, Finance and Administration	
ILO	Mr. Jens Dyring Christensen	Decent Work Specialist	Virtual
ILO	Mr. Alexio Musindo	Country Director	Pretoria

Department of Trade, Industry and Competition	Ms. Joceyln Vass	Chief Director Skills for the Economy	Pretoria
Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC)	Mr. Anton Fiets	Executive Manager	Virtual
	Mr. Claude Pillay	Executive Manager	
Companies and Intellectual Property Commission	Ms. Amanda Lotharingen	Senior Manager Copyright and Intellectual Property Enforcement	Pretoria
ILO	Mr. Jealous Chirove	Employment Specialist	Virtual
National Association of Automotive Components and Allied Manufactures (NAACAM)	Ms. Lebalang Molebele	Project Manager	Pretoria
	Ms. Nomqhele Dube	Analyst	
Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)	Mr. Tengo Tengela	Trade and Industrial Policy Coordinator	Virtual
South African Footwear and Leather Export Council (SAFLEC)	Ms. Nerisha Jairaj	Executive Director	Durban
National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU)	Mr. Narius Moloto	General Secretary	Virtual
Silokoto Trading	Mr. Brian Hlophe	Operation and Administration Manager	Durban
Expert Autotrim	Mr. Renesh Ramlaaken	Production Supervisor	Durban
	Ms. Hohle Nginti Wewe Nyathi Thithikazi	Safety, Health, Environment, and Quality Manager	
Productivity SA	Ms. Amelia NAIDOO	Acting CEO	Durban
	Mr. Mninawa Zwakala	IA Project Manager	
Business Unity South Africa (BUSA)	Ms. Beverly Jack	Employers Representative	Virtual
	Ms. Sanelisiwe Jantjies	Acting Head Social Policy	
SECO	Mr. Shakespear Mudombi	Programme Manager	Pretoria
	Mr. Philipp Ischer	Programme Manager	Virtual
Department of Employment and Labour	Mr. Kgomoto Letoaba	Deputy Director of International Relations	Virtual

	Mr. Sipho Ndebele	Acting Deputy Director General: Labour Policy and Industrial Relations	Virtual
Department of Small Business Development	Basambilu Nkanyani		Virtual
	Khomotso Ramaifo		Virtual
	Maphuti Kgare		Virtual
	Ndivhuwo Nancy Nevhufumba		Virtual
	Nozipho Sithole		Virtual
	Ongeziwe Nongauza		Virtual
	Tidima Mojapelo		Virtual
Viet Nam			
ILO	Ms. Gulmira Asanbaeva	PE4DW, Project Manager	Virtual & Ha Noi
	Ms. Nguyen Thi Le Van	PE4DW, Employment policy specialist	
	Ms. Vu Thi Thu Hang	PE4DW, Enterprise development and private sector specialists	
	Mr. Phung Duc Hoang	PE4DW, Sectoral and technical leads	
ILO	Mr. Felix Weidenkaff	Employment and Labour Market Policy Specialist	Ha Noi
National Statistics Office (NSO)	Mr. Nguyen Huy Minh	Deputy Head, Department of Population and Labour Statistics	Ha Noi
	Ms. Phuong	Statistician	
Norwegian Embassy	Mr. Erlend Skutlaberg	First Secretary	Ha Noi
Institute for Policy and Strategy Study (IPSS) - Central Communist Party's Commission for Policy and Strategy	Ms. Tran Binh Minh	Deputy Head, Department of sectoral and regional economic research	Ha Noi
Vietnam Association for Supporting Industries (VASI)	Ms. Truong Thi Chi Binh	Vice President – General Secretatry Head of Research and Data Department	Ha Noi
	Mr. Pham Hai Phong	Vice President Chief Administrative Officer	

Vietnam Productivity Institute (VNPI), Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST)	Mr. Nguyen Tung Lam	Director	Ha Noi
Public Employment Services (PES), Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)	Mr. Ngo Xuan Lieu	Director	Ha Noi
Agency for Private Sector and Cooperative Economic Development (APED), Ministry of Finance (MOF)	Ms. Nguyen Thi Hong Lam	Manager, Division of Policy, Business environment and International cooperation	Ha Noi
	Ms. Nguyen Bich Thuy	Deputy Manager, Enterprise Support and Business Household Division	
SIPPO Swiss Import Promotion Programme	Ms. Tran Nhu Trang	Country Representative	Ha Noi
Research Institute of Digital Organization and Economy (RIDE)	Mr. Karl Tran	President	Ha Noi
	Ms. Dinh Thi Ly	Head of Project Management	
	Four other team members		
Tomeco Company	Mr. Vu Van Hoi	Production Manager	Ha Noi
	Mr. Mai Van Ngoc	Production Manager	
	Mr. Le Quy Thành	Production Manager	
	Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Son	VASI Coordinator/ trainer	
Natural resource and Environment Consulting center (NREC), University of National resource and environment HCMC	Ms. Nguyen Thi Truyen	Lead Consultant	HCM
Dong Nai Wood Processing Association (DOWA)	Mr. Nguyen Phuong	Vice Chairman President of Vitana International	Dong Nai
	Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Hoai	Deputy Head of Office	
	Ms. Phan Ngoc Lam Ninh	Administrative staff	
Handicraft and wood processing association, HCMC (HAWA)	Mr. Nguyen Chanh Phuong	Vice chairman General Director of HAWA Development Corp.	HCM

	Mr. Nguyen Phi Long	Chief of staf	
Lam Viet Joint Stock Company	Mr. Nguyen Thanh Lam	General Director	HCM
	Ms. Song	Deputy Director	
	Mr. Le Ngoc Hung	Head of Maintenance department	
	Ms. Tram	Secretary	
	Mr. Thien	Head of IT department	
SECO	Mr. Meier Andri Fabian	Deputy Head of Cooperation	Virtual
	Mr. Do Quang Huy	Senior Programme officer	
Global			
ILO	Mr. Stephan Ulrich	Global Programme Coordinator, Enterprises	Virtual
	Ms. Na Eun Mun	Project Officer, Enterprises	
ILO	Mr. Jose Luis Viveros Añorve	Senior Specialist, ACT/EMP	Virtual
SECO	Ms. Andrea Gysel	Deputy Head, International Labour Affairs	Virtual
ILO	Mr. Jean-Francois Klein	Head, Employment Department Management Unit	Virtual
	Mr. Luca Fedi	Technical Specialist, Employment	
ILO	Mr. Michael Watt	Senior Advisor, ACTRAV	Virtual
ILO	Ms. Inviolata Chinyangarara	Specialist, ACTRAV	
ILO	Mr. Dragan Radic	Chief, MSME Branch, Enterprises	Virtual
OECD	Ms. Lucia Cusmano	Head SME and Entrepreneurship Division	Virtual
NORAD	Ms. Ragnhild Eitungjerde Høyvik	Senior Advisor	Virtual

Annex 4: Data collection tool

Government (Ministries, statistical offices, productivity agencies, etc.)

1. Can you provide a brief overview of what your organisation is doing and what is your involvement in the programme?

Relevance

2. How well does the programme's activities fit with your organisation's priorities on productivity, employment and decent work?
 - Was the programme designed in line with national policies and reform agendas? Which ones?
 - Did it adapt to evolving priorities during implementation? Could you give some examples?

Design

3. In your opinion, did the programme address the main structural barriers to productivity and decent work in your country? If yes, which ones? If not, what was missing?
4. Does the way the programme connects policy reform, sector development and enterprise support make strategic sense? Why or why not?
 - Which elements of the design have worked particularly well so far, and which have proven more difficult in practice?
 - Were any important issues overlooked at the design stage?
 - Did the link between productivity improvements and decent work outcomes seem realistic?
 - Was sector selection strategically justified?

Effectiveness

5. What do you see as the most significant changes the programme has introduced at institutional, sectoral, and enterprise levels? Which achievements are you particularly proud of?
6. What are challenges? Were there any unexpected effects of the project, either positive or challenging?
7. Have gender and environmental dimensions been integrated into the programme / supported reforms? Can you provide concrete examples?

Management and efficiency

8. Has the programme been managed efficiently and transparently?
9. How has working with the programme team been? What has gone well, and what could be improved?
10. How effective were coordination and governance structures (e.g. PAC, ILO technical support)?

Impact and sustainability

11. In your view, has the programme contributed to creating a more enabling environment for productivity and decent work in your country? If so, how?
 - Have supported reforms changed institutional behaviour, incentives or practices? Examples?
12. Has your institution allocated resources or formal mandates to sustain results?
13. Which results are most likely to endure, and which remain fragile?

Forward-looking

14. What changes or improvements would you like to see in Phase 2?

Employer and Business Membership Organizations (EBMOs)

1. Can you provide a brief overview of what your organisation is doing and what is your involvement in the programme?

Relevance

2. Did the programme address the most pressing productivity constraints faced by your sector or members? Please share concrete examples.
3. Were you involved in designing and planning the activities?

Design

4. In your opinion, did the programme address the main structural barriers to productivity and decent work in your country? If yes, which ones? If not, what was missing?
5. Does the way the programme connects policy reform, sector development and enterprise support make strategic sense? Why or why not?
 - Which elements of the design have worked particularly well so far, and which have proven more difficult in practice?
 - Were any important issues overlooked at the design stage?
 - Did the link between productivity improvements and decent work outcomes seem realistic?
 - Was sector selection strategically justified?

Effectiveness

6. What do you see as the most significant changes the programme has introduced at institutional, sectoral, and enterprise levels? Which achievements are you particularly proud of?
 - Has your organisation strengthened its services to members (e.g. productivity tools, compliance support, export readiness)?
 - Has collaboration or social dialogue within the sector improved?
7. What are challenges? Were there any unexpected effects of the project, either positive or challenging?
8. Have the sector/ enterprises adopted improved practices regarding working conditions, gender equality or environmental sustainability?

Management and efficiency

9. Has the programme been managed efficiently and transparently?
10. How has working with the programme team been? What has gone well, and what could be improved?
11. How effective were coordination and governance structures (e.g. PAC, ILO technical support)?

Impact and sustainability

12. In your view, has the programme contributed to creating a more enabling environment for productivity and decent work in your sector? If so, how?
13. Are sector-level initiatives likely to continue without donor support? Have member enterprises changed behaviour or decision-making in a lasting way?
14. Which results are most likely to endure, and which remain fragile?

Forward-looking

15. What changes or improvements would you like to see in Phase 2?

Workers' organisations / Trade unions

1. Can you provide a brief overview of what your organisation is doing and what is your involvement in the programme?

Relevance

2. Did the programme respond to workers' priorities regarding productivity and decent work? Were workers meaningfully involved in programme processes?

Design

3. In your opinion, did the programme address the main structural barriers to productivity and decent work in your country? If yes, which ones? If not, what was missing?
4. Does the way the programme connects policy reform, sector development and enterprise support make strategic sense? Why or why not?
 - Which elements of the design have worked particularly well so far, and which have proven more difficult in practice?
 - Were any important issues overlooked at the design stage?
 - Did the link between productivity improvements and decent work outcomes seem realistic?
 - Was sector selection strategically justified?

Effectiveness

5. What do you see as the most significant changes the programme has introduced at institutional, sectoral, and enterprise levels? Which achievements are you particularly proud of?
 - What changes have you observed in working conditions in supported sectors or enterprises?

- Has the use of productivity data influenced wage negotiations or social dialogue?
 - Has union capacity improved (e.g. policy engagement, technical understanding)?
 - Has collaboration or social dialogue within the sector improved?
6. What are challenges? Were there any unexpected effects of the project, either positive or challenging?
 7. Have women workers or vulnerable groups benefited? In what ways?

Management and efficiency

8. Has the programme been managed efficiently and transparently?
9. How has working with the programme team been? What has gone well, and what could be improved?
10. How effective were coordination and governance structures (e.g. PAC, ILO technical support)?

Impact and sustainability

11. In your view, has the programme contributed to creating a more enabling environment for productivity and decent work in your sector? If so, how?
12. Are improvements in working conditions likely to be maintained?
13. Have new workplace practices (e.g. OSH committees, contracts, productivity-linked incentives) been institutionalised?
14. Which results are most likely to endure, and which remain fragile?

Forward-looking

15. What changes or improvements would you like to see in Phase 2?

Enterprises (SMEs)

1. Can you provide a brief overview of what your organisation is doing and what is your involvement in the programme?

Relevance

2. What is the reason you have joined this initiative? What were your expectations?

Effectiveness

3. What do you see as the most significant changes the programme has introduced at your enterprise? Which achievements are you particularly proud of?
 - Have productivity, efficiency, revenues or market access changed? How?
 - Have you introduced improvements in management practices, technology or production processes?
 - Have working conditions improved (e.g. safety, contracts, wages, benefits)?
 - Have you created additional jobs since receiving support?
4. What are challenges? Were there any unexpected effects of the project, either positive or challenging?

5. Have you introduced gender-sensitive policies or environmentally sustainable practices? Are these changes ongoing?

Impact and sustainability

6. Have management practices changed in a lasting way?
7. Are improvements financially viable without continued external support?

Forward-looking

8. What changes or improvements would you like to see in Phase 2?

ILO team

1. Can you provide a brief overview of what is your involvement in the programme?

Relevance

2. How well does the programme's activities fit with the country's priorities on productivity, employment and decent work?
 - Was the programme designed in line with national policies and reform agendas? Which ones?
 - Did it adapt to evolving priorities during implementation? Could you give some examples?
3. How well does the programme align with ILO's broader strategic priorities and frameworks, including DWCPs and the P&B? Does it complement or duplicate other ILO initiatives?

Design

4. In your opinion, did the programme address the main structural barriers to productivity and decent work in your country? If yes, which ones? If not, what was missing?
5. Does the way the programme connects policy reform, sector development and enterprise support make strategic sense? Why or why not?
 - Which elements of the design have worked particularly well so far, and which have proven more difficult in practice?
 - Were any important issues overlooked at the design stage?
 - Did the link between productivity improvements and decent work outcomes seem realistic?
 - Was sector selection strategically justified?

Effectiveness

6. What do you see as the most significant changes the programme has introduced at institutional, sectoral, and enterprise levels? Which achievements are you particularly proud of?
7. What are challenges? Were there any unexpected effects of the project, either positive or challenging?
8. Have gender and environmental dimensions been integrated into the programme? Can you provide concrete examples?

Management and efficiency

9. How did ILO bodies work together, especially re backstopping? What has gone well, and what could be improved?
10. How effective were coordination and governance structures (e.g. global and country PAC, ILO technical support)?
11. Did monitoring and reporting systems support learning and decision-making?
12. Were resources allocated strategically across countries and intervention levels? Were financial, human, and technical resources used efficiently? What could be improved?

Impact and sustainability

13. In your view, has the programme contributed to creating a more enabling environment for productivity and decent work in the country? If so, how?
 - Is the programme sufficiently focused on systemic change rather than activity delivery?
 - Have supported reforms changed institutional behaviour, incentives or practices? Examples?
14. Which results are most likely to endure, and which remain fragile? What are the key sustainability risks?

Forward-looking

15. What are the **key lessons learned** during this phase?
16. What changes or improvements would you like to see in Phase 2?

Other ILO departments

1. Can you provide a brief overview of your role and what is your involvement in the programme?

Relevance

2. How well does the programme align with ILO's broader strategic priorities and frameworks, including DWCPs and the P&B?
3. Does it complement or duplicate other ILO initiatives?

Design

4. Does the way the programme connects policy reform, sector development and enterprise support make strategic sense? Why or why not?
 - Which elements of the design have worked particularly well so far, and which have proven more difficult in practice?
 - Were any important issues overlooked at the design stage?
 - Did the link between productivity improvements and decent work outcomes seem realistic?
 - Was sector selection strategically justified?

Effectiveness

5. What do you see as the most significant changes the programme has introduced at institutional, sectoral, and enterprise levels? Which achievements are you particularly proud of?

6. What are challenges? Were there any unexpected effects of the project, either positive or challenging?

Management and efficiency

7. How did ILO bodies work together, especially re backstopping? What has gone well, and what could be improved?
8. How effective were coordination and governance structures (e.g. global and country PAC, ILO technical support)?

Forward-looking

9. Has the programme generated useful lessons or models that could inform other ILO programming?
10. What changes or improvements would you like to see in Phase 2?

Donor

1. Can you provide a brief overview of your role and what is your involvement in the programme?

Relevance

2. How well does the programme align with your institution's strategic priorities on private sector development, employment and green growth?
3. Are there strategic shifts you would expect in a potential Phase II to improve alignment?

Design

4. In your opinion, did the programme address the main structural barriers to productivity and decent work in your country? If yes, which ones? If not, what was missing?
5. Does the way the programme connects policy reform, sector development and enterprise support make strategic sense? Why or why not?
 - Which elements of the design have worked particularly well so far, and which have proven more difficult in practice?
 - Were any important issues overlooked at the design stage?
 - Did the link between productivity improvements and decent work outcomes seem realistic?
 - Was sector selection strategically justified?

Effectiveness

6. What do you see as the most significant changes the programme has introduced at institutional, sectoral, and enterprise levels? Which achievements are you particularly proud of?
7. What are challenges? Were there any unexpected effects of the project, either positive or challenging?

Efficiency and management

8. Has the programme been managed efficiently and transparently?

9. Were resources allocated strategically across countries and intervention levels? Were financial, human, and technical resources used efficiently? What could be improved?
10. Has reporting met your expectations in terms of quality and usefulness?

Impact and sustainability

11. Is the programme sufficiently focused on systemic change rather than activity delivery?
12. Which results are most likely to endure, and which remain fragile? What are the key sustainability risks?
13. What level of impact ambition should Phase 2 aim for?

Forward-looking

14. Has the programme generated useful lessons or models that could inform your future programming?
15. What changes or improvements would you like to see in Phase 2?

Annex 5: Rating criteria

This annex presents the two rating scales applied in this evaluation. The first defines the six-point performance scale used to assess the programme against each DAC criterion; the second defines the three-point scale used to characterise the strength of evidence underpinning each rating. Together, they provide the methodological basis for the evaluative judgements presented in the conclusions chapter. All ratings reflect the evaluator's independent judgement, drawing on the full body of evidence collected across methods, sources, and country contexts.

Table 4: Rating criteria

Rating	Definition
Highly Satisfactory	The programme has fully achieved or exceeded expectations against this criterion, with strong and consistent evidence across countries and levels. No significant shortcomings.
Satisfactory	The programme has largely achieved expectations against this criterion. Results are positive overall, with only minor shortcomings that do not undermine the overall assessment.
Moderately Satisfactory	The programme has partially achieved expectations against this criterion. Results are positive in important respects but are uneven, incomplete, or limited in scope, depth, or scale.
Moderately Unsatisfactory	The programme has not yet achieved expectations against this criterion. Some positive elements are present but significant gaps, limitations, or risks outweigh them at this stage.
Unsatisfactory	The programme has largely failed to meet expectations against this criterion, with persistent and significant shortcomings across most dimensions assessed.
Highly Unsatisfactory	The programme has not met expectations against this criterion in any significant respect, with fundamental and pervasive shortcomings.

Not rated	Applied where available evidence does not allow for a sufficiently robust assessment against the criterion within the scope and timeframe of the evaluation.
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Table 5: Strength of evidence rating scale

Rating	Definition
High	Evidence is drawn from multiple independent sources and methods, findings are consistent and mutually reinforcing across countries and stakeholder groups, and conclusions can be drawn with confidence. Limited risk of bias or confounding.
Moderate	Evidence is drawn from several sources but is uneven in coverage, depth, or reliability across levels or countries. Findings are generally consistent, but some gaps remain, and conclusions are made with reasonable but not full confidence.
Limited	Evidence is sparse, largely qualitative, or relies heavily on self-reporting, stakeholder projections, or single sources. Conclusions are indicative rather than definitive, and should be interpreted with caution.

Annex 6: Lessons learned

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 24 April 2026

Lesson learned element	Productivity is an effective and politically viable entry point for advancing decent work, but translating productivity gains into decent work outcomes requires deliberate design.
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The programme demonstrates that productivity is an effective and politically viable entry point for engaging governments, employers, and workers across diverse contexts. It enables dialogue and collaboration where a more explicit decent work framing may face resistance. Enterprise-level evidence points to improvements in areas such as working conditions, worker satisfaction, and workplace practices among supported firms. However, the translation of productivity gains into broader and sustained decent work outcomes, including wages, inclusiveness, and systemic labour market improvements, has remained uneven and not automatic across contexts. The lesson is that while productivity is a strong entry point, the link to decent work outcomes does not occur automatically and must be deliberately embedded in programme design.
Context and related preconditions	The programme operated in politically and institutionally diverse contexts where productivity is widely accepted as a policy priority, while labour issues can be more sensitive. Enterprise-level interventions were often implemented without parallel mechanisms linking productivity improvements to broader labour market and decent work outcomes..

Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Governments (labour and industry), employers' organisations, trade unions, SMEs, and workers benefiting from productivity and workplace improvements.
Challenges / negative lessons- Causal factors	• Implicit assumption that productivity improvements would "trickle down" into better labour outcomes • Insufficient integration of wage-setting systems, OSH enforcement, and worker representation • Limited incentives for enterprises to translate gains into improved labour conditions.
Success / positive Issues- Causal factors	• Productivity framing facilitated engagement, reduced resistance, and generated measurable improvements in efficiency and management practices • Created entry points for dialogue that would not have been possible under a purely labour-focused approach. • Contributed to improvements in working conditions and workplace practices among participating enterprises
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	• Programme design and technical delivery were more strongly oriented towards productivity tools than explicit labour outcome pathways • Limited integration between technical specialists (productivity vs labour standards) • Future design requires clearer operational guidance on embedding decent work linkages.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 24 April 2026

Lesson learned element	A demand-led approach builds ownership but requires a strong strategic framework to prevent fragmentation
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The programme's demand-led approach successfully built strong ownership and relevance, but without a sufficiently defined strategic framework, it led to dispersion across activities and reduced coherence. The lesson is that demand responsiveness must be guided by clear strategic priorities and boundaries.
Context and related preconditions	Implemented across diverse country contexts with multiple stakeholders, sectors, and institutional entry points, generating a wide range of demands and expectations from partners.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	National partners, implementing institutions, enterprises, and social partners engaging with programme support.
Challenges / negative lessons- Causal factors	• High responsiveness to stakeholder demand without clear prioritisation led to fragmented interventions, unclear sequencing, and limited cumulative impact • Difficulty in managing expectations and maintaining focus within a broad ecosystem approach.

Success / positive Issues- Causal factors	• Strong ownership, trust, and engagement across stakeholders • Interventions closely aligned with real needs • Flexibility allowed adaptation to evolving contexts and institutional realities.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	• Need for stronger central strategic steering and clearer Theory of Change • Absence of explicit prioritisation criteria for selecting and sequencing interventions • Coordination challenges across teams and levels contributed to dispersion.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 24 April 2026

Lesson learned element	Pilot-phase breadth is necessary for learning, but depth and focus are prerequisites for systemic impact.
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The pilot phase appropriately prioritised breadth to test approaches, build partnerships, and generate evidence. However, systemic change requires sustained, deeper engagement. The lesson is that moving from pilot to impact requires a deliberate shift from breadth to focus and intensity.
Context and related preconditions	Phase I was designed as a pilot across multiple countries, sectors, and levels, with a broad scope to test the ecosystem approach and generate learning.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Programme teams, donors, national institutions, sector organisations, and enterprises engaged in pilot interventions.
Challenges / negative lessons- Causal factors	• Activities spread across too many areas limited depth, continuity, and institutionalisation • Short intervention cycles constrained behavioural change • Lack of sustained follow-up reduced durability and scalability of results.
Success / positive Issues- Causal factors	• Broad engagement enabled experimentation, learning, and credibility-building • Strongest results observed where engagement was intensive and sustained (e.g. sector-level transformation, enterprise upgrading).
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	• Resource allocation across multiple activities diluted impact • Limited time horizon (pilot phase) constrained depth • Future phases require more concentrated investment, longer engagement cycles, and clearer prioritisation of sectors and interventions.

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 24 April 2026

Lesson learned element	Systemic change requires deliberate integration across levels – it does not emerge automatically from results at each level.
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Although the programme generated meaningful results at policy, sector, and enterprise levels, these did not consistently combine into systemic change. The lesson is that cross-level integration must be actively designed and managed rather than expected to emerge organically.
Context and related preconditions	The programme operates across macro, meso, and micro levels with different actors, mandates, and timelines; implementation often occurred in parallel across levels.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Government institutions, sector organisations, enterprises, social partners, and programme teams responsible for multi-level implementation.
Challenges / negative lessons- Causal factors	• Weak feedback loops between levels • Limited visibility of activities across teams • Siloed implementation structures • Absence of mechanisms linking enterprise-level results to sector and policy processes.
Success / positive Issues- Causal factors	• Where deliberate integration mechanisms existed (e.g. sector platforms, collective bargaining processes, advisory committees), results were more coherent and reinforcing across levels.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	• Need for stronger coordination structures, shared objectives, and cross-level accountability • Limited incentives for teams to work beyond their level-specific outputs • Integration not sufficiently embedded in programme design and management systems.

Annex 7: Emerging good practices

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 24 April 2026

Good practice element	Building worker and employer organisations simultaneously in informal sectors – Ghana, shea sector
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	In Ghana's shea sector, the programme supported the parallel establishment and strengthening of both worker and employer organisations, notably the Ghana Shea Workers Union (GSWU) and the Ghana Shea Employers Association (GSEA), alongside practical sector tools such as the pricing mechanism and support to the Shea Sector Technical Working Group. This helped create the institutional preconditions for social dialogue in a largely informal value chain and culminated in the signing of a first collective bargaining agreement. The practice is noteworthy because it did not treat worker voice, employer organisation, and productivity upgrading as separate tracks, but developed them together as mutually reinforcing elements of formalisation and decent work. The results are linked directly to the programme's objective of addressing sectoral constraints to productivity and decent work.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This good practice emerged in a women-dominated, largely informal value chain with weak prior institutional organisation, fragmented pricing, and limited mechanisms for collective representation. It was enabled by strong ILO facilitation, close engagement with existing national social partners, and the presence of a concrete sector issue around which actors could organise, particularly pricing, working conditions, and market relations. Replication is most feasible in informal sectors where both workers and employers have shared incentives to improve sector governance, but it may be harder where one side is far less organised, where there is no credible convening institution, or where market incentives for cooperation are weak. Continued support may still be needed to consolidate membership, financial sustainability, and service delivery beyond the initial formation stage.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The programme's simultaneous support to worker and employer organisation created a more balanced basis for dialogue than would have been possible had only one side been strengthened. This was reinforced by practical, sector-relevant tools such as the pricing mechanism and sector working groups, which gave newly formed institutions an immediate function and legitimacy. In turn, stronger representation, structured dialogue, and clearer sector rules contributed to better coordination, more formalised labour relations, and greater ability to negotiate sector improvements. The sequencing mattered: institutional development was linked to practical sector problem-solving, which increased buy-in and moved the organisations from nominal existence to active function. This reflects the programme theory that meso-level institutional strengthening can help relax constraints to both productivity and decent work.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Targeted beneficiaries were shea workers, women pickers and processors, shea enterprises, and sector institutions. Available evidence points to clear early results. The Ghana Agricultural Workers Union reportedly doubled membership from around 2,000 to 4,000 workers, while the Shea Employers Association reached 183 member enterprises employing about 12,000 workers. The pricing mechanism was institutionalised, improving picker incomes and raw material supply, and the sector reached a first collective bargaining agreement in what is described as a largely informal sector. At enterprise level, 95% of surveyed enterprises reported productivity improvements, 89% introduced additional employee benefits, and 40% reported expanded employment. These results suggest benefits both for representation and for enterprise and worker outcomes.

Potential for replication and by whom	This approach has good replication potential in other informal or weakly organised sectors where productivity, formalisation, and decent work challenges are intertwined. It is particularly relevant for value chains with dispersed actors, weak bargaining structures, and unequal market power. Replication could be led by ILO country projects, ministries responsible for labour and industry, employer organisations, trade unions, and sector associations. The key lesson is that institution-building on both sides of the labour relationship should be combined with practical sector tools that generate immediate value and incentives for continued participation.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This practice links clearly to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and to the programme's own objective of ensuring that productivity gains translate into better working conditions, representation, and fairer sharing of benefits. It also aligns with the programme's outcome on addressing sectoral and enterprise constraints to productivity and decent work, and supports broader ILO priorities on social dialogue, formalisation, and inclusive productivity growth.
Other documents or relevant comments	

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 24 April 2026

Good practice element	Training of trainers to embed productivity approaches within national institutions – South Africa
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	In South Africa, the programme invested in building master trainers and embedding the combined SCORE–Workplace Challenge approach within Productivity SA and partner delivery systems, rather than relying only on repeated direct delivery by the project. This approach helped institutionalise productivity and decent work methods within a national institution's core service offer and created a locally owned model for continued enterprise support. The practice is significant because it strengthens national delivery capability and reduces dependency on temporary project structures, thereby advancing sustainability from the outset. It is directly linked to the programme objective of strengthening capacities to address productivity and decent work constraints.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This good practice was enabled by the presence of an established national institution with a formal mandate on productivity, existing relationships with enterprises, and a policy environment that recognises the need for productivity improvement. It is most applicable where a capable delivery institution already exists and can absorb new methodologies into its systems. Replication will be more difficult where institutions are weak, under-resourced, or lack operational autonomy. It also requires sustained quality assurance, incentives for trained staff to continue delivering, and some alignment between service mandates and enterprise demand.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	By investing in trainers, the programme shifted knowledge and delivery capacity from the project to domestic actors. This enabled the methodology to be adapted, owned, and used within existing service structures, which in turn increased the likelihood that enterprise support

	would continue beyond the project cycle. The training-of-trainers model also helped move from one-off support to a repeatable service model, while the integration of productivity methods into institutional practice strengthened consistency and scale potential. In effect, institutional capacity-building became the mechanism through which enterprise-level gains could be sustained and expanded.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The main beneficiaries are Productivity SA and other delivery partners, along with the SMEs they support. Survey evidence shows that all six South African partners reported that project support helped them expand or improve services, and partner surveys point to improved staff skills, stronger engagement, and enhanced credibility. The 2025 annual report further notes that 193 SMEs and 5,193 workers were reached in 2025 alone, with cumulative support to 374 SMEs and 18,052 workers over the project period; 90% of enterprises recorded productivity improvement, 66% reported no accidents or injuries during the reference period, and 44% reported wage growth. These results suggest that institutionalised delivery capacity is already translating into measurable enterprise-level benefits.
Potential for replication and by whom	This model is replicable in countries where there is a national productivity institution, SME agency, strong sector / employer organisations or other training and business development service providers capable of taking on a structured service offer. Replication could be led by ILO projects in partnership with national institutions, ministries, and sector support bodies. The most transferable feature is not the exact methodology, but the principle of embedding tools, trainers, and service standards within national systems early enough for ownership and continuity to develop during the project period.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This practice supports ILO goals on sustainable enterprises, decent work, and institution-building, and contributes to the programme's outcomes on both strengthened capacities and relaxed enterprise-level constraints. It also aligns with the programme's wider logic that stronger national institutions are essential if productivity gains are to be sustained, scaled, and linked to improved working conditions rather than remaining isolated pilot results.
Other documents or relevant comments	

Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/16/MUL

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 24 April 2026

Good practice element	Integrating digital and green transformation at enterprise level – Viet Nam
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	In Viet Nam, the programme integrated digitalisation and green transition into a single enterprise support offer, rather than treating them as separate thematic strands. Enterprises were supported through a practical package that included tools such as greenhouse gas accounting, energy efficiency measures, computerised maintenance management systems, IoT-based monitoring, and, in some cases, AI-guided factory-floor applications. Framing these interventions around productivity, cost reduction, compliance, and competitiveness made them more accessible and commercially relevant to firms. This is an emerging good practice because it translates dual transformation into concrete business improvements while also advancing environmental and decent work objectives.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The practice emerged in sectors facing growing pressure to modernise production and respond to environmental requirements, especially wood processing and machinery/components. It was facilitated by strong engagement with business support providers and associations, and by framing green and digital measures as productivity solutions rather than abstract compliance obligations. Replication is most feasible in export-oriented sectors or supply chains facing pressure on cost, quality, traceability, emissions, or equipment reliability. However, uptake may be slower where firms have weak investment capacity, where the service market is underdeveloped, or where associations lack the technical mandate to support more advanced services.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Combining digital and green tools in one support model allowed enterprises to see immediate operational benefits from interventions that might otherwise have been perceived as separate or burdensome. For example, digital monitoring and maintenance tools reduced breakdowns and improved process control, while energy and GHG tools made resource use and emissions more visible and manageable. Because the package was framed in business terms, firms were more willing to experiment, invest, and continue applying the practices. The result was stronger uptake, clearer incentives for internal ownership, and a more coherent pathway from productivity improvement to environmental performance and better working conditions.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The primary beneficiaries are SMEs in the wood processing and machinery/components sectors, along with intermediary service providers and associations. The 2025 annual report records verified annual electricity savings of 798,195 kWh and estimated emissions reductions of 526.17 tonnes of CO ₂ in pilot enterprises in the machinery/components sector, while wood-processing firms reported productivity gains ranging from 5.9 to 30% and one CMMS pilot reduced machine breakdown time by 32%. The Viet Nam enterprise survey further reports that all surveyed enterprises tracked productivity and all reported increased production with the same or fewer inputs; 99% reduced production costs; 99% improved business processes and management practices; 77% increased wages; and 38% created new jobs, totalling 316 positions. Partner surveys also show that environmental sustainability

	and digital services were among the most frequently strengthened service areas.
Potential for replication and by whom	This approach has strong replication potential in enterprise support programmes working in manufacturing and export-oriented sectors, especially where firms are under pressure to improve productivity, meet environmental requirements, and modernise operations simultaneously. Replication could be led by ILO projects, national productivity institutes, sector associations, public enterprise support agencies, and private service providers. The most replicable feature is the integrated framing: firms are more likely to adopt dual transformation when digital and green tools are packaged around concrete commercial gains.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This practice links to ILO goals on sustainable enterprises, just transition, and decent work by showing how productivity, environmental sustainability, and improved enterprise practices can be advanced together. It supports the programme's outcome on addressing enterprise constraints and is consistent with broader ILO priorities on green transition, competitiveness, and institutional support for sustainable business development.
Other documents or relevant comments	