



ILO EVALUATION

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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

Imprint

Final Independent Evaluation of the SKILL-UP Programme: Upgrading skills for the changing world of work.

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Abbreviations

BRIDGE	Global Action on Forced Labour Project
CBT	Competency-based Training
CSA	Civil Society Association
EQ	Evaluation Question
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
KAB	Know About Business
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OJT	On-the-job training
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Training
PCA	Programme Cooperation Agreement
ProDoc	Programme / Project Document
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises Programme
SSC	Sector Skills Council
STED	Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification
WiL	Work-integrated Learning

Executive Summary

The International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned orange & teal to carry out the final independent evaluation of the SKILL-UP Programme. The evaluation was conducted between December 2020 and March 2021.

Programme overview

The SKILL-UP Programme is an initiative jointly undertaken by the ILO and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme started in April 2018 and ended, following a twelve-month cost extension, in December 2020. It was based on the Programme Cooperation Agreement 2018-2019 (PCA) between the ILO and the Government of Norway and funded with 12 million USD. Organisationally the programme was located in ILO's Skills and Employability Branch (SKILLS), which was tasked with implementation and oversight.

The PCA 2018-2019's objective is to contribute to the ILO Programme & Budget (P&B) Outcome 1 *"More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects."* and Indicator 1.3: *"Constituents have taken action on skills development systems, strategies and programmes to reduce skills mismatches and enhance access to the labour market."* The programme aimed to assist ILO member states in preparing their skills systems to respond to the challenges and opportunities offered by emerging global drivers of change such as trade integration, technological change, and migration.

The programme consisted of interventions that were implemented at the country, regional and global level. The country components were implemented in Ethiopia, Ghana, Lebanon, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania. The regional component covered skills partnerships in Western Africa and Central Africa with a view to make migration more demand-led and informed. The interventions at the global level intended to have global reach beyond a given country or region, and included activities related to combatting modern slavery in Niger.

Methodology

The purpose of the final evaluation is to serve accountability and learning. Furthermore, the evaluation is expected to provide recommendations for the future development and implementation of projects of this type and for consideration in the implementation of the next phase of this programme. The main clients of the evaluation are the ILO, the donor, and the constituents. It covers the entire duration (2018-2020) and all components.

These sources were used for the evaluation:

- Interviews: 114 persons, covering all components
- Survey: 122 participants, out of 458 persons invited; overall response rate of 27%
- Document review: Selection of the over 2,000 files that the ILO provided
- Data: Progress Reports, fund disbursement, Service Tracker and media downloads

Major milestones of the evaluation were the kick-off meeting with ILO stakeholders (18 December 2020), the approval of the Inception Report (3 February 2021), the workshop with representatives from the ILO and Norway (9 March 2021) and the approval of the evaluation report (31 March 2021). Apart from minor deviations the evaluation was implemented as planned.

Evaluation Results

Relevance

The findings have highlighted the relevance of the objectives and programme implementation of SKILL-UP with development plans, constituents' objectives, the overall programme of the ILO as well as the Norwegian Government. There are a few shortcomings that need to be borne in mind, however. Firstly, the limited involvement of social partners in the overarching design of the programme, and the finding that many respondents lacked an understanding of the relationship between its elements. In our understanding, this pointed to the absence of an articulated, and clearly communicated, overarching Theory of Change that is used as a basis for determining the relevance of specific activities. It is also related in some part to the ways in which the constituents are involved in decisions relating to the programme. Secondly, the evaluation has found that whilst most of the activities were considered relevant, there were not sufficient spaces created to reflect on what may be unintended outcomes of certain decisions that are made. Thirdly, the need to consider the involvement of women in the design and management of the interventions may need to be critically reviewed given the relatively larger number of women who were unsure whether the interventions were aligned with their priorities.

Coherence

There is good internal coherence of the SKILL-UP Programme with other programmes of the ILO that are relevant for the skills domain. Specifically, the SCORE and BRIDGE programmes were mentioned several times and apparent interlinkages could be realised, including in Lebanon, Ghana, and Niger. It emerges from the interviews, however, that synergies between the programmes could be improved. The programme's consistency with international norms and standards is high, primarily because of ILO's own role in setting the latter and applying them in the delivery of its interventions. Regarding external coherence, we found that some opportunities for collaboration were seized but not systematically identified. The survey results show that ILO staff believe that internal coherence was ensured whilst the ratings for external coherence were somewhat more critical.

Effectiveness

The majority of the outcome and output targets are achieved, and the reasons provided for the dropped, delayed or otherwise unachieved items – waned interest by partner governments, political gridlock or turmoil, delays due to the pandemic – are reasonable. Most stakeholders believe that the interventions implemented under the programme have been successful, and that the objectives have been reached. Despite this overall very positive assessment, there were also critical voices. Some stakeholders see the work as “preparatory”, now requiring additional work to reach ultimate beneficiaries, while other criticise that the “groundwork” has been done, yet more systemic changes are still lacking. These observations are relevant, yet given the short time frame and oftentimes small component budgets it seems natural that change was not sweeping on both micro and macro level. Again, the programme could be better explained if its Theory of Change entailed a more

strategic discussion on the sequencing of interventions. The fact that there is no information on the ultimate beneficiary impact is a shortfall of the programme (although it should be noted that some tracer studies are still forthcoming).

Impact

The long-term objective of the programme is to contribute to the P&B 2018-19 Outcome 1 and Indicator 1.3 (see above). The activity-based component of the two, related to Indicator 1.3, has clearly been fulfilled through the various SKILL-UP interventions. There is no evidence yet for the programme's contribution to "youth employment prospects", yet we believe that in theory such a contribution is likely, at least as soon as labour market conditions improve, and given enough time for systems-related development to manifest themselves in concrete improvements. Such time lags are even more true for contributions to "more and better jobs", an ambitious target for a skills development project. The fact that SKILL-UP has focused on growing economies makes a contribution to such aggregate employment effects more likely. While acknowledging that the selections of industries was taken based on the STED methodology, together with the stakeholders, we wonder if a stronger focus on "future of work" and "green" jobs could or should have been achieved.

Efficiency

Several of the elements that were assessed to measure the extent to which the programme is efficient were rated positively. This holds true for the political, technical, and administrative support that the programme received from its stakeholders, the programme management structure, as well as the communication among the stakeholders. The outcome-based funding approach is appreciated both by the donor and the ILO for its flexibility and literature suggests that such "softly earmarked" approaches are overall efficient. Issues that undermined the programme's efficiency include the delays that it experienced to launch the activities, including those due to the initial appointment of staff as well as staff changes, coupled with the late fund disbursement dynamics. Several activities had thus to be implemented in the late stages of the programme, leaving little room to deliver, monitor, learn, and adapt the activities. The Covid-19 pandemic caused additional delays, yet the ILO's response to this external factor was considered to be effective by the majority of the ILO staff and this was also confirmed by constituents in interviews.

Sustainability

The findings have highlighted that whilst the level of ownership of the SKILL-UP Programme is positive this does not directly equate to sustainability which is yet too early to assess. Interviewees were confident that a strong foundation for the current PCA 2020-21 has been created and highlighted the strong relationships between partners, the emphasis on building the structures and systems to drive skills development, the integration of interventions into the existing institutional offerings and the work that has been done with key players in the eco-system. However, the evaluation also highlighted the constraints that stakeholders may face in terms of time and finance to effectively participate in, and sustain, these processes. There was a view that there is a need to ensure that high level individuals from within partners are effectively brought on board such that they are aware of what may be expected of them and that this engagement takes place with partners across levels (national, regional and global). Finally, in realising these changes it is our view that the way in which the programme is being implemented in terms of the emphasis on capacity building and the development of resources is also contributing to the resilience of the structures.

Gender equity and inclusion

Gender equity and inclusion is addressed to varying degrees across the country components, at the system level, the institutional level, and the intervention level. Ghana and Senegal were the only country components that included a focus on gender equity at all three of these levels. The programme components vary in the extent to which they meet gender mainstreaming goals. Niger and Lebanon, for instance, reflect on how to address factors that may prevent young women from accessing training. Tanzania's project focused on building capacity within the skills development system to support more inclusive outcomes and develop inclusive modular apprenticeship programmes. Respondents in the interviews in both Senegal and Ghana highlight the implementation of inclusivity-focused capacity building. The successes realised in this regard, for example in Malawi, highlight that increasing the number of women beneficiaries contributes to changing norms. Ethiopia is less explicit in its focus on gender although the component does include the development of an inclusion strategy and action plan for the skills development system in its logical framework. What is evident in this evaluation is how much work there still is (including harassment of young women seeking to enter certain sectors). This suggests the need for further reflection on ways to strengthen the focus on building gender imperatives in social dialogues.

Tripartism

Tripartism is embedded in the SKILL-UP Programme through its support for tripartism at the systems level, and well as through directly assisting institutions to implement more practical aspects of tripartite governance, such as the STED methodology. In terms of capacity building, most efforts focus on developing the skills required to implement sectoral skills councils, with the exception of Senegal, where the focus is specifically on developing a skills development strategy for the digital sector. Generally, the country components appear to include member states, employers' and workers' organisations in their implementation plans to at least some extent. The Malawi component, having built on existing collaboration, has the most clearly developed tripartite strategy and in particular in terms of their oversight role. This is also true, at least to some degree in Tanzania and specifically Zanzibar. In Ethiopia, Ghana, Lebanon, and Senegal the components typically include tripartite partners in the implementation.

Learnings and Good Practice

Based on the learnings reported in the Progress Reports, as well as the interviews with ILO staff, these lessons learned can be identified:

- Consultation, participation, and collaboration are essential to design relevant interventions that reflect different interests and vantage points and necessary to contribute to ownership for project implementation. Yet they are insufficient to ensure sustainability.
- The outcome-based funding approach makes it easier to responding to constituents' requests flexibly but needs to be managed to minimise the risk of fragmentation. It can also contribute to reducing administrative overhead.
- Online forms of communication and capacity building have become commonplace in the SKILL-UP Programme. Whilst they can be very effective generally, several challenges need to be overcome for which close and active coordination with ILO's field offices is beneficial.

- For work-based learning schemes to be successful, they need to be adapted to the specific context in which the schemes are implemented, including the structure of the economy, the market challenges that firms face and the opportunities that exist in these contexts, or the firm structure.

The SKILLS Innovation Facility can be highlighted as good practice; the evaluation found that the facility in its entirety, and the call in particular, are considered a great success by the interviewees. Additional learnings and good practice which were identified in the interviews and the survey, covering various technical, procedural and management issues, are documented in the report.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the programme-wide Theory of Change

We recommend strengthening the programme-wide ToC with a clear articulation how activities/outputs support the realisation of outcomes and contribute to impact. This should explain the interrelations of the country, regional and global components, and within the components (such as the work on skills systems and the selection of training for beneficiaries), explain the various assumptions which lead to behavioural change, and identify assumptions which are “at risk” and deserve particular attention. This will also assist to focus the monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) work related to the programme.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen learning orientation

We recommend developing a concept – covering responsibilities, timelines, milestones, and requisite resources – that defines and operationalises how learning will be gathered and disseminated during the next phase. The recommendation also extends to improving the M&E so that, for instance, it allows for comparison of the same activities across components; and that there are opportunities for different role players to engage and reflect critically upon successes and failures (without risking ramifications) in ways that strengthen practices and strategic approaches within the ILO and with partners. Supplementary capacity building might be required for the programme / component managers to ensure the reporting related to learning is pertinent and significant.

Recommendation 3: Share and apply learnings regarding gender equality

It is important that spaces be created to share the very good examples that are emerging so as to deepen the understanding of meaningful gender mainstreaming across the programme.

Recommendation 4: Identify good training practice

Develop and implement a concept on how to identify good training practice. For instance, similar interventions might need to be applied in different contexts, or different interventions in similar contexts. The evidence produced needs to be comparable. This requires a strengthening of key mechanisms such as finalising the tracker technically to this end, and conceptualising the tool to support this learning process (e.g. how can trainings be compared, given different content, participants, labour markets)? Does information on the status before the training need to be included to learn about the effect or does benchmarking among trainings suffice? etc.).

Recommendation 5: Adapt the evaluation approach to support learning processes

We recommend that the ILO Evaluation Office initiates a discussion with Norad, SKILLS, and the SKILL-UP Programme management team as to what type of evaluation would best serve the needs of the evaluation stakeholders. This could be a final evaluation like the one which was just implemented; a formative evaluation which provides information as the programme is implemented; an evaluation which looks at a wider time span (including the PCA 2016-17, 2018-19, and 2020-21); or a combination of these types. If one of the first two types of evaluations (final evaluation, formative evaluation) serves the immediate needs best, we recommend the ILO Evaluation Office to further examine whether an impact evaluation could furnish additional insights for ILO's learning processes more broadly. The discussions should extend to the processes and the timing of the evaluation.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen constituent engagement process

It should be assessed whether and how a global structure (such as an overarching steering committee for SKILLS) could benefit engagement and coherence, without creating too much additional overhead. Second, the engagement process should ensure that space is created for constituents who have low institutional capacity to express their needs (this includes capacity building, ensuring local officials can support initiatives effectively as well as through informing global partners who can provide direct support to constituents where possible). Third, the engagement process could further extend to beneficiary groups if there is a risk that they are not sufficiently represented by those stakeholders involved in the dialogues.

Recommendation 7: Map the ecosystem, strengthen external coherence

The ILO should undertake a practical and focused mapping of the landscape in all its components in order to strengthen coordination with other development partners and actors. This with a view to both actively bringing in – or working with – other development partners to support aspects of the programme so as to enhance the effectiveness of its interventions. In other cases, it may make sense to agree amongst partners ways to ensure that interventions complement each other such that ILO can focus on its strengths in terms of bringing in, and supporting constituents, building systems and signalling demand whilst others may focus on implementation within this context.

Recommendation 8: Consolidate, complete, sustain results

We recommend using the momentum that was created with the SKILL-UP Programme and to screen systematically during the design phase which activities of the programme necessitate additional resources to complete, consolidate, and sustain the results that were achieved hitherto. Activities for which inclusion targets could not be met during the past phase could be prioritised to improve SKILL-UP's relevance for ultimate beneficiaries. Notwithstanding, diverting attention to other interventions can be necessary if they are more relevant, including for SKILL's long-term strategy, and likelier to be more effective and efficient.

1. Introduction

The International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned orange & teal to carry out the final independent evaluation of the SKILL-UP Programme: Upgrading skills for the changing world of work. The evaluation was conducted between December 2020 and March 2021. This report contains the findings, conclusions, as well as recommendations of the evaluation team.

The report is structured as follows: The programme and its components are briefly outlined in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the purpose, scope and approach of the evaluation, as well as challenges and limitations. Chapter 4 discusses the findings on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, and sustainability while Chapter 5 and 6 contain the conclusions and recommendations. Supplementary information and data are included in the Annexes.

2. Programme overview

The SKILL-UP Programme – Upgrading Skills for the changing world of work – is an initiative jointly undertaken by the ILO and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme started in April 2018 and ended, following a twelve-month cost extension, in December 2020.¹ It was based on the Programme Cooperation Agreement 2018-2019 (PCA) between the ILO and the Government of Norway and funded with 12 million USD.

Organisationally the programme was located in ILO's Skills and Employability Branch (SKILLS) of ILO's Employment Policy Department in Geneva, which was responsible for implementation and oversight. The overall programme, alongside the global and regional components, was managed centrally. The other components were managed decentralised in the respective countries, with accountability to the concerned ILO country offices and SKILLS providing coordination and strategic and technical guidance. The management team consisted of 19 staff, including the global programme manager and the national coordinators.

The PCA 2018-2019 integrated outcomes and indicators from the ILO Programme & Budget (P&B)² which read:

- Outcome 1: “More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects.”
- Indicator 1.3: “Constituents have taken action on skills development systems, strategies and programmes to reduce skills mismatches and enhance access to the labour market.”

Related to the objectives in the PCA, the programme aimed to assist ILO member states in preparing their skills systems to respond to the challenges and opportunities offered by emerging global drivers of change

¹ In summer 2020 the ILO and Norway started to design a follow-up phase of the SKILL-UP Programme under the PCA 2020-21 (“ILO-Norway Special Agreement 2020-2021”).

² The P&B describes the ILO's targets, indicators, and resources for a period of two years, to achieve the ten policy outcomes that operationalise ILO's high-level objectives set by the Decent Work Agenda.

such as trade integration, technological change, and migration flows. All of these drivers have skills implications and were the main entry points of the intervention strategy.

The programme consisted of interventions that were implemented at the country, regional and global level. The country components were implemented in Ethiopia, Ghana, Lebanon, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania. The regional component covered skills partnerships in Western Africa and Central Africa with a view to make migration more demand-led and informed. The interventions at the global level intended to have global reach beyond a given country or region and included activities related to combatting modern slavery in Niger.

The funding approach was outcome-based, meaning that the donor Norway earmarked the funds thematically and geographically and to high-level outcomes (“softly earmarked”). This left the ILO much flexibility regarding the design of the specific interventions to achieve the outcomes.

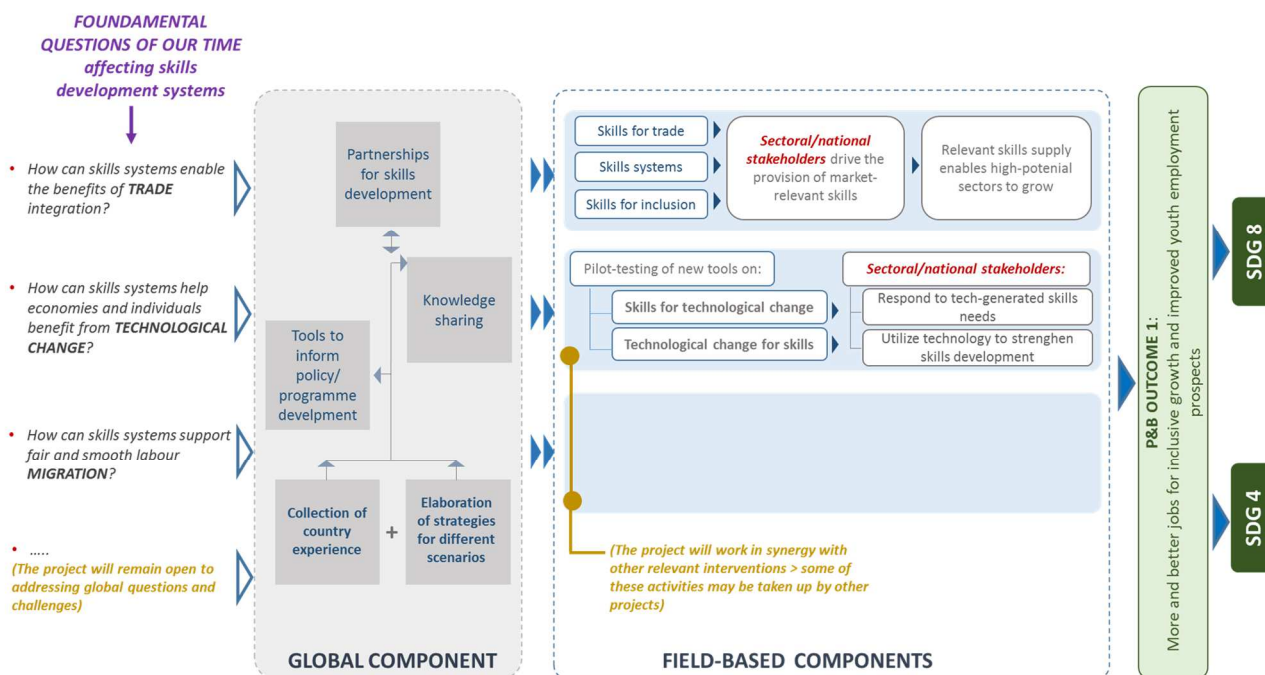
Table 1 shows the implementation periods and respective budgets. The table focuses on when the implementation in each component of the programme began, though there have been consultation workshops and engagements which informed the design before. A graph showing the budget changes that resulted from additional funding rounds is in Annex 4.

Table 1: Component duration and budgets

Component	2018			2019				2020				Budget mil USD
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Ethiopia						■	■	■	■	■	■	0.7
Ghana			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	0.7
Lebanon				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	0.7
Malawi	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1.5
Niger								■	■	■	■	0.3
Senegal				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	0.6
Tanzania	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	2.0
Regional				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1.5
Global					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	4.1

Figure 1 contains a graphical representation of the programme logic that was contained in the ProDoc for the global component, showing the interplay between the global and the country components as well as their relation to P&B Outcome 1. The migration-related work in Sub-Saharan Africa and the component in Niger is not included because they were added during implementation as a result of additional funding – yet the theoretical link is established via the change driver migration (“fundamental questions of our time”) and the intervention line “skills for inclusion”. In the course of the programme implantation there were additional funding rounds, covering for instance the Skills Innovation Facility, which are equally not explicitly shown in the programme logic.

Figure 1: SKILL-Up Programme Logic (global and field components)



Source: SKILL-UP Global Component ProDoc

The thematic areas of the programme are:

- Strengthening skills systems, through improved skills anticipation and skills governance (focus on ILO’s STED methodology and Sector Skills Councils)
- Strengthening the delivery of skills programmes (focus on support to TVET institutions, developing and piloting VET / VSD courses, strengthening Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL))
- Inclusion / Leaving no one behind (focus on gender inclusion, inclusion of people with disability, inclusion of refugees / IDPs; skills partnerships on migration and combatting modern slavery)
- Developing knowledge products
- Fostering Innovation

Table 2 gives an overview in which component these topics were implemented.

Table 2: Thematic focus of the components

Component	Systems	Progr.	Inclusion	Migration	Slavery	Knowledge	Innovation
Ethiopia	■	■	■	■			
Ghana	■	■	■				
Lebanon	(■)	■	■				

Malawi	■	■	■			
Niger					■	
Senegal	■	■	■			
Tanzania	(■)	■	■			
Regional		■	■	■		
Global	■	■			■	■ ■

Note: A dot in brackets indicates that a thematic focus was planned, but dropped during implementation

3. Evaluation background

3.1. Purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation, as stated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), is to serve accountability and learning:

- Accountability: “indicate ... the extent to which the project has achieved its aims and objectives and to determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of project outcomes. ...”
- Learning: “... The knowledge generated by the evaluation will also feed in the design of future intervention models and contribute to documenting management and delivery approaches.”

Furthermore, the evaluation is expected to provide recommendations for “*the future development and implementation of projects of this type*” and for consideration in the implementation of the next phase of this programme.

The purpose was further specified in the ToR with a preliminary set of evaluation questions. As a result of the inception phase, the evaluation questions were slightly reformulated, restructured, and prioritised to better align with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria,³ and the primary interest by stakeholders. The evaluation questions are shown in Annex 1.

The main clients of the evaluation are the ILO, the donor, and the constituents. It covers the entire programme duration (2018-2020) and all country components – beyond the expectation in the ToR to cover four of them. Outside scope are detailed assessments of the country components.

³ Better Criteria for Better Evaluation – Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, OECD, 2019

3.2. Approach

The elements of our approach were defined in the Inception Report, the main ones we describe in this section.

- First, consistent with aim that the evaluation shall be a learning opportunity, we engaged with the evaluation stakeholders in all stages of the evaluation. This included consulting ILO staff in field offices and headquarters and representatives of Norway on the evaluation questions; consulting and pre-testing the online survey; drafting an information letter for ILO constituents; organising a stakeholder workshop to discuss the preliminary evaluation results. This ensured that the evaluation includes and creates value for the evaluation audience.
- Second, we approached the evaluation as a programme evaluation, meaning that not all aspects and realities in the components can be discussed. Notwithstanding, to the extent possible references are made to specific countries, including in “spotlights”.
- Third, we set-up our evaluation team so that it brings together members of different backgrounds and is gender balanced – apart from having experience in evaluation, skills development, inclusion, or development assistance in general.

This approach, the use of the ILO evaluation guidance notes, checklists and templates as well as the regular contacts with and guidance by the ILO Evaluation Manager ensured that the evaluation complies with ILO evaluation norms and standards. The entire team signed ILO’s Code of Conduct.

3.3. Methods and sources

We used qualitative and quantitative mixed methods to collect data and information from different sources, scrutinised and triangulated them to ensure robust and valid findings. The methods are explained in more detail in Annex 2, while Annex 3 includes a list of all interviewees.

Altogether, the following sources were used for our assessment:

- Interviews: 114 persons (including 30 ILO staff; the evaluation made sure that worker and employer associations were represented to equal degrees; gender representation is 36% women and 64% men), almost exclusively single interviews, covering all components
- Survey: 122 participants, out of 458 persons invited; overall response rate of 27%
- Document review: Selection of the over 2,000 files that the ILO provided to the evaluation team
- Data: Information from Progress Reports, fund disbursement, Service Tracker and media downloads

Major milestones of the evaluation were the kick-off meeting with ILO stakeholders (18 December 2020), the approval of the Inception Report (3 February 2021), the workshop with representatives from the ILO and Norway (9 March 2021) and the approval of the evaluation report (31 March 2021). Apart from minor deviations that were communicated and agreed with the Evaluation Manager, the evaluation was implemented as planned.

3.4.Challenges and limitations

We believe to have a robust and valid basis of data and information to evaluate the SKILL-UP Programme, however, there were also challenges and limitations that we undertook to mitigate.

- Due to the restriction of movement imposed by the pandemic situation, all fact finding had to be done online-/remote and several of the interviews were affected by poor connectivity, limiting the time available to cover and delve into evaluation questions, to assure fact-checking and validation. There has been no possibility for observation and site visits, which may have yielded additional information and insights. *Mitigation:* Invitation to submit feedback or fill in the questionnaires also in writing or in the survey, high number of interviews, virtual focus groups.
- Several of the interviewees were involved in a specific activity and did thus not know the component or the programme in its entirety. *Mitigation:* Breaking down the programme-level questions to intervention or activity level; active invitation to take part in the online survey with a view to cover all activities so as to “aggregate” towards programme effects.
- As a result of the pandemic (which inhibited site visits and other interactions) but also by the nature of a programmatic review, the survey and the interviews with institutional stakeholders were given priority. Whilst the view of institutional stakeholders is always a core source, certainly when it comes to any type of systems development, the assessment of the programme and its interventions is particularly dependent on their perceptions. *Mitigation:* *Comprehensive assessment of M&E data, reflection of the findings based on own experience, “spotlights” on ultimate beneficiary impact.*

Learnings that we draw from the evaluation processes that we deem also relevant for the ILO are:

- The SKILL-UP Programme is a multifaceted undertaking, the complexity and diversity of which became apparent only over time and mainly after the inception phase. Considering the complexity, the 10-week delivery period foreseen for the evaluation was immensely short, not least since the team had to be recruited thereby ensuring our recruitment and team values. Planning and starting the evaluation earlier would have increased both efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation – not least also as an input for the design of the follow-on phase which had already begun.
- For a similar-type programme evaluation of the next phase, a potential way to mitigate the tension between complexity and time, would be to either reduce the breadth of interview questions or to cover all programme elements with survey and M&E data, whilst covering only selected programme elements with interviews – yet with a deep dive.
- Considering the short duration of programmes such as SKILL-UP and the complex interactions of the components with other ILO and non ILO-programmes, we believe the ILO could improve its institutional learning by commissioning selected impact studies, which would look how the ILO’s interventions in a certain country, region, or thematic area have together created impact over a longer time span. This could complement or even substitute the discussion of impact in project and programme evaluations with a focus on shorter implementation period.

4. Findings

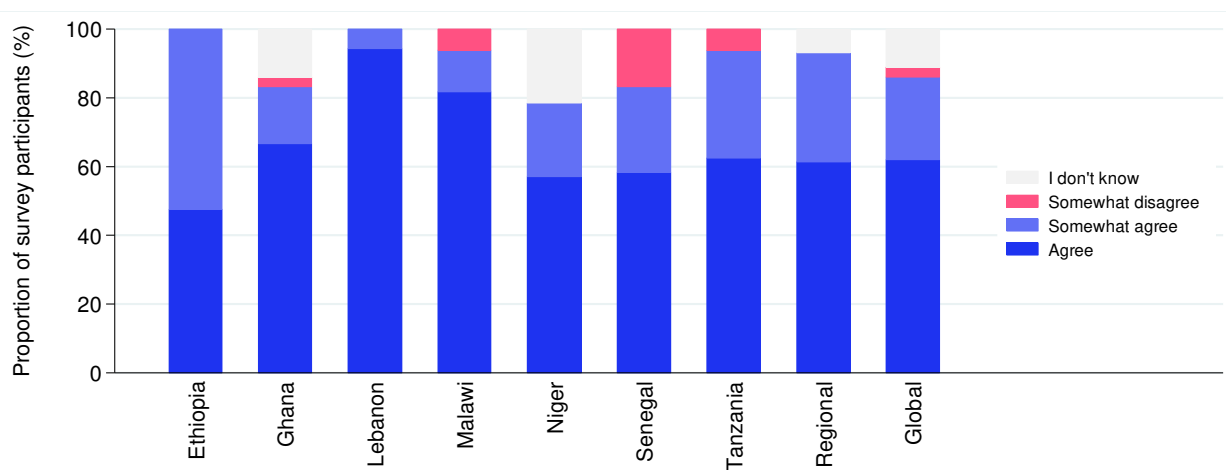
This chapter summarises the findings of the evaluation team. The observations are structured along the DAC evaluation criteria (main sections), and the evaluation questions (see Annex 1). The sources and elements of the analysis vary with the content of the sections: Relevance and sustainability, for instance, are to a large degree concerned with the perception of the stakeholders; the description hence uses interview notes and survey results and is often structured along the (country) components, given that relevance and sustainability are largely shaped by the ecosystems in which the interventions take part. For effectiveness, on the other hand, M&E information plays an important role, and an important structure is the thematic intervention area, to see whether results were more easily obtain in certain types of areas than in others. Coherence, impact and efficiency take a broader view across the entirety of the programme.

4.1. Relevance

How was the programme focus (topics, countries, objectives) determined? How does the programme align with relevant national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents? (EQ 2 / 3)

The survey results in Figure 2 affirm that the programme focus is considered relevant in all its various components. There were a few respondents who disagreed with the statement indicating that there was some dissonance between the programme objectives and their country and/or organisational needs. This is explored further considering the views expressed during the interviews about the programme focus and the alignment development plans and other priorities.

Figure 2: Survey: Are the objectives aligned with the priorities of your organisation?



Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The objectives of the programme in [insert programme component] are aligned with the priorities and strategies of your organisation." If a participant responded to several components / objectives, all responses are included as separate observations. Observations: 21, 36, 18, 33, 14, 12, 16, 44, 100.

Interviewees indicated that the design was developed in ways that took into account the priorities and perspectives of constituents and ILO specialists. A couple of interviewees noted that there can however be a

tension between the views of constituents and those of the ILO specialists but indicated that “*there is an acceptance that if countries say they want it anyway [despite the views expressed by ILO specialists] ... then we explain how you could do it if you want to do it.*” Other interviewees noted that this needs to be carefully managed as the design can “*sometimes be a bit supply-driven...*”. This is the case when the ILO specialists offer the “menu” of interventions and partners and constituents may simply confirm what is being offered because they are aware that they need support and do not feel equipped to question what the ILO offers to them.

We found though that two elements assist to manage interest in ways that supports the relevance of the programme: First, the role of staff members within the ILO, who hold the responsibility to ensure that the different elements of the skills work are in line with governing body agreements and the needs of constituents. Second, the consistent inclusion of participatory assessment processes prior to implementation. Some respondents also commented that the design considered learning from previous initiatives (incl. those made in countries where the ILO was already active in the PCA 2016-17 with Norway, i.e. Malawi and Tanzania) which enhanced its relevance. Examples that evidence these assertions, are provided below:

- In Ghana the programme started as a result of a request from Council for Technical and Vocation Training (COTVET), the government body responsible for overseeing TVET. Interviewees explained that the request came as a response to the recognition of the importance of determining the skills that are required by various sectors within the economy in a demand driven manner.
- In Malawi the design was guided by survey results and documents on the country’s export strategy. This ensured that the diversity of the sector was taken into account and that there is a greater emphasis on key sub-sectors. These sources observe, for instance, that 70% of fruits and vegetables for consumption are imported from South Africa and highlight the gaps in skills required for economic diversification and value chains to improve export and substitute imports. For quick gains the horticulture sector was selected.
- In Senegal interviewees explained that programme was designed based on a needs assessment study into the state of the digital space, which highlighted skills development gaps and possible solutions. The needs were defined through a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the ILO.
- The interventions in the regional component were based on needs identified by a working group whose work was facilitated by a consultant, constituents with facilitation by ILO technical, and skills development experts.

As indicated, there was a strong view expressed by interviewees and survey respondents that the design was relevant to supporting the achievement of different national strategies as well as skills and employment relevant policies and in most cases specific reference was made to these documents so that these assertions could be validated. This was confirmed by a review of the ProDoc sections dedicated to the topic where links between the interventions and the country strategies is also made evident. During the country interviews the following picture emerged:

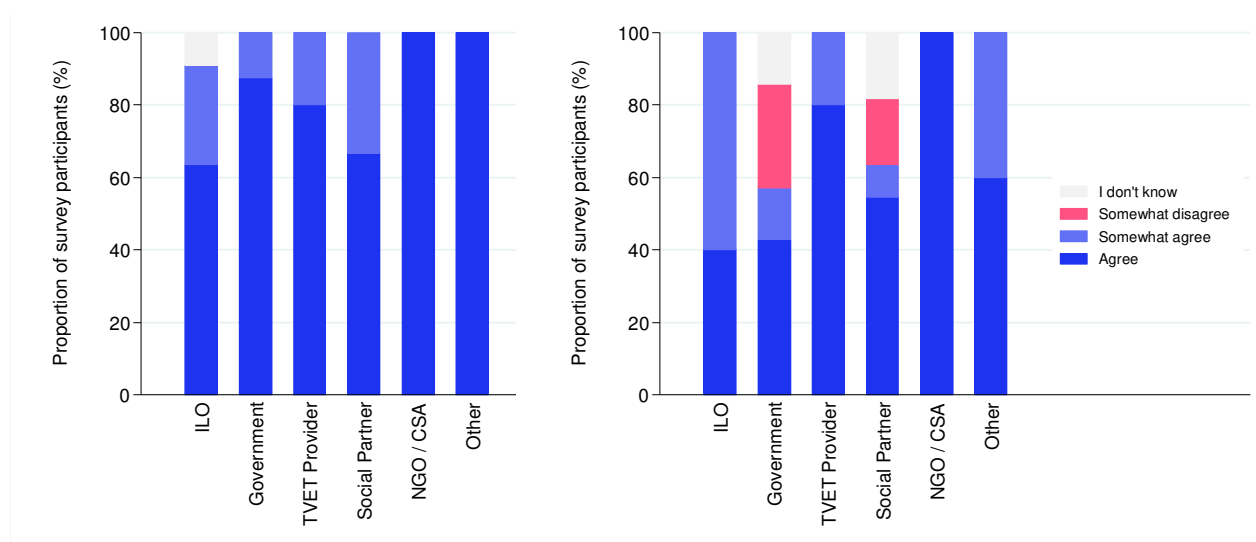
- In Ghana interviewees indicated that the programme is aligned with the *Strategic Plan for TVET Transformation 2018–2022*.⁴

⁴ State of Skills: Ghana, ILO, 2020

- In Niger interviewees explained that the programme aligns with *Niger’s National Development Plan (PDES) 2017-2021* which aims to transform Niger and to eradicate poverty and inequality. The interventions specifically align with goals that the plan contains under axis 2 (social development and democratic transition), 3 (economic growth), and 4 (governance, peace and security).
- In Tanzania the few interviewees who were familiar with the programme’s design explained that it was informed by *National Development Strategies*, specifically the skills mismatch between graduates of TVET and the needs of the economy which has resulted in an inability to access employment and a lack of recognition for skilled youth operating in the informal sector.

A deeper dive into some of the specific objectives related to the relevance of the systems (SSC/STED) initiative as well as the inclusion objectives found substantial differences Figure 3.

Figure 3: Survey: Are the objectives aligned with the priorities of your organisation? (systems objectives (left) vs inclusion objectives (right) from country components)



Note: The survey question was: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The objectives of the programme in [insert programme component] are aligned with the priorities and strategies of your organisation.” The objectives were identified as systems or inclusion objectives by the evaluation team. For “programme” as the third major thematic area in country components, this identification was not possible given overlaps with other thematic areas. Observations: 11, 8, 5, 12, 2, 5 (left) and 10, 7, 5, 11, 2, 5 (right)

The survey results show that the inclusion elements are rated lower than the systems ones, by every stakeholder groups but the NGO / CSA. The disagreement about the importance of the inclusion objectives was from amongst constituents, especially by government and social partners. The reasons for these views are not immediately apparent as the importance of inclusion was highlighted across interviewees.

A couple of ILO staff confirmed the value of the STED initiative but nonetheless questioned whether the resultant focus on sectors – or subsectors – which are growing their exports may also have ramifications. For example, one interviewee observed that a focus on only those agricultural products that are being exported excludes, from a skills development perspective, the majority of employees in the agricultural sector. Another interviewee indicated that there may be sectors of the economy, such as those related to ICT, which will also be excluded using this approach as they are not an export sector and therefore not prioritised (for instance the

digital sector that is very important to an economy and relies on high-level skills). In the feedback provided to this report the responsible ILO unit argued, on the other hand, that domestic value chains that supply export sectors and sectors that are exposed to competition from imports are duly considered as part of the STED methodology. From our perspective both these viewpoints have their merits. The discussion indicates the importance of critically reflecting on the decisions relating to sectors, and observing whether there are important sectors, or sub-sectors, that from a skills perspective may have unintentionally been excluded. The STED process with its consultations with the stakeholders and the technical analysis give ample opportunities to do so.

These challenges, highlighted by ILO staff, were given further expression from the perspective of constituents, in the case of Ethiopia. This is described in more detail in the “spotlight”.

Spotlight: Programme focus in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, interviewees explained, there were initially 11 sectors chosen by stakeholders, but after further discussions these sectors were narrowed down to five priority skill areas. It was particularly agreed that the Textile and Garment sectors would be prioritised because of their relevance to Ethiopia’s Growth and Transformation Plan and their contribution to Ethiopia’s exports. Additional research and further analysis were then undertaken using the STED method.

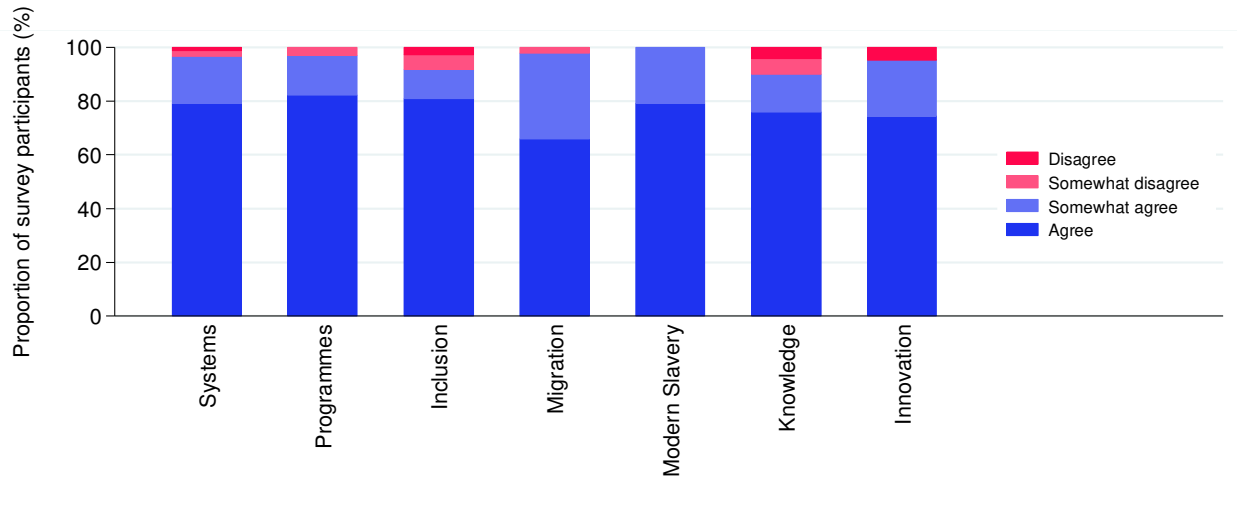
However, whilst the relevance of this work was affirmed there were several challenges highlighted. One interviewee from the private sector observed that the focus on the export market had excluded local manufacturers who play an important role in reducing the import of commodities – and therefore the expenditure of foreign exchange. These perceptions suggest that whilst there is an intention for an exploration of the full value chain, as outlined above, this may not take place or be understood as envisaged.

An interviewee, from the TVET sector, observed that “*the objectives of the programme are very important*” and indicated that the intervention is very relevant to the work that they are doing to understand demand and supply mismatches but indicated that it was regrettable that the programme design had failed to take the TVET study that they had conducted into account, which would have deepened the findings about the skills gaps that exist. Another interviewee made a related point about the need for the programme to take other existing initiatives and studies into account emphasising that this is central to ensuring the relevance of the programme. The interviewee noted that “*there appears to be a high-level of fragmentation in the sector*”. There is a necessity to ensure increased levels of coordination to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure that the programme meets the most pressing needs.

In addition to the review of the relevance of the objectives, we also explored the extent to which the *implementation* of the programme was relevant to the organisational priorities of the constituents. The findings from the survey in this regard are provided in Figure 4, distinguishing between the thematic areas of the programme. The results show that there were a few respondents (from any of the areas) that disagreed with the statement of the relevance of the interventions. A factor that may account for these positive responses is the high level of involvement of partners in the planning of the activities of the programme and even more so in the implementation of the programme, with respondents indicating that there was a high level of stakeholder involvement and a “collaborative consultative process” during planning and/or implementation.

A closer look at the figures (see Annex 5 for graphs distinguishing between gender, role and component) reveals that women and men responded in a similar fashion to these questions, yet women had a higher proportion of “I don’t know” (29% versus less than 22% for men). This may be because men were more involved in the interventions because of their (management) positions, and this issue will be considered further in our analysis of gender and final recommendations.

Figure 4: Survey: Are the activities aligned with the priorities of your organisation?



Note: If a participant responded to several thematic areas / activities, all responses are included as separate observations. "I don't know" (25%) was dropped as participants did not observe all activities in a component they took part in. Observations: 91, 68, 37, 50, 24, 50, 43.

In addition, the role of the outcome-based funding also emerged as important for enabling the relevance of the implementation of the programme. Interviewees commented that the approach was critical for creating flexibility within the programme to ensure the on-going relevance of the programme (see EQ 24).

To what extent are the programme interventions relevant to the achievement of ILO P&B Outcome 1 and Indicator 1.3? (EQ 3)

Further, as is evident from Figure 2, there was a strong agreement amongst ILO staff that the programme objectives are relevant to the achievement of ILO P&B Outcome 1 and Indicator 1.3. Interviewees from the ILO suggest that the multi-level approach of the programme, is aligned with the agenda and mode of interventions of the ILO. During this evaluation evidence emerged of the ways in which the programme has been able to use the expertise and experience of the ILO to strengthen capacity development processes, as well as its strong relationship with constituents to create dialogues and facilitate processes in which social partners could collectively undertake skills planning and implementation. This approach adopted by the ILO in the programme is given strong expression in the three components of the programme, and in doing so has therefore strongly contributed to achieving Outcome 1 that aimed at "more and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects".

The alignment with the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for the SKILL-UP countries was not enough of a topic in the interviews to draw conclusions. From our own document review we can say that all country ProDocs duly discuss and map the linkages to the DWCP. The UNSDCF are not discussed in the ProDocs, given their recent addition, yet selected checks to this end have also shown alignment between the SKILL-UP interventions and UNSDCFs.

To what extent is the programme aligned with the donor's priorities? (EQ 4)

We also found that the programme is aligned with the donor's priorities as outlined, for instance, in the White Paper on Education for Development⁵ and consistent with those of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) in TVET and in particular the commitment to strengthen national TVET systems, to support labour market relevant skills development; and to include girls in TVET and the inclusion of marginalised groups. Further, during interviews with representatives from the embassies it was evident that there is a strong alignment between the imperatives of Norway, including needs-based legal migration and the focus on skills development in key sectors. However, interviews with embassy staff suggest few linkages between the programme and the activities being implemented directly by the embassies – even where there would be opportunities for linkages. The interviewees suggested that notwithstanding the capacity constraints in the embassy, it would be beneficial to have more frequent involvement and communication (either with headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Norad and/or directly between the embassies and the ILO in countries) to enhance alignment.

4.2. Coherence

To what extent are the programme design (objectives, outcomes, outputs, and activities) and its underlining theory of change logical and coherent? (EQ 5)

To respond to this question, we look at three elements: the coherence of the programme with ILO's overall goals; the coherence of the components within the programme; as well as the theory of change of the programme.

As discussed in subchapter 4.1 the programme's objective is coherent with ILO's overall Decent Work and Future of Work agendas – and by extension the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. This does not come as a surprise since ILO's overall objectives are broadly formulated, giving space for a range of interventions of different topics and themes. The three programme components – global, regional, country – combine several themes that are at the meta-level coherent with the P&B. Table 2 in Chapter 2 above gives a more detailed overview of the intervention areas and themes that the programme covers. It shows that there is concentration on systems, programmes, and inclusion but also that the foci span widely with migration, forced labour, knowledge and innovation.

For all the components we observe on the one hand that the respective outcomes and outputs – outlined in ProDocs (Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, global component) and concept notes (Lebanon, Niger, regional component) – generally fit with the overall component objectives. On the other hand, it is difficult to ascertain this in detail, because some of the component outcome statements are quite broad. It also does not emanate clearly from the component narratives whether the chosen outputs are always the ones that collectively will lead to the outcomes or whether additional or other outputs would be needed or could lead to

⁵ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014). Education for Development, Report to the Storting (White Paper), Meld. St. 25 (2013–2014)

the outcomes quicker. It is noteworthy that for seemingly similar interventions different formulations of the outcome statements are used (and M&E data, as discussed in EQ 26).

Regarding the Theory of Change (ToC) we find that it more resembles a logical framework; the change narrative provides little explanation how the causal chains from outputs to outcomes and further to impact are meant to work and under which assumptions the causal relations are expected to hold true. The absence of the underpinning logic or a clear statement of assumptions as part of the ToC narrative can undermine the possibility of assessing its coherence and consistency.

Some ILO and donor representatives explained that the impression could emerge that the programme is merely a portfolio of several (separate) projects that are serviced by the global component rather than a coherent programme. A comprehensive ToC for the entire programme, they argue, could be the instrument to provide both the narrative that explains the coherence and a tool to steer the programme in its entirety. When discussing about the outcome-based funding (see EQ 24), several interviewees from the ILO cautioned it carries the risk of contributing to fragmentation.

To what extent did the programme build on knowledge developed during the previous phase of the ILO-Norway partnership? (EQ 6)

Representatives both from the donor and the ILO opined the programme built on the previous collaboration, illustrated by one of interviewees who stated: *“my impression is that things kept going, somewhat modified, based on the experience from the first phase”*. More concretely this is reflected in the decision to continue the SKILL-UP Programme in countries where previous implementation experience, results, and networks could be leveraged. The decision to end the engagement in Mozambique and Zambia contrasts this and is questionable given that skills development and reform require long planning and implementation horizons.

Examples to indicate that earlier implementation experience was taken into consideration were also shared in the country interviews. In Tanzania, for instance, more coordination was sought by instituting a steering and technical committee, and in Senegal efforts were undertaken to improve the consultation process to identify needs in the digital economy and to ensure relevance of the planned interventions and activities.

To respond to the question, we also assess the extent to which the ILO addressed learnings and recommendations that were generated in evaluations of previous skills programmes. Instead of comparing what the ILO has concretely done to address the learnings and recommendations, we looked at whether the issues raised continue to need optimisation. Based on this review we conclude that the ILO has acted on all but two of the learnings and recommendations that we deem relevant, as shown in Table 3.

The Skills Innovation Facility, for instance, responds to the recommendation that encouraged the ILO to allocate funding to develop and test new models to identify effective and scalable solutions. Another example relates to the programme’s focus on Africa and the need to seek modalities that allow the ILO to quickly respond to changes in the demand for different types of skills – which the “outcome-based funding” provides.

One area where we deem the ILO to have fallen somewhat short – which consequently leads to one of our recommendations – relates to the *“... level of regional interaction in projects of this type by building into their design more opportunities for collaboration, the exchange of ideas and peer reviews among the participating countries. ...”* (Recommendation 3, 2017) The second one relates to reporting and verification of results at an outcome level, such as the numbers of persons who are employed following a training activity (Recommendation 6, 2016), though the Service Tracker has been developed to address this. Our assessment

regarding the learning that “performance indicators and their measurement criteria need to reflect more accurately the work that actually leads to outcomes” (Lessons learned 5, 2016), is mixed.

Table 3: Overview of the knowledge generated in previous evaluations

Component	Total	Relevant	Reflected
Independent evaluation of the ILO’s strategy and actions for skills development for jobs and growth: 2010–2015 – Recommendations Relevant <i>R2: Adequate technical support for areas of growing demand</i> <i>R3: Clarify scope of the skills agenda</i> <i>R4: Encourage innovation by allocating funds for new models</i> <i>R5: Enhance the capacity of tripartite partners</i> <i>R6: Improve the systems in place to review and assess reported results</i>	7	5	4
Independent evaluation of the ILO’s strategy and actions for skills development for jobs and growth: 2010–2015 – Learnings Relevant <i>LL 3: Input of ministries other than Ministry of Labour</i> <i>LL 4: Guidance document for skills work</i> <i>LL 5: Performance indicators and criteria regarding outcomes</i>	5	3	(2)
Strengthening skills development systems to promote access and employability especially of young women and men: 2017* – Recommendations Relevant: <i>R3: Regional interaction, exchange of ideas, and peer review</i> <i>R4: Results framework to measure progress towards broader goals</i> <i>R5: Reinforce the need for skills development to be inclusive</i>	5	3	2
Strengthening skills development systems to promote access and employability especially of young women and men: 2017* – Learnings Relevant: <i>LL 5: attention to gender in design and implementation</i>	6	1	1

Sources: Independent evaluation of the ILO’s strategy and actions for skills development for jobs and growth: 2010–2015 / International Labour Office, Evaluation Office – Geneva: ILO, 2016; Strengthening skills development systems to promote access and employability especially of young women and men, Tony Powers, November 2017. Note: Recommendations and learnings shortened. * This is the report evaluating the previous Programme Cooperation Agreement between the ILO and the Government of Norway.

To what extent is the programme compatible with other ILO interventions? (consistency, complementarity, and synergies) (EQ 7)

In the previous section we reflected on the extent to which the design and implementation of the programme was informed by the knowledge that was generated in the previous phase of the ILO-Norway partnership. Another measure for coherence pertains to the synergies and interlinkages between the programme and other interventions carried out by the ILO. With the broad objectives that the programme defined for each of the components there is potential for many touchpoints.

In the interviews most references were made to the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises Programme (SCORE), which focuses on improving productivity and working conditions in Small and Medium Enterprises with practical training and enterprise consulting. SCORE is co-financed by the Norad. Examples of

creating these synergies were reported in Ghana, primarily on the operational level, regarding the deployment of experts and consultants. Apparent interlinkages could also be found with the Global Action on Forced Labour Project (BRIDGE) in Niger and its provisioning of access to remedies for victims of forced labour as well as with the integration of the Know About Business (KAB) educational programme into the Lebanon component. Several of the activities under the global component are oriented towards the greater ILO agenda, beyond the Programme, including the Training of Trainers Certification Programme on Skills Anticipation and STED.

Despite these positive examples it also emerges from the interviews that synergies between the programmes could be optimised, for instance by seeking opportunities to link up beneficiaries of the respective programmes, by offering access of the beneficiaries of one programme to the services of another programme, or by improving the sequencing of the interventions so that they mutually support / reinforce each other. Judging the programme against the potential synergies that were formulated in the ProDoc, for example in Ghana,⁶ we found that neither in the documents nor the interviews could we collect significant examples of sharing resources with the explicit intent to supporting the co-development of interventions or the identification of new stakeholders and partners that were not otherwise already considered at the design stage. Similarly, as far as sequencing is concerned, the example most often cited was that of the global component work on the “resource package” and the field work that was done in parallel in Niger (see also EQ 19).

Another element to consider relates to the consistency of the programme with international norms and standards. We consider coherence in this regard high, primarily because of ILO’s own role in setting norms and standards applying them in the delivery of the interventions.

To what extent is the programme compatible with other interventions of other donors? (consistency, complementarity, and synergies) (EQ 8)

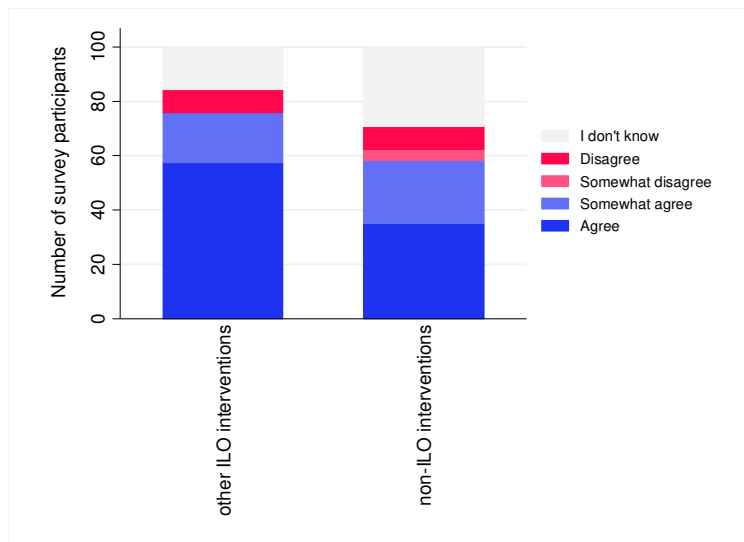
Regarding the complementarity, harmonisation, and co-ordination of the SKILL-UP Programme with the interventions of other agencies we were able to collect selected examples. One of the opportunities seized to collaborate is in Ghana, where ILO and GIZ agreed to partner to combine work on systems (ILO) with direct implementation (GIZ). Another example is Lebanon, where both ILO and the European Training Foundation (ETF) talked about the close collaboration among donors. In terms of the regional component, the Global Skills Partnership in which the ILO partners among others with the IOM and UNESCO was mentioned. These collaborations are assessed positively by our interviewees and they contribute to coherence.

However, assessing external coherence would necessitate more detailed analysis of other development partner engagements which goes well beyond the scope of the evaluation (in the interviews in Ethiopia alone interviewees referred to various skills related interventions of international (GIZ, World Bank, UNESCO) and national organisations (Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Trade, Job Creation Commission).

⁶ “... explore synergies ... identify and replicate good practices, increase the project network through the identification of new stakeholders and partners, make its results and deliverables available to a wider audience and identify opportunities to share resources, with a focus in supporting co-development and strengthening ILO’s presence in the country.” (SKILL-UP Ghana, ProDoc, Page 13).

These findings mirror those of the survey among ILO staff, the results of which are shown in Figure 5. Whereas the results show that the vast majority considers that internal coherence was ensured (73% “agreed” with this statement, of those who responded), the ratings for external coherence were more critical (54% “agreed”).

Figure 5: Survey: Has enough been done to ensure compatibility? (type of organisation)



The survey question to ILO participants was: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Enough has been done [to ensure] compatibility with other ILO interventions; Enough has been done [to ensure] compatibility with interventions of other (non-ILO) donor-funded interventions.” Observations: 17, 17.

4.3. Effectiveness

Has the programme achieved its objectives and targets? (EQ 9)

To answer this question, we draw on the M&E data, the survey and interviews. Table 4 provides an overview of how many of the targets formulated in the design documents (ProDocs, concept notes) were documented as achieved in the last Progress Report (covering the period April to December 2020). In total, 13 of the 20 outcome targets are considered as achieved by the programme management team, while 3 targets were either dropped altogether or postponed; 4 targets are not reported. Among the 115 output targets, 62 are reported as achieved, 29 as not achieved, and 24 were not documented.⁷ The success rate among the reported targets is thus 81% (outcomes) and 68% (outputs).

One interpretation of these results could be that a relatively high proportion of the targets were missed, yet we find the explanations provided for these deviations reasonable (as outlined in table below). It is not possible for the evaluation team to determine which targets were overly ambitious, just right, or not ambitious enough, given the specific country contexts. This also applies for instance to the question whether more systemic and

⁷ Some of the outcome targets were marked successful in the Progress Report without providing indicator values or explanation (also see comments on indicators in the efficiency section). The regional and global components did not use indicators, and in Malawi, the Progress Report did not report against the indicators. Also see discussion in the efficiency section (EQ 22).

milestone inclusion changes would have been possible and should have been achieved (e.g., adopted strategies, instead of studies and pilot activities providing the ground for such larger achievements).

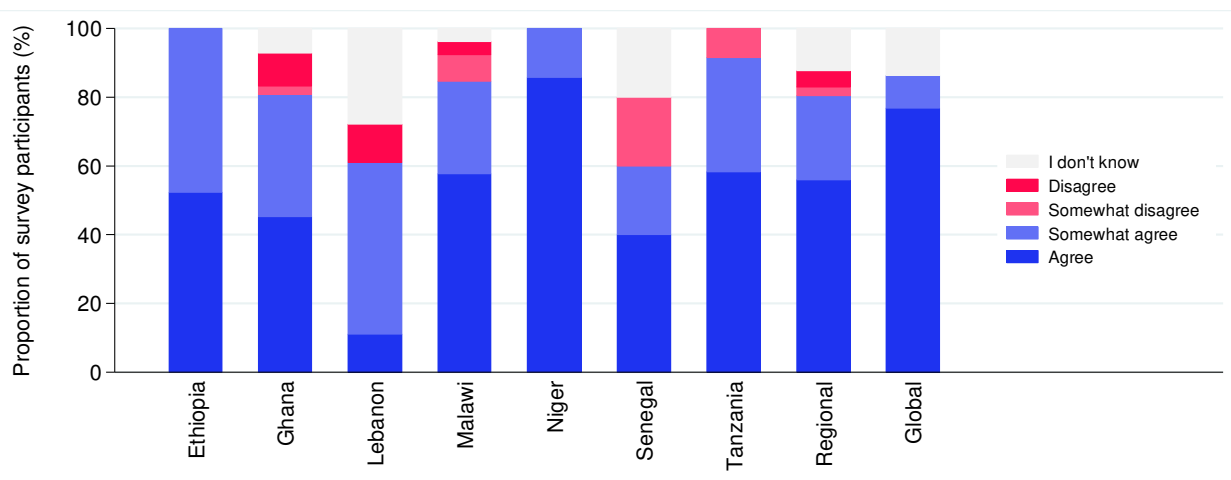
Table 4: Achievement of original targets (self-assessment Progress Reports)

Component	Outcome targets			Output targets			Comments
	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	
Ethiopia	3			8			
Ghana	2	1		11+1	2		Inclusion targets postponed to PCA 2020-21
Lebanon				11+2	16+1		All system and some programme and inclusion targets postponed to PCA 2020-21
Malawi			4			24	Progress report does not document progress against indicators
Niger	3			8			
Senegal	2	1		2+2	3		Inclusion targets missed
Tanzania	3	1		16	7+1		STED activities dropped; some inclusion targets postponed/missed
Regional							No target values
Global							No target values

Note: If the last Progress Report (April-December 2020) contains an "achievement rate (%)", this is used as basis for target achievement (> 90% = achieved). If that rate is missing, then "progress achieved: Yes" is used. If there are relevant indicators from the ProDoc which are not covered, they are added to the "N/A" column. If there are indicators documented in the Progress Reports which were not included in the ProDoc, they are added after the plus (+) sign. The Senegal report does not report on outcome 3; information from the other tables (see below) was used; the target "structuring framework written for at least three supporting subsectors" was recoded as successful given the explanation on activities.

The assessment of the survey data in Figure 6 shows that the vast majority of participants consider the outcomes as achieved. The level of satisfaction is particularly high for the work in Niger (86% selected the highest rating, "agree") and in the global component (77%), while somewhat lower in Lebanon (11%) and Senegal (40%), yet it should be made transparent that the difference is often due to a few participants (Niger and Senegal are covered by 14-15 respondents each; other components have more responses).

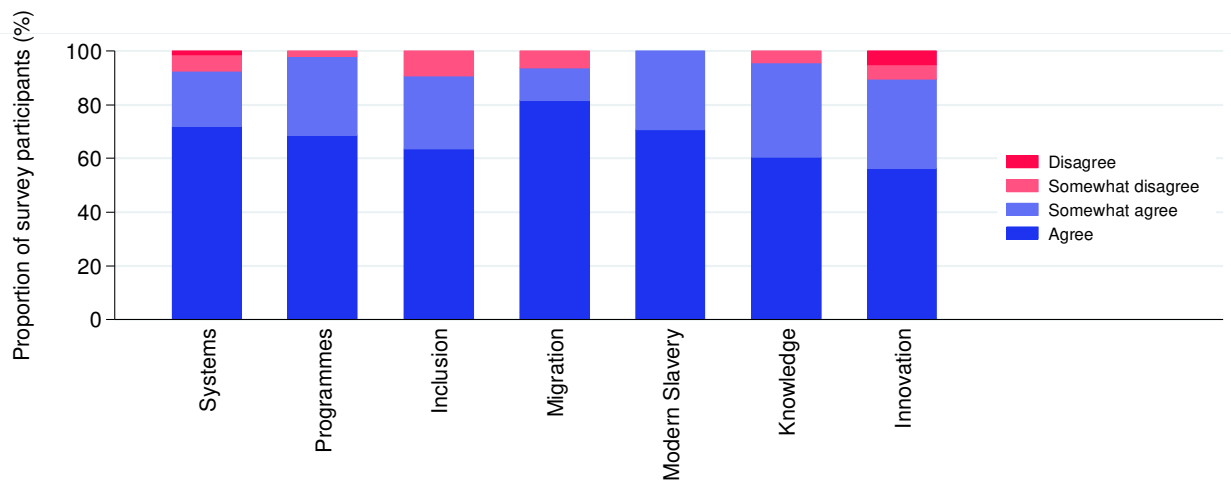
Figure 6: Survey: Were the objectives achieved?



Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The objectives of the programme in [insert programme component] have been achieved." If a participant responded to several components / objectives, all responses are included as separate observations. Programme elements which were dropped entirely are not rated. Observations: 21, 42, 18, 26, 14, 15, 24, 41, 95.

The differences between different stakeholder groups (see Annex 5) are relatively small, with social partners and NGO / CSA being slightly more critical, and TVET providers particularly satisfied. A larger proportion of women believe that the objectives were reached, as compared to men, but this difference is also quite small.

Figure 7: Survey: Were the interventions successful?



Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The activities of the programme in ... were successful." If a participant responded to several thematic areas / activities, all responses are included as separate observations. "I don't know" (34%) was dropped as participants did not observe all activities in a component they took part in. Programme elements which were dropped entirely are not rated. Observations: 82, 51, 33, 49, 24, 48, 39.

The individual interventions (such as the work on SSCs in Ghana, or the guidelines for RPL in Ethiopia, and so on) are also considered successful: 70% of participants "agree", and further 25% "somewhat agree" with the respective statement, while only 5% "somewhat disagree" and 1% "disagree". Figure 7 shows that this distribution is very similar, irrespective of the thematic areas covered in the programme.

Looking at those targets which were not achieved, three patterns emerge:

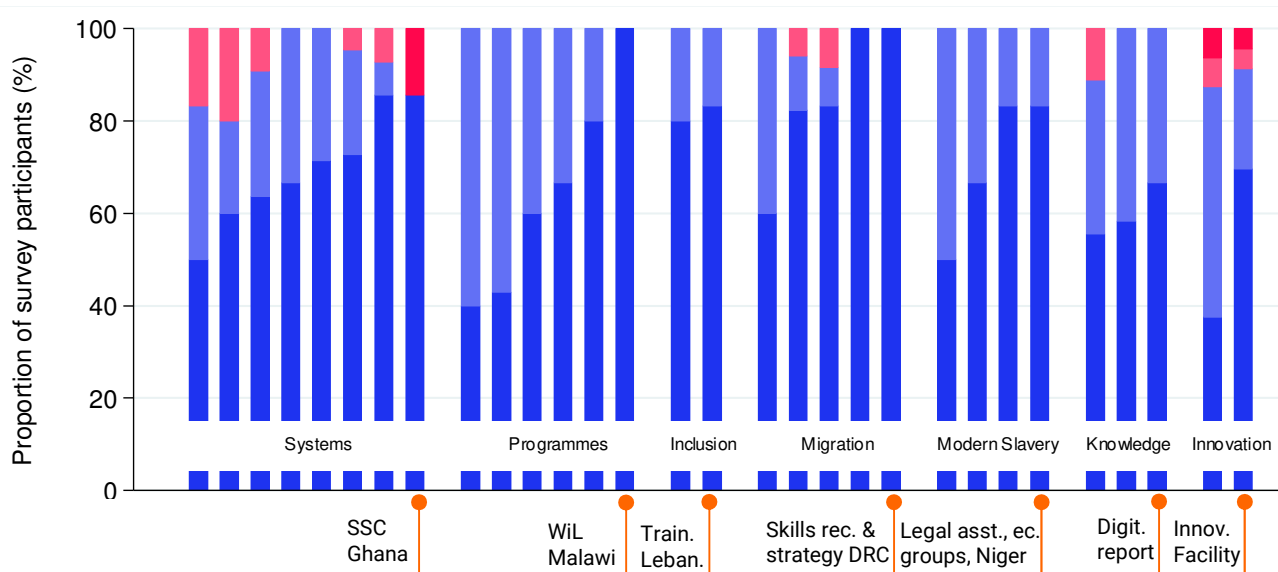
- Two outcomes were dropped altogether, namely the systems targets in Lebanon (SSC) and in Tanzania (STED). This was explained with a lack of interest from government in both cases, the political and economic crisis more broadly (Lebanon), and a disagreement between stakeholders what sectors to select (Tanzania). The work on the SSC in Lebanon is planned to continue under the current Programme Cooperation Agreement 2020-21 between the ILO and Norway.
- Some interventions were delayed or modified due to the pandemic. In Ghana, the pilot activities related to the inclusion outcome were postponed, with the outcome marked as only partly achieved in the last Progress Report. In Lebanon, some elements of the KAB component were delayed (due to the pandemic but also shifting political priorities). In Tanzania, RPL monitoring activities were decreased because of the pandemic. (Note: also see section on the Covid-19 response in the efficiency section, EQ 18)
- Some of the inclusion work did not result in the adaptation of strategies and action plans as intended, while the more operational work was carried out. In Senegal the “Strategy and Action Plan for Women’s Digital Orientation Adopted by Stakeholders” did not materialise, and work on an inclusion strategy in Tanzania was postponed. In both countries, the inclusion work was considered successful, yet interviewees acknowledged how much work still needs to be done.

In which area did the programme have the greatest achievements, in which the least achievements? (EQ 14)

To respond to this question, the results are further split to distinguish between individual interventions. We use the survey for this, as it provides the most structured and comparable basis for such an assessment. The feedback from the interviews do by and large reflect the ratings from the survey. It should be further noted that we discuss the greatest achievements as perceived by the stakeholders themselves. Given the breadth of the programme, it is not possible for the evaluation team to independently assess the merit and worth of each intervention (the survey discussed the 46 interventions identified as most relevant by the programme management team).

Figure 8 shows that all interventions are rated positively. To identify the most successful ones, the variation between participants who strongly believe that the intervention was successful (“agree”) and those which perceive the intervention as positive but not as enthusiastically as the first group (“somewhat agree”), is used. Within each thematic area, those interventions with the highest ratings are highlighted.

Figure 8: Survey: Were the interventions successful? Comparison across activities.



Note: Only interventions with 5 and more observations are shown.

These interventions are:

- Systems: SSCs in Ghana:** The feedback from the interviews shows that the establishment of SSCs in four sectors raised awareness among stakeholders about their roles, and provided momentum to skills development more broadly. Yet sustaining the momentum is a challenge (see spotlight below).
- Programmes: Work-integrated Learning (WiL) in Malawi:** WiL is seen as a key intervention by the interviewees because it responded to the needs of the (horticulture) industry and empowered suppliers (local farmers, mostly women) to boost productivity and access a market which was closed to them before. The work integration provided the experience to understand the buyer's demands and respond accordingly (further information on WiL is provided below, in the spotlight, as well as in Annex 8).
- Inclusion: Non-formal market-based training in Lebanon:** This intervention provided non-formal training in the construction sector. Interviewees highlighted that it addresses both the private sector skills needs as well as the requirements of the beneficiary groups (Syrian and Lebanese youth). There was also pride regarding "breaking stereotypes" and facilitating the integration of (seven) women in non-traditional roles.
- Migration: Skills recognition and skills strategy in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):** These two interventions coming out of the Central Africa partnership were considered particularly successful.⁸ The skills recognition is part of the objective "to implement training, skills recognition and post training support for 200 migrant workers/refugees from RCA [who] will

⁸ Ratings are provided by stakeholders who are familiar with these interventions and were possibly even directly involved in the implementation (so the results should be interpreted partly as a self-assessment). This is true for all activities, but possibly even more so in the regional component given its scope of activities.

receive a certificate recognised in the ECCAS region.” (Progress Report May-November 2020). Our understanding from the interviews is that this is ongoing work and the trainings have not yet taken place. Interviewees appreciate that a national training provider (INPP) was used as partner, which in their view strengthens the national systems, create ownership but also enables the INPP to replicate the intervention in other areas.

- **Combatting modern slavery: Legal and judicial assistance, and economic interest groups in Niger:** These interventions relate to a) 13 paralegals providing legal and judicial support to 420 women – regularising their status which would give them and their children access to education, healthcare, and the labour market – and b) the creation of small cooperatives for agro-pastoral activities. In the interviews, the trainings of victims of slavery and generally the awareness created through all activities were also considered as achievements. The lack of coaching and follow-up activities, on the other hand, were considered as risks to these achievements.
- **Knowledge: Digitisation of skills:** The three items which were contained in the survey – digitisation of skills and the big data workshop as part of the global component; research and mapping studies as part of the regional component – received quite similar ratings. None of the interviewees referred to these reports in their answers, yet there were not enough interviews (or interview time) dedicated to this part of the programme to make conclusive statements. From an evaluator’s perspective we do note, however, that the digitisation studies are not published or did not flow into the latest ILO publication on the topic.⁹
- **Innovation: Skills Innovation Facility:** The facility in its entirety, and the call in particular, are considered a great success by the interviewees this was proactively discussed with. There is pride in what has been achieved; concerning the numerous entries to the call, the attention received within the ILO and beyond, and the fact the call has been replicated in Cambodia, with other regional offices also showing interest. It should be noted that the evaluation team was not able to observe how the facility changed innovation culture within the SKILLS branch as a long-term objective. Dalberg, which has accompanied the process, confirms the achievements, and has a number of suggestions how to strengthen the facility further.¹⁰

It does not seem meaningful to identify “least achievements” (see evaluation question) via the survey, given that there only few unfavourable ratings. The following are based on the interviews and our own observations:

- There are several elements which were either dropped, postponed, or not fully achieved, or substituted with other elements (see above).
- Interviewees referred to elements they saw as problematic within otherwise successful interventions, such as the unclear status of the SSCs (Ghana) and the implications for its functionality and commitment among the stakeholders. In other cases, certain parts of the training were flagged as less successful, such as the financial elements of the online KAB course (Lebanon), the fact that due to the pandemic, the trainings had less exposure to employers and

⁹ The Digitisation of TVET and Skills Systems, ILO, 2020. It is also possible that in the survey there was some confusion which digitisation study / studies the questions were relating to, given that there are now several.

¹⁰ Dalberg (2020): ILO Skills Innovation Strategy. Taking stock of the last 18 months. Recommendations relate to the scope of the call, the call evaluation process, technical assistance for the winner, support for other participants, increasing ILO staff engagement including sourcing innovative ideas from internal teams and strengthening the culture of innovation within the SKILLS branch, reinforcing sustainability, and the governance structure.

practical elements than originally planned (Tanzania), or the lack of budget for follow-up activities (Niger).

- In regard to the regional component, it was criticised that the intervention was weak with respect to actual implementation of the various training, and the harmonisation of certification and standardisation of training in the areas identified. This was partly attributed to the pandemic.
- The Service Tracker is flagged as a success in several ILO headquarter interviews; just recently a version was officially launched. There is a lot of interest from other UN agencies and beyond. The objective, “to reach all training participants per mouse click”, and in the long-term not just reaching ultimate beneficiaries but also institutional stakeholders, is certainly a relevant vision. For the SKILL-UP Programme as implemented under the PCA 2018-19, the tool comes too late (unless used for the forthcoming tracer studies) however. Delays seem to be related to the fact that requirements have changed several times, as well as to technical and communication issues. It is an omission that the data has not been shared with the Tanzanian stakeholders where one of the pilots took place. The data could have been used for the discussions with constituents, and it would have been important to see what parts of the data is considered as relevant. Moving forward, we miss a concept how the data will be assessed and disseminated.¹¹

Spotlight: Sector Skills Councils Ghana

Four Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) were established in Ghana covering the agriculture, construction and tourism and hospitality as well as the oil and gas sectors – four sectors of total 22 that in 2017 the Council for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (COTVET) recommended to establish. With strong private sector engagement, the SSCs are meant to overcome challenges in the skills domain, including poor linkage between training institutions and industry. It emanates clearly from our interviews and the document review that the setting-up of the SSCs is seen as one of the key achievements of the programme. Interviewees believe that the SSCs helped to identify skills gaps that exist in their sectors and that, as one SSC member put it, “SSC stakeholders have now identified the roles they can play in promoting skills development within their sectors” (SSC member interview, 2021).

Notwithstanding the principal interest of stakeholders in engaging in an SSC, the discussions with various stakeholders show that significant hurdles exist. From the onset, funding constraints had been an issue, leading the SSCs to be established as committees reporting to COTVET rather than as autonomous organisation. The legal status is seemingly a concern for some of the council members, since it reportedly limits what it can do and achieve. Dissemination by the organisations represented in the SSCs to their respective members is also yet to be strengthened. Whilst intermediary financial backing could be secured, including with support of the GIZ, a sustainable funding model has yet to be found. These issues suggest on the one hand that there is continued need for external support to the SSCs; such support is envisaged under the PCA 2020-21. Yet it also appears that rather than taking the current model as a blueprint for future ones, solutions need to be found how to improve the model to overcome the deficiencies that seem to have surfaced as the SSCs went into operation.

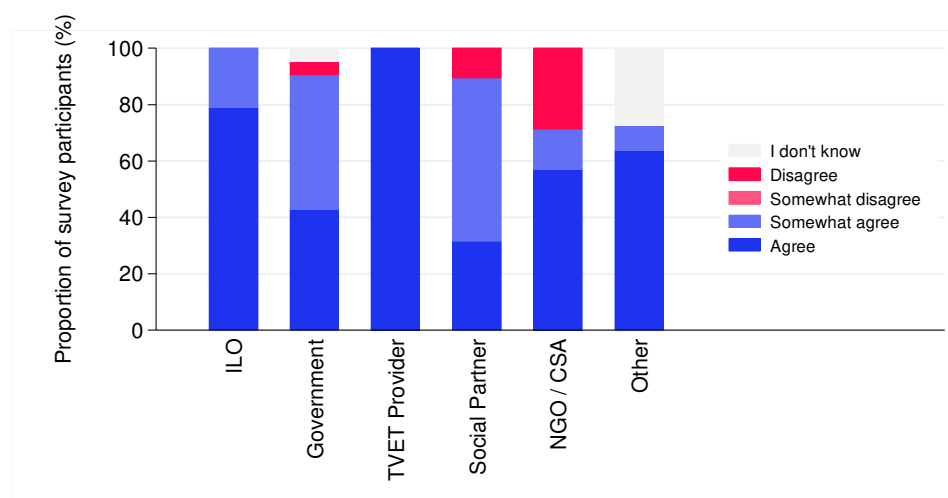
¹¹ The concept would need to address questions such as: How to deal with the fact that courses widely differ regarding content, duration, costs, participation profiles, and labour market situations? How to measure “impact” in absence of data on the situation before the training, or a comparison group, or on substitution/displacement effects? How can distortions be minimized to improve data validity (e.g., to deal with different response rates between groups of participants, including between successful / not successful participants)? How to boost response rates?

What national capacities have been targeted by the programme, and what does evidence suggest has changed? (EQ 10)

The programme implemented 26 different trainings of institutional stakeholders which are summarised in Table 5. Trainings touched on various topics related to skills anticipation, SSCs, management of training centres, inclusivity, CBT and apprenticeships, training of trainers and RPL assessors, digitalisation, and big data. Looking at the quantitative figures, about two thirds of the trainings achieved their target numbers (or there were no target numbers documented in the ProDoc), with the rest either just falling short of the targets or being dropped altogether. In total, 2,075 persons took part in the trainings. Only 6 out of the 26 trainings which took place had 40% and more women participants. This is likely a reflection of the gender distribution in management roles or other roles which were targeted by capacity building, yet the 27% average rate is (too) low. It should be noted, on the other hand, that in the survey, women rated the capacity building better than men (68% “agree” versus 48%).

The satisfaction between different types of stakeholders varies quite strongly (Figure 9). TVET providers are particularly satisfied (100% “agree”), while social partners are somewhat more critical, with the majority choosing “somewhat agree”. There are also pronounced differences between the components, when focusing on the difference between “agree” and “somewhat agree” (see Annex 5, Figure 9). Satisfaction was particularly high in Ethiopia, Lebanon, and Tanzania, while comparatively more critical feedback was obtained in Senegal and the regional component (which might reflect the limited extent of the capacity building there).

Figure 9: Survey: Did you get the support you needed?



Note: The survey question was: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Overall, the program has provided the technical support that your organisation or institution required.” ILO participants were asked “Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Overall, the program has provided the technical support that the constituents ... required.” Observations: 19, 21, 5, 19, 7, 11.

One large training investment was the “Training of Trainers (ToT) Certification Programme on Skills Anticipation and STED” (176,000 USD) implemented under the global component, with the objective to boost the ability to convey the STED methodology and facilitate STED processes. This was used to train two stakeholders from each SKILL-UP country (with the exception of Malawi), with the national coordinator and one additional stakeholder, usually from a partner ministry. Further 24 stakeholders, either ILO staff (9) or other partners (15; incl. some consultants) took part. Based on the four interviews in which the ToT were discussed, these trainings were considered of high quality and relevance. All trainees referred to instances where they have disseminated or applied the learnings, in training sessions, workshops or studies implemented by the

ILO. As far as we can tell, the training has substantially increased the ability of the ILO to provide STED trainings and facilitation, and decentralised that capacity, given that these was previously a role taken on by few members of its headquarter staff.

Table 5: Capacity building participants

Component	Participants			Training	Participants	Industry
	Target	Status	women			
Ethiopia	100	81	43%	Skills needs anticipation and sectoral governance	National stakeholders	-
	N/A	11	36%	Different online courses	ILO partners	-
	N/A	1	0%	Managing voc. training centers, ITCILO Turin	Federal TVET Institute general director	-
	yes	partly	-	Capacity building support (assessment implemented)	Centre of excellence	Agro-proc.
	60	0	-	Delivering core skills modules, RPL resources	TVET teachers	
Ghana	20	87	15%	SSCs and how to run them	Relevant stakeholders	-
	84	78	17%	Sector skills rapid foresight workshop	Relevant stakeholders	-
	30	0	-	How to make skills systems more inclusive	TVET stakeholders, educational staff	-
	100	87	18%	Covid-19 related training, such as business recovery	Managers	Tourism / hospitality
Lebanon	50	63	44%	KAB programme	Teachers/instructors	-
	Yes	No	-	Coaching and support	SSC members	-
	50	119	6%	Delivering CBT	Trainees	Construction
	-	50	N/A	Skills anticipation and STED	(I)NGO, private sector	
Malawi	20	32	53%	Skills needs anticipation	MoL	
	25	37	51%	Sectoral approaches to skills development		
	30	10	10%	RPL assessors	New assessors	
Niger	2	2	0%	Training of trainer (SYIB)	Timidria association	
Senegal	50	50	16%	How to guide young people to digital sectors	Directors TVET instit., other stakeholders	ICT
	9	9	22%	Digital entrepreneurship	National stakeholders	-
	10	10	20%	Modular content creation, e-pedagogy, virtual campus	Directors of TVET institutions	-
	14	14	14%	Management train. centres	Directors TVET instit.	
	45	39	(28%)	STED	National stakeholders	
	56	40	25%	Quality apprenticeships, management	Directors of TVET institutions	
	20	0	-	Gender sensitive training and orientation	Trainers / inspectors	ICT
Tanzania	200	0	-	STED analysis	Constituents	
	220	300	55%	Designing / implementing apprenticeship programmes	Specialists, e.g. from emp / work assoc.	
	70	70	36%	Inclusive skills strategies	Partner institutions	
	N/A	200	18%	Training and certification of assessors	New assessors	
Regional	20	22	14%	Training pilot implementat. of RPL (Mauritania)		
Global	20	34	53%	ToT Certification Prog. on Skills Anticipation and STED	ILO staff and selected external participants	
	25	35	37%	Big Data Workshop		

Note: Activities as mentioned in ProDocs, last Progress Reports, and Results Book. Brackets mark estimates. Highlighted cells with 90% target achievement or min. 40% women participants, respectively, are highlighted

How have the programme's products and knowledge been used by national policy makers and social partners in countries that have participated in the programme or been involved in capacity building activities? (EQ 11)

There were various studies, policy-briefs and tools produced on country, regional and global level. It is notable that interviewees in the SKILL-UP countries only referred to country products and not to regional or global ones.¹² As noted under coherence, this also extends to the resource package on modern slavery and the field work in Niger, and the digitisation study in Senegal and those on global level, which were implemented separately despite the close thematic link. The comparatively large investment into 36 country profiles on the TVET policies and systems and 1 region brief on Africa (281,000 USD) did not have the external dissemination one would expect – the media data shows that these reports have only been downloaded 564 times in total.

Many of the country “products” themselves are linked to other activities and achievements and were hence discussed together. In the few instances where they were rated separately, the products were discussed as helpful. Given that these documents vary hugely in terms of nature and type, it is difficult to summarise how they have been used, but purposes seem to reach from preparing initial steps (e.g. needs assessments, STED analysis) to implementation (e.g. guidelines and manuals) to awareness raising.

Spotlight: SKILL-UP programme communications and visibility

ILO's programme communication and visibility efforts comprised a range of web and social media content. Analytics of the SKILLS webpage shows, for instance, that from January 2019 to mid-December 2020 there have been around 507,000 visits of the SKILLS website with an average duration of roughly 2 minutes per visit. With 85,000 visits the Skills Innovation Facility is the activity that created most traffic on the SKILLS website. In comparison, the subsite dedicated to the SKILL-UP programme was accessed 5,100 times, according to data received from ILO. Programme outputs that users accessed more frequently include the Big Data Report “The feasibility of using big data in anticipating and matching skills needs” (1,156 users) and several migration related activities under the regional component (e.g., 576 visits to the global guidelines on the prevention and reintegration of victims of forced labour). Compared with the resources that were invested, the 36 country briefs and the Africa regional brief were accessed only 564 times. This alludes to the need of optimising how these documents are promoted on the programme website. There could be value in understanding in more depth who uses each resource and how these resources are utilised.

Source: SKILL-UP Programme Impact Report, ILO, undated

Is there evidence of outcomes of training on final beneficiaries, e.g. have they been able to find employment or increase their income? (EQ 12)

Altogether there were 21 trainings planned at one point or another, 15 of which were implemented. The other 6 were either prepared but not yet implemented (planned for the current PCA 2020-21; Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi), shifted to another type of training (Ethiopia, returnees instead of refugees/IDP) or dropped (Tanzania; this is related to the STED component).

Among those trainings which took place, all but one either reached their target figures (or there were no target

¹² Similarly, in the survey, there are comparatively few ratings of global products were provided by stakeholders in the SKILL-UP countries (where there are ratings, however, they are similarly distributed to the ratings from “global” stakeholders, i.e. stakeholders outside the SKILL-UP countries).

figures to begin with). All but three trainings had at least 40% women participation, some entirely focusing on women. Among the trainings with a lower women participation rate, there is the non-formal training in the construction sector, where it was pointed out that the seven women who participated were trained in non-traditional roles in road maintenance and welding (*"This number even if small is in fact a big breakthrough with regards common cultural norms and social perceptions in Lebanon which considers construction is a man's world."*). Overall, 56% of the 5,505 participants were women.

To our knowledge, the programme has not collected evidence for the training impact on employment rates or income. Some tracing is forthcoming. The lack of data impedes the ability of the programme to learn what works and what does not. While employment data from 2020 – a strong outlier year given the pandemic – is not very informative for years to come, structured feedback (from participants and employers) would still have been relevant.

The interviews in Tanzania (see spotlight below) show that institutional stakeholders believe that the practical training provided relevant skills, and that this led to improved wage employment or self-employment compared to conventional theory-focused training. All 6 (newly) graduates interviewed are still looking for jobs, yet this is likely due to the fact that they have recently graduated in the context of an extremely difficult labour market situation. The graduates are currently doing part-time/volunteer work either at the college or at field training placed. The pilot data collected with the Service Tracker, shows that among the earlier cohort of 2018-19 apprenticeship graduates, 43% had (at the time of data collection in January / February 2020) permanent positions and/or are self-employed, 33% have temporary or casual employment, 18% are looking for work. Other ultimate beneficiary impact is reported in Malawi (see below). Both Malawi and Tanzania are countries in which the ILO was already active in the PCA 2016-17 with Norway; this makes it easier to observe and report results.

Spotlight: Skills for inclusion: agricultural entrepreneurship in SKILL-UP Malawi

One of the central activities of the Malawi component was implementing a programme to support women farmers that built on previous work conducted in partnership with SIDA. This programme used the ILO's STED methodology to identify the horticulture sector as having potential to provide employment and self-employment to people in rural areas by linking them into the supply chains of major retailers which import the majority of their fresh produce. The project particularly aimed to support emerging women farmers to take advantage of the opportunity to supply these retailers by providing training in agronomy, pest and disease control, and skills in business and enterprise. The project also collaborated with an agriculture research centre to provide community sensitisation on the role of women in business; and linked the farmers to market through an aggregator farmer (ProDoc Malawi).

In addition to the training on horticulture and entrepreneurship, the project facilitated a link with a TVET institution to provide training to emerging farmers on post-harvest handling and packaging. This training was implemented in response to the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the incomes of small-scale farmers and provided young women with the skills and inputs necessary to compete with the suppliers of major retailers. Training included: identification of quality produce; harvesting methods; and grading, packaging, processing, and marketing of fresh produce and farm inputs included inter alia solar systems, fertilizer, support to build small greenhouses (Progress Report Malawi).

The successful implementation of this aspect of the intervention highlights several key lessons. First, the use of the STED methodology – in both the analytic and the implementation phase – provided a strong basis for identifying sectors with potential for employment growth. Second, the intervention targeted specific linkages within the horticultural sector by linking farmers into the supply chains of major retailers. Finally, the provision of skills in support of agricultural entrepreneurship as a specific focus, rather than more general entrepreneurial skills development, and meant that the training was directly applicable within participants communities.

Spotlight: Work-integrated Learning in Malawi's agricultural sector

The Work-integrated Learning intervention of Malawi's SKILL-UP component provided useful lessons in terms of facilitating partnerships between TVET institutions, private employers, and trainees. The WiL focused on the agricultural sector and involved the development of a TVET curriculum at level 2 and 3 of the TVET system (Progress Report Malawi). The programme is divided between theory (25%) and practical experience on farms (75%), with farmers acting as mentors to trainees.

The combination of theory and practice in the training process reportedly provided the trainees with an advantage over other graduates and the programme has been particularly successful in supporting young women to become farmers. The trainee cohort for 2020 was gender balanced, but more female participants have remained in the horticulture sector than male participants (Stakeholder interview, 2021).

"The intervention has largely impacted the girls. They are very industrious, start small farms, and in no time at all start employing farmers who turn out to be most young boys. And the young boys are eager to work for the female. Considering the power dynamics in Malawi this is a shift." (Stakeholder interview, 2021).

Key factors that supported the successful implementation of the WiL programme included: the ongoing partnerships between the Ministry of Labour, TVET institutions, employer associations, government associations, and labour unions in both developing and implementing the intervention; the integration of the training into the curriculum of the TVET institution; and the division of learning between theory and practice.

Areas in which the WiL could be further strengthened include the lack of post-training support for beneficiaries, a lack of interest in training mentees among some farmers, a lack of interest in learning new techniques among mentors, and a desire for white collar jobs among some trainees. However, trainees graduating from the programme were reportedly well equipped with skills that will enable them to earn livelihoods within their communities, with some trainees already outperforming their mentors.

Spotlight: Apprenticeships in Tanzania's Tourism & Hospitality industry

The SKILL-UP component in Tanzania implemented a successful apprenticeship programme in the Tourism & Hospitality sector in partnership with training institutions, government departments, private employers, and relevant trade unions. Partners participated in both the design and implementation of the programme and met on a regular basis to address challenges that occurred during the implementation process (Stakeholder interview, 2021). These partnerships enabled the programme to adapt to the major challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to the closure of many hotels and a dramatic drop in revenue for the entire sector (Stakeholder interview, 2021). The strength of these partnerships was partially attributable to the ILO's approach to programme support, which facilitated a sense of ownership among stakeholders:

"We felt the sense of ownership since the ILO left to use most of the roles from recruiting, training, to field attachment of the beneficiaries. I hope even the other stakeholders felt the sense of ownership as we do." (Stakeholder interview, training institution 1, 2021).

Stakeholders also noted that apprenticeship programmes were not common in Tourism & Hospitality, and that the SKILL-UP's support for the programme had demonstrated the value of the approach.

"I have come realize there is a difference between youth whose training involved apprenticeship under the SKILL-UP Programme and those who did not go through similar mode. Youth who have undergone training under the SKILL-UP Programme have gained relevant skills and are well equipped compared to those undergone the regular class-based training." (Stakeholder interview, training institution 2, 2021).

The success of the programme reportedly created momentum at a national level to expand apprenticeships in the sector to enable trainees to gain relevant and practical skills directly related to labour market demand. Interview participants attributed the programme's success to various factors, including: the support for the programme among government,

employer, and labour organisations; the cooperation of the Hotel Owners Associations in accommodating apprentices; and capacity building for programme trainers.

Beneficiaries of the programme generally felt that the programme had equipped them with the necessary skills to find employment in the sector. Several beneficiaries also noted that they planned to establish their own businesses using the skills they had acquired through their training (beneficiary focus group discussion, 2021). In terms of challenges, beneficiaries noted that there was a need for post-training support, particularly for those who planned to start their own businesses. Female beneficiaries noted that they were sometimes sexually harassed when looking for work, which discouraged some of them from actively seeking employment (beneficiary focus group discussion, 2021). Finally, trainees reported that the technology available at the training institutions was outdated in comparison to what they encountered during the practical parts of their apprenticeships, which some trainees found challenging (stakeholder interview, training institution 3, 2021).

Table 6: Ultimate beneficiaries participating in trainings or RPL

Component	Participants			Training	Participants	Industry
	Target	Status	women			
Ethiopia	-	0	-	Short course (<i>dropped, shifted to returnees</i>)	IDP and refugees	Agro-processing
	-	0	-	Core skills training (<i>prepared, but not implemented</i>)	Workers	Garment
	-	1,000	47%	Tech. and vocational training (<i>not in initial proposal</i>)	Returnees (Covid-19)	-
	-	0	-	RPL (<i>prepared, but not implemented</i>)		-
Ghana	-	0	-	Voc. training / apprenticeship (<i>postponed to new PCA</i>)	Students, incl. PwD	
Lebanon	600	644	35%	Know About Business (KAB)	Students targeted institutions	-
	50	100	7%	CBT and OTJ (<i>original target later increased to 100</i>)	Syrian and Lebanese youth	Construction
Malawi	200	137	82%	Post-harvest quality management, value-addition	Mostly women	Horticulture
	60	100	80%	WiL training programme		Horticulture
	50	45	100%	Protected vegetable farming	Women and out of schoolgirls	Horticulture
	500	500	90%	Open space vegetable cultivation, disease control	Vulnerable men and women	Horticulture
	200	0	-	RPL: Accreditation various skills (<i>postponed to new PCA</i>)	Mostly young women, inf. appr.	Construction Brick laying
Niger	420	420	100%	Personalised training to enhance employability	Victims of slavery	-
	420	100	100%	Start and Improve Your Business Programme (SIYB)	Victims of slavery	-
Senegal	300	300	100%	Introduction to digital skills (coding)	Young girls	ICT
Tanzania	150	0	-	STED programmes (<i>dropped</i>)	Youth	
	100	151	46%	Apprenticeship programmes	Youth	
	-	100	21%	Modularised apprenticeships	Disadvantaged youth	
	-	116	42%	Internship programme	People with disability	
	-	1,592	42%	RPL assessment		

Regional	-	200	40%	Training, skills recognition, post training support (DRC)	Migrant workers and refugees	Woodwork, agri., mining
<i>See Ethiopia, returnees</i>						
Global	-	-	-			

Note: All training and RPL mentioned in the ProDocs, the last Progress Reports, and the Results Book are listed. Highlighted cells with 90% target achievement or min. 40% women participants, respectively, are highlighted

How much innovation did the programme generate? (EQ 13)

Various elements of the programme were identified by the interviewees as innovative in their own context:

- Sector Skills Councils for skills development (Ghana)
- Country component steering committee (Tanzania)
- Virtual learning platforms (Ghana, Lebanon)
- Conscious efforts to include vulnerable groups (Ghana, Niger), including developing training materials and methodologies to reach people without basic education (Niger) and gender mainstreaming (Senegal)
- Curriculum with a highly practical content, or a value chain approach to skills development (Malawi)
- Providing post-training support (Tanzania)
- Additional references to new collaborations, courses, or services (Ghana, Niger, Senegal)

Regarding the regional component, interviewees highlighted that the regional approach was a good way of promoting collective and cross learning, promoting regional stakeholder participation and trust. In the end, a wealth of data has been gathered on the issue of harmonisation of certification, standardisation of training, and economic opportunities for training from a regional perspective.

On the global level, innovation was a focus from the very beginning (“... it expands the focus on innovation, particularly with the Global component, by working on the development of innovative tools that will open up opportunities for the ILO to support constituents in new contexts.” Global ProDoc), which then obtained considerable momentum during the first additional funding round. The proposal introduced the ideas of Skills Innovation Facility and Service Tracker (albeit under different names). It should be noted that it is telling that neither of the two elements was brought up in country interviews,¹³ either because they might be considered outside the programme (Skills Innovation Facility) or because the tool – or at least its results – have not been shared with stakeholders (Service Tracker in Tanzania, where it was piloted).

¹³ This is also true for two more global elements – ToT on skills anticipation and STED, Big Data workshop and publication – which the responsible ILO unit highlights as innovations.

What were the major factors influencing the success or non-achievement of the programme objectives? (EQ 15)

Discussing the programme results, interviewees referred to these success factors:

- Collaboration with key stakeholders (experience, outreach, political clout and/or legitimacy)
- Participatory approach (comprehensive involvement, clear roles and responsibilities)
- Adaptation to Covid-19 but also to political impasses
- Evidence-based / analysis-led design and implementation (incl. STED)
- Competency of the project management team / national coordinators

As limiting factors, on the other hand, these were mentioned:

- Political turmoil, gridlock, conflicting agendas
- Changes in political priorities, changes in leadership
- Covid-19; in terms of procedures (f2f meetings), and lack of practical training and employment opportunities
- Lack of funding to keep moving forward, budget-cuts
- Not all relevant stakeholders could be reached / included
- Bureaucratic procedures (e.g. in fund disbursement) leading to delays

In addition to these general factors, some topic-specific hurdles were mentioned. Related to the trainings, these factors were discussed: Insufficient or lack of post-training support (coaching, mentoring, start-up kits), adequate infrastructure, heterogeneity of participants in the training, expectations of participants (e.g. white collar jobs), gender stereotypes (both in outreach to potential participants and employment of graduates), sexual harassment, harassment related to the hijab, suitability of coaches / instructors in practical trainings, suspension of (practical) learning activities during the pandemic, the lack of mobile friendly content. Related to the SSC, organisational challenges were mentioned, and the legal status of the SSC.

Unintended results and consequences

Similar to “innovation”, the concept of “unintended” depends very much on the eye of the beholder. The interviews highlighted only few and unspecific elements in this regard, such as awareness, the extent of success, and shifts due to changes in the context, including the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the scope of the programme and its broad objectives (even on the component level), there are few elements which do not fit somewhere into the narrative. On the global level, the interest in the Skills Innovation Facility and Service Tracker generated seems somewhat unexpected, including the plans to replicate the innovation call or desires to use the tracker by other UN agencies.

In our experience from other evaluations in the skills domain, such unintended consequences sometimes relate to two types of substitution or displacement effects: One is related to the investments into training or capacity building, which could have been done by the constituents or by companies themselves, while the bill is now picked up by the programme (“crowding-out” effect). Given the frequent references to budget cuts, and requests that more budget should be made available to finance follow-up activities and so on, the risk for this effect seems relatively low. The second effect is that companies hire graduates from the piloted training programmes, but that these simply displace other recruits which did not participate. This is discussed further in the impact section below.

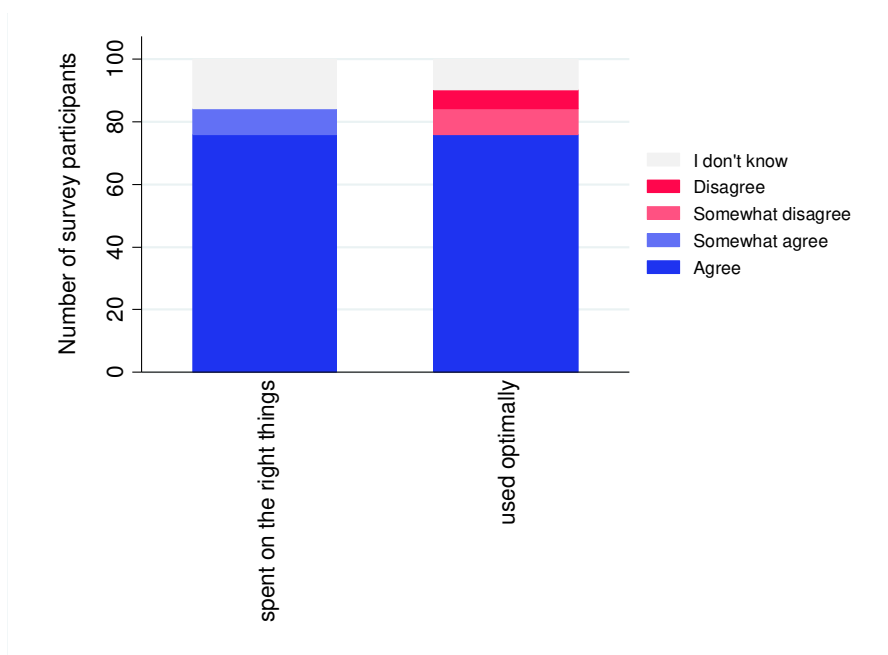
4.4. Efficiency

Have activities supporting the programme been cost effective? (EQ 19)

The term cost-effectiveness refers to the ratio between results and the cost of the interventions leading to these results. As discussed in the last two chapters, the programme had a strong result-delivery, reflected in the positive feedback by interviewees and survey participants. In this section, we thus focus on the second part of the ratio.

To this end, ILO staff were asked whether the programme resources were spent “*on the right things*” and whether the resources were “*used optimally*”: 79% and 84%, respectively, of the respondents “agree” and “somewhat agree” (Figure 10), indicating that the activities provide good value for the resources invested. Regarding the optimal use of funds, two of the 19 respondents (11%) are of the opinion that the resources could have been invested more efficient.

Figure 10: Survey: How were the funds used?



Note: The survey question to ILO participants was: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The program resources were spent on the right things. The program resources were used optimally.” Observations: 19, 19.

In the interviews with ILO staff, the following issues were discussed:

- There have been delays in the initial period of the programme, which ILO representative considered to be concern, since it shortened the implementation period of the activities. This included the initial appointment of staff.
- It was acknowledged by several interviewees that the coordination and sequencing of the interventions could have been optimised, for instance regarding the support to victims of forced labour in Niger and those at the global level with the “resource package” – though there has been

some interaction via the Timidria organisation, ILO's implementing partner in Niger.

- In the country interviews concerns were raised because the resources to some activities did not allow to complete them as planned or not in an ideal fashion. In Malawi, for instance, the resources did not permit to provide "start-up packages" to young entrepreneurs to set-up their small business. The same concern was also expressed in Niger (even though there had been unused funds at the end).
- ILO staff mentioned repeatedly that they procured services through competitive bidding process and tried to negotiate favourable terms, to improve value for money. In retrospect we cannot say whether more spending would have improved quality; we know, however, that often quality of service delivery was considered to be good.
- In a couple of interviews with ILO and other stakeholders the question was raised whether the programme had spread too thinly – meaning that it had to many, too diverse, too small interventions at the same time. Rather than attempting to answer this relevant, yet highly complex question – not least given that SKILL-UP is not a stand-alone programme but interrelated with other projects and programmes of the ILO and beyond – we believe that the question puts the need of a comprehensive ToC at centre stage, because it can be the tool to put interventions that one interview called "cobbled together" into a consistent narrative, or decide whether certain interventions do not fit into the narrative. A comprehensive ToC would also be the means to discuss whether a broad programme with many interventions, or a deep programme, with a few flagship activities, does better service the objectives.
- Constituents shared that they believe that resources were spent well and for the right purposes. This is particularly the case for those constituents who were involved in the design of the interventions and activities. However, many of the constituents were not aware of budget resources and cost; their statements relate to *quality*, rather than cost-effectiveness.

Has the programme's budget structure and financial planning process been conducive to efficiently use, allocate and re-allocate financial resources? (EQ 20)

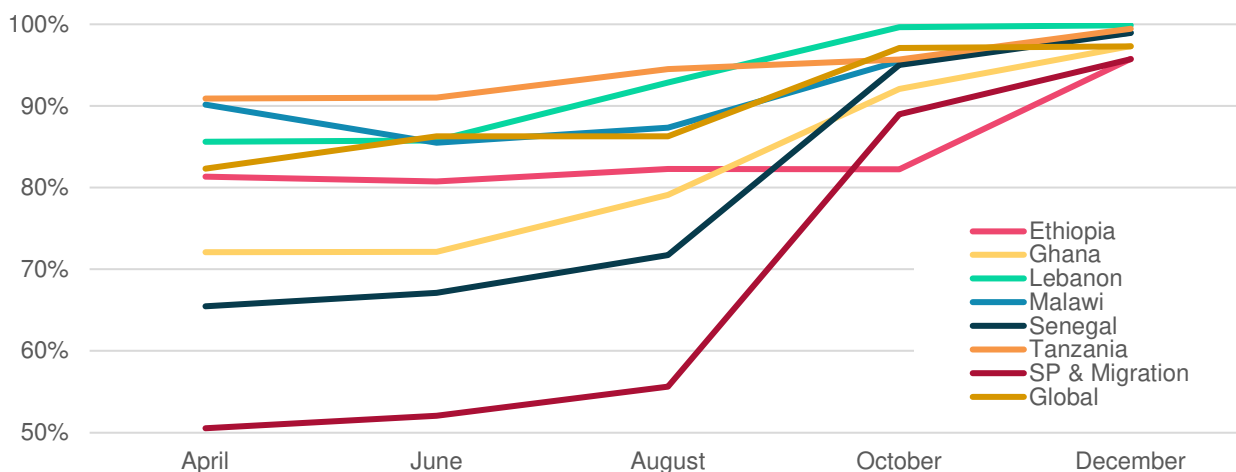
ILO staff commonly stated in the interviews that the budget processes provide ample room for revisions, which allowed the programme to shift activities – and this was found specifically important in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic (see also below EQ 18). The flexibility of the Norwegian government which the "outcome-based approach implies" was highlighted as an important factor for the programme and it was contrasted with the way in which other donors work. ILO staff in two country offices criticised that delays in financial disbursement made it necessary for implementers to revise work plans.

Whilst revisions and additions to the budgets were on the one hand considered vital for the extent to which the programme was able to realise results, some ILO staff noted that they required re-planning of activities and caused transaction costs. Revisions and top-ups have also collateral effects on M&E because they necessitate being reflected in the M&E with changed target values, at least as far as outputs are concerned. The consistent adaptation of M&E did not take place.

One aspect of financial planning is fund disbursement. As of end of 2020 fund disbursement reached 80.2% of actual spending and 17.8% commitments, leaving a residual of 2.1% or 246'000 USD of the entire 12 million USD budget. Taking a closer look at fund disbursement (see Figure 11) indicates that much of the spending happened during the last two quarters of the programme's implementation. This is partly due to payment procedures of the ILO (e.g. last payment instalments are higher than earlier ones) and partly due to delays in the delivery of outputs, which led to increases in expenditure even though the contracts and commitments

were done much earlier. Furthermore, because of additional funding rounds at the end of 2019, new activities and outputs were planned for 2020. Several activities had thus to be crammed into the late stages of the programme, leaving little room to deliver, monitor, learn, and adapt the activities. The latter are typical elements that can render implementation more effective and their absence could, on the contrary, signal an inefficient use of the funds.

Figure 11: Committed resources, April to December 2020



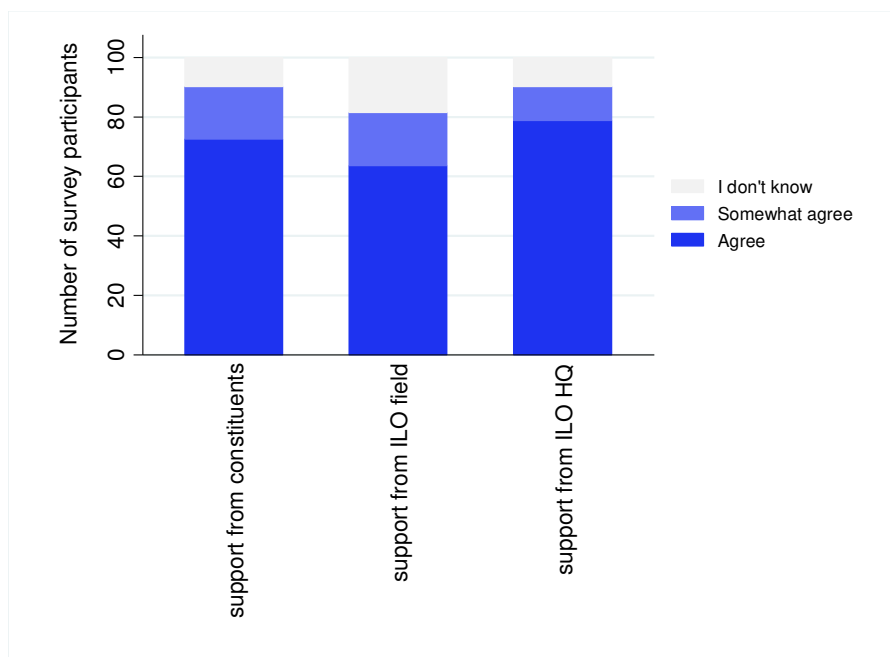
Source: ILO-Norway SKILL-UP Overall Delivery (status 16 December 2020)

Did the programme receive adequate political, technical, and administrative support from its partners? Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters? (EQ 23)

In several of the interviews ILO staff shared their experience that institutions such as the COTVET (Ghana), the DGTVET (Lebanon) or generally from all constituents (Tanzania) were highly supportive and engaged in the implementation. Notwithstanding, there were also voices stating that whilst the support was high with regard to policy formulation, more could be done to translate the latter into practice and to assure the requisite financial, institutional, and regulatory support to sustain results (see also the findings on sustainability).

The ILO interviewees viewed that the teams in field offices and headquarters were committed to mutually support each other operationally and administratively, as exemplified during periods in which there were staffing gaps (including the one related to overall programme management) or during the first phase of the pandemic when activities had to be moved online and technical challenges on-site needed to be resolved. The survey results confirm these positive views (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Survey: Was the support from different stakeholders sufficient?



Note: The survey question was: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The program received adequate support from the constituents (social partners and partner governments). The program received adequate support from the ILO offices in the field. The program received adequate support from the ILO units at headquarters.” Observations: 17, 17, 16.

To what extent has the programme been effective and timely in providing an adapted Covid-19 response and guidance to constituents through the intervention? (EQ 18)

ILO staff who participated in survey agree (53%) or somewhat agree (26%) that the Covid-19 response was effective and timely; the remaining participants indicate that they don't know. The interviews substantiate these findings on the level of technical and operational response; financial response; and response at the level of activities.

Technically and operationally the field offices were able to quickly adapt to online means of communication and in later stages, relying on the support of the ICT ILO, also to move capacity development and training to online formats, examples being the KAB training in Lebanon, training for the Sector Skills Council in Ghana, and the online elements of the ToT programme on skills anticipation and STED. As much as the field offices could rely on headquarter support, the latter stated that the field offices were instrumental in remedying challenges with internet connectivity or engaging the stakeholders to partake in online formats. Notwithstanding, it was frequently stated that online activities and platforms have yet to develop in terms of user friendliness and learning experience to match the commitment, participation, and effectiveness of face-to-face capacity building formats.¹⁴ In regard to the skills development implemented or piloted for ultimate

¹⁴ In early 2021 the ILO published a report summarising experiences how TVET responded to the pandemic: Skills development in the time of Covid-19: Taking stock of the initial responses in technical and vocational education and training, ILO, 2021

beneficiaries it was often the practical parts – which arguably were the most important additions to traditional theory-based trainings – which suffered most from these changes.

From the financial perspective the budget procedures were flexible, and the ILO management granted swiftly budget change requests, according to the ILO national coordinators. This allowed in some instances to repurpose funds to, for instance, procure safety equipment to comply with safety protocols that were established in the respective countries, to pay for students to stay in a dormitory so as to reduce movement; or to produce the aforementioned online training programmes.

Finally, we were able to collect examples of responses at the activity level such as in Ghana or Malawi where the ILO provided management training to stakeholders regarding immediate Covid-19 responses (for instance regarding the implementation of safety protocols) and post-Covid-19 recovery (e.g., marketing in the tourism sector). In Tanzania / Zanzibar, on the other hand, the project partners agreed to extend the duration for course completion by four months into March 2021. As much as the response was overall deemed adequate and as some ILO staff see the very move to online activities as an “innovation” the pandemic influenced the delivery of several of the programme activities in all countries.

ILO’s Covid-19 response adapted the programme so that it could continue under Covid-19 circumstances (for instance by providing online training) as well as adaptation of the activities with a view to assist the beneficiaries to cope with the consequences of the pandemic. We have no indications to suggest that a major shift in the programme (shifting funds to entirely other interventions) would have been necessary or realistic. Generally, we feel at this point in time that it was the right decision to (mostly) stay focussed on the existing activities, as otherwise these prior investments might have been lost.

To what extent was the programme management structure and approach conducive to achieving objectives? (EQ 25)¹⁵

The SKILL-UP Programme was not run as a separate development project but instead was located in the Skills and Employability branch of ILO’s Employment Policy Department in Geneva, which was responsible for the programme. The overall programme, alongside the global and regional component, was being managed centrally, whilst the other components were managed in the respective countries. The management team consisted of 19 staff, including the global programme manager and the national coordinators, who were responsible for steering, coordination, supervision, and communication. Skills technical specialists at headquarters and field offices provided advisory support to different components. Whilst the duality of centralised and decentralised management could be seen as a specific feature, the programme management followed otherwise established practices and rules (e.g., with the national coordinators reporting the respective ILO country director).

The ILO interviewees stated that structure and arrangements were overall effective, aided decision making and were adequate to ensure effective and efficient communication at vertical and horizontal levels (see below EQ 26). The flexible management approach enabled the field offices to ask for assistance from headquarters and/or the skills specialists when necessary. The working relations were qualified as positive and trustful, with a sense of providing mutual support. Whilst the respective responsibilities were generally well delineated, we

¹⁵ We understand management structure as the organisational set-up (roles and responsibilities) and management approach as the techniques that emerged to steer and control the programme.

learned from the interviews that there had been in few exceptional cases disagreements about the roles of the national coordinators and the skill specialists. However, these issues seemingly could soon be settled and were not the result of systemic deficiencies. Furthermore, there was also an acknowledgement that there was variation between the components with respect to the quality of the management and coordination in the programme – which also is not extraordinary in large organisations and in light of the different country contexts. The management of the intervention in Niger was mentioned as suboptimal; the interviewees consider that it would have been beneficial if there had been a national coordinator too.

The regional component had a somewhat different management structure: in West Africa, the three countries worked through a representative working group whose work was facilitated by a consultant; in DRC, the project was delivered through the implementing agency INPP with facilitation from ILO skills expert covering the region; in Mauritania, the ILO is the body managing the intervention. The different management structures were somewhat suited to the circumstances of each region given the different set-ups and seem appropriate to achieve the objectives.

It comes out strongly from various of our conversations that the programme management was more directed towards operations and delivery than learning from the process, from what is emerging from implementation, and sharing it with the intended purpose of steering and adapting among ILO and ILO constituents. In this context several interviewees noted that skills specialists might be able to play a larger role in this process, for instance to facilitate learning sessions and feed the learnings back into design and implementation.

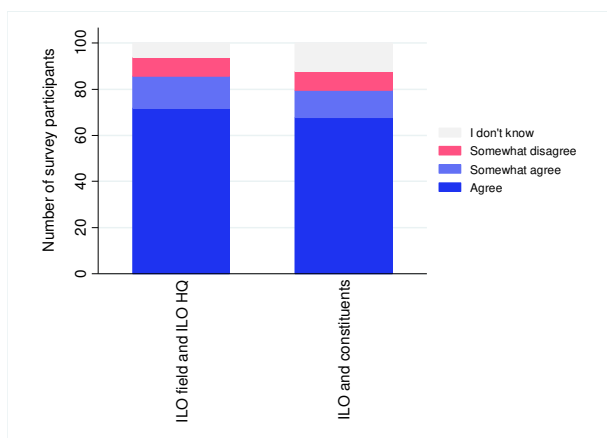
Based on the information we were able to collect from different vantage points it is difficult to assess whether another structure or arrangement would have yielded more, better or other results. Even in the case of Niger, in which the management structure (*note: not the persons involved*) was seen as suboptimal, the intervention can be considered successful with targets achieved, and positive feedback from stakeholders. Generally, the deficiencies that were shared seem not to have been of a magnitude that would have significantly affected the results.

How effective was the communication between the programme team, the donor and other stakeholders? (EQ 26)

The vast majority of survey participants and interviewees commented positively on communication. Figure 13 shows that more than 80% of the respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that communication was good. In the interviews for the country components the interviewees also consistently expressed their satisfaction with how the communication unfolded. They made frequent references the openness and transparency of the communication; that the activities were communicated timely and clearly; that the use of online platforms and messaging apps rendered communication efficient.

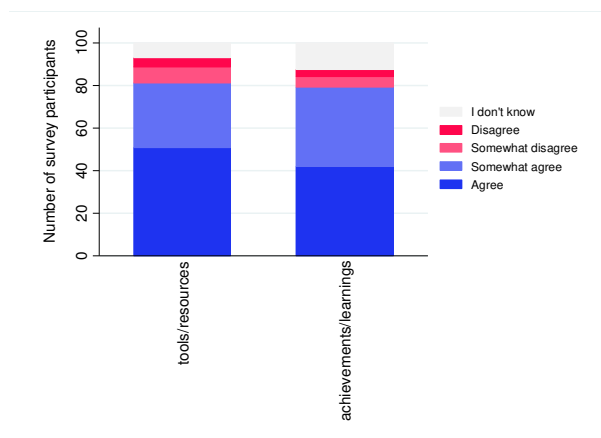
Closely related is the question to what extent the programme shared tools and resources as well as achievements and learnings. Here also we take a look at the survey results that are shown in Figure 14. Comparing the results to those on communication it can be observed that the approval rate (agree and somewhat agreed) are less pronounced, suggesting that there is room for improvement. Respondents highlighted that a clear plan for external communication could be beneficial to increase the level of awareness amongst constituents as well as to strengthen and diversify partnerships (see also EQ 30 below). In the interviews, critique was voiced rarely, mainly from constituents or other programme partners who stated that they had not received regular progress updates or reports.

Figure 13: Survey: Was the communication effective and efficient?



Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The communication between ILO offices in the field and ILO units at headquarters was effective and efficient. The communication between ILO units and constituent (social partners and partner governments) was effective and efficient." Observations: 19, 19.

Figure 14: Survey: Was enough done to share tools, resources, and learnings?



Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Enough has been done by the programme to share tools and resources. Enough has been done by the programme to share achievements and learnings from the programme." Observations: 19, 19.

Was the results framework appropriate, given the expectations of the ILO and the donor and the lightly earmarked approach adopted by the PCA? (EQ 21)

There is no programme-wide results framework, yet for each of the components, a LogFrame is contained in the ProDoc, concept note, or proposal for additional funding. These describe (mostly) outcome and output statements and sometimes activities, with some of the targets being further specified with indicators and target levels (although rarely so on outcome level, see EQ 22).

Overall, we note from our interviews with representatives of the ILO, Norad and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that all sides are satisfied with the lightly earmarked partnership (see EQ 24). This seems to extend to the way objectives were specified; the approach leaves this, by definition, to a certain degree up to the ILO. It was specifically highlighted by several interviewees (including from the Norwegian side) that the ILO was able to provide pertinent ideas for each of the additional funding rounds.

From our perspective the expectations are not sufficiently defined in qualitative and quantitative terms (example: 5,000 jobs by the end of 2020) to lend themselves for results orientation, accountability and learning which we deem all important for ILO internal processes beyond the expectations related to the outcome-based funding. We suggest formulating the frameworks so that they are comparable across components (e.g. similar statements, see EQ 5), adding a programme-wide framework beyond the component ones, which is linked with a programme-wide ToC narrative.

How effectively did the programme monitor performance and risks? (EQ 22)

Based on our document review and exchanges with ILO staff responsible for M&E we understand that monitoring takes place in different forms, via routine team communication and updates, formal and informal exchanges, and the Progress Reports. They team also produced two results books for communication purposes.

ProDoc or concept notes contain a description of the objectives, outcomes, and outputs of the component. The country components also include indicators and targets which are reported again in the Progress Reports, yet the global and regional component lack indicators altogether. Beyond this, we observed several technical challenges and deficiencies in the M&E, the most important of which we outline below:

- The M&E is quite differently implemented in each of the components which makes it difficult to compare and aggregate across them. While this might be partly due to different thematic choices, activities and aspirations, it seems that it was left up to every component team to define indicators. This resulted in quantitative differences (with the number of indicators ranging from 10 and 27, depending on the country) and qualitatively, meaning that even for the same or similar interventions (e.g., SSC related results) each country used its own set.
- The M&E focuses on the very beginning of the results chain, which means that most outcomes did not have indicators or target values – and even when they were defined, they were not consistently reported against. This is true for the macro (e.g., the capacity of an SSC) and the micro level (e.g., employment outcomes of trainings).
- Some of the M&E indicators and target values were changed over time and keeping track of these changes is not easy. The additional funding rounds added activities to the original implementation plans, but this was neither done systematically nor consistently.
- The programme and the different components put inclusion at centre stage, but gender disaggregated data is only scantily reported. (Note: The data was made available, however, at the request of the evaluation team; see subchapter 4.3 on effectiveness).

With regard to risks, we understand that the primary tool is the Progress Report, which contains a mandatory section on main challenges and corrective action. It appears, however, that these challenges are reported ex-post, whilst a risk monitoring would have to identify and assess risks ex-ante in order to undertake avoidance, mitigation or contingency planning. In this context we also observe that the reports tend to speak about positive developments or challenges but not about failures or difficulties.

As shown further above under subchapter 4.3, we have generated a few tables to summarise the M&E data. They document the direct beneficiaries involved in capacity building, the ultimate beneficiaries involved in skills development, and system and policy related results (see Annex 6). To generate the tables, we used different sources and the effort to collect, to collate, and to cross-reference so that it can be used to assess the effectiveness of the programme was considerable. Only the beneficiary tool seems to be the one that at some point provided aggregated information from all the components. That the programme team was not able to provide an overall M&E suggests that such has not been in use during implementation.

Several considerations come to mind when assessing whether the monitoring was “effective”. Given the outcome-based funding, the short duration of the programme, the relative size of the different components, or the complexity to e.g. monitor changes of systems, it might just have been the right choice to remain pragmatic with the M&E effort. One interviewee indeed noted that *“the M&E framework was not complex and more straight forward as compared to other programmes”*. Yet it seems that with little additional monitoring effort, the M&E could have been made more relevant for steering, results orientation and learning purposes.

In the interviews with ILO staff the views about the monitoring were quite different – while some believed that the effort was adequate and useful, others wished that more was done to assessing and properly communicating the achievements, the risks and the failures. A couple of interviewees also invoked that a balance needs to be found so that the resources invested for M&E do not come at the expense of

implementation, stakeholder management etc. – alluding to the need of a team dedicated to M&E. In several countries the ILO staff only knew the headline M&E facts.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the “lightly earmarked partnership” as applied in the ILO-Norway Programme Cooperation Agreement? (EQ 24)

The representatives of the ILO and Norway generally hold the view that the outcome-based funding approach (alternatively referred to as “lightly earmarked partnership”) is an asset. We understand that the donor is of the opinion that advantages typically associated with earmarking (for example more control, visibility, goal orientation) can be sufficiently achieved with the outcome-based funding too. Unlike more prescriptive modalities, the approach leaves the ILO the opportunity to design the programme responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries and emerging issues in skills development, leveraging its expertise and outreach. Other advantages relate to the flexibility that the approach allows because, as one interviewee put it, it is “*easier to reallocate funds if [the ILO] see things being stalled*” and that administrative overhead can be reduced.

These views were shared by interviewees from the ILO, stating that it is more difficult to balance the needs and priorities of countries and constituents if the donor is more prescriptive. It was also indicated that in the SKILL-UP Programme, the ILO could focus on those countries that had indicated that skills development is a priority and then had the space to respond to specific needs. Others argued that an arrangement with more earmarking might have stifled creativity. Both Norwegian and ILO interviewees see the long-term partnership that builds on shared objectives as an asset and pre-condition for the “lightly earmarked partnership”.

At the same time, the outcome-based funding can have disadvantages too. Several respondents from the ILO cautioned, for instance, that this kind of approach can result in fragmentation and affect the coherence of the programme. Striking a good balance between responding to the needs that constituents and beneficiaries voice, seizing opportunities where they arise, shifting attention towards another activity rather than sticking with one when it stalls – all reinforce the importance of a clear ToC that holds things together. In terms of effectiveness and efficiency (as we discuss elsewhere in the report) the approach requires to reflect changes in the M&E system. It generates transaction costs when budgets are shifted or when additional funding is released during programme implementation.

With a view to both supplement and contrast the perceptions and experience of the interviewees, reference is made here to a recent study on the practices and consequences of earmarking in multilateral development cooperation.¹⁶ The study showed that only about 10% of the funds made available to the organisations observed were so called “softly earmarked funds” – the category in which the “outcome-based approach” can be placed. The study concludes that “*softly earmarked contributions all score better in terms of efficiency, coordination and ownership*” – even though earmarked funds can have positive effects too.¹⁷ Yet the study acknowledges that data and literature on earmarking is still too thin to substantiate the effects.

¹⁶ Weinlich, Baumann, Lundsgaarde, Wolff. Earmarking in the multilateral development system: Many shades of grey, German Development Institute, Bonn 2020

¹⁷ “... Although highly restrictive and customized forms of earmarking might be detrimental ... other forms of earmarked funding can provide welcome impetus to increase the scale and scope of development interventions, allow for greater risk-taking or foster partnerships. ...” German Development Institute, 2020, page 13.

4.5. Impact

What contribution will the programme make towards achieving its long-term objective? (EQ 27)

The long-term objective of the programme is its contribution to the ILO's Programme and Budget 2018-19 Outcome 1 *"more and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects"*, and to Indicator 1.3, *"Constituents have taken action on skills development systems, strategies and programmes to reduce skills mismatches and enhance access to the labour market"*.

Looking at the various results described in subchapter 4.3, one can certainly conclude that there has been a strong contribution to Indicator 1.3. All six country components originally included interventions relating to systems, programmes, and inclusion – and most of these were successfully implemented (see previous section).

The contribution to *"improved youth employment prospects"* is harder to estimate at the point of evaluation. This contribution is two-pronged: A direct contribution through vocational skills programmes in which ultimate beneficiaries partake, and an indirect contribution through making skills systems more relevant, effective, and inclusive. As discussed in the section on effectiveness, there is little measurable evidence for the direct contribution, as respective data still needs to be collected (including through some forthcoming tracer studies). Stakeholders believe that such a contribution is likely, at least as soon as the situation on the markets improve.

A similar belief is held regarding the indirect effects. Their contribution is not yet visible, but almost all stakeholders believe that the interventions were both relevant and successful, and that they will in time lead to the desired objective. Interviewees recognise that systems change will take 3-4 years (and potentially many more) to demonstrate value of interventions even during normal circumstances. Programme delays and the impact of Covid-19 have made such observations even more difficult. Overall, the prospect for youth employment has deteriorated since the start of the SKILL-UP Programme as a consequence of the pandemic. Given these factors it is not surprising that there is limited evidence available which demonstrates where the SKILL-UP Programme has contributed to *"improved youth employment prospects"*.

Finally, the contribution story becomes more complicated still when discussing *"more and better jobs"*. The contribution of new and improved skills to job creation is indirect, through enabling companies to be more productive and competitive and eventually creating more jobs, assuming that this expansion creates jobs beyond just displacement between competing companies. This seems more likely in growing (sub) industries experiencing skills shortages. The fact that SKILL-UP stakeholders methodologically selected its target (sub) industries – agro-processing, horticulture, construction, garment / textiles, oil and gas, tourism and hospitality, ICT and banking – bodes well in this respect. Interviewees brought several arguments forward why these industries were relevant in terms of growth outlook. It is beyond the scope of the evaluation to confirm these choices, yet some choices seem somewhat traditional in the light of the *"future of work"* and *"green jobs"* discussions at the ILO.¹⁸ This is also a concern shared by some of the interviewees. Going forward we understand from the concept note of the PCA 2020-21 that the ILO inclined to do more in these fields.

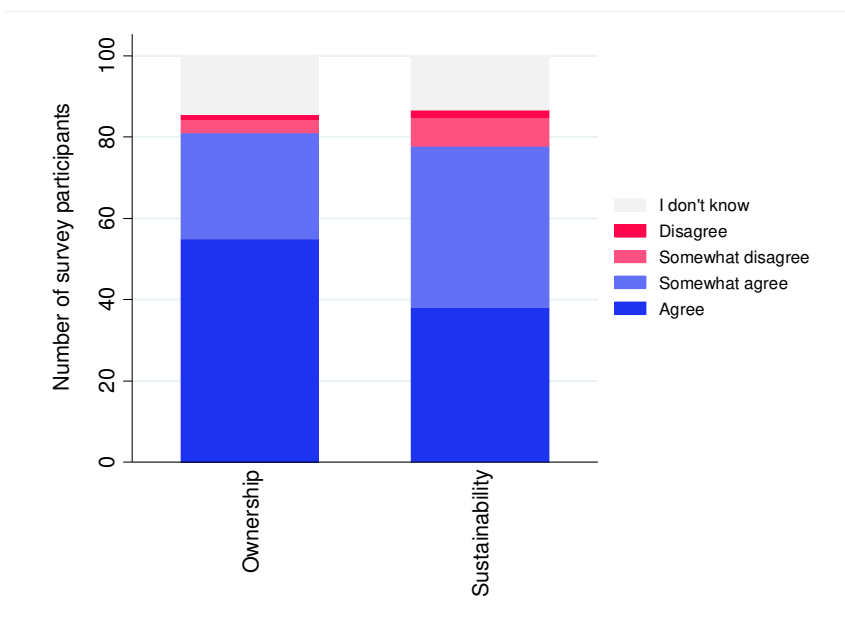
¹⁸ The responsible ILO unit disagrees with this assessment and points to the fact some of the work has an explicit link to *"Future of Work"* topics, such as the focus on IT in Senegal, and that other sectors selected are key future growth sectors. It argues further that the focus within the selected sectors is on skills which are linked to *"green work"*, for instance sustainable practices in the construction industry.

4.6. Sustainability

What is the likelihood that the results of the programme will be sustained and utilised after the end of the programme? To what extent has the programme contributed to increased resilience in the skills system ecosystem (such as increased collaboration, capacity, etc.)? (EQ 28 / 29)

In the survey we asked participants to reflect on the extent to which respondents felt a sense of ownership of the programme and whether they felt that the programme is likely to be sustained (Figure 15). The results highlight that whilst the level of ownership of the programme is positive this does not directly equate to sustainability. In the interviews it was explained that this is because it is premature to talk about sustainability, particularly because of the impact of Covid-19. Interviewees emphasised that the extent to which ownership has been created is critical for creating a strong foundation for the current PCA 2020-21.

Figure 15: Survey: Is ownership high and the programme likely to be sustained?



Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The level of involvement and ownership of stakeholders is high. The programme outcomes are likely to be sustained once the SKILLS-UP program has come to an end and external funding stops". Observations: 90, 88.

Notwithstanding, respondents made a number of observations with respect to sustainability. Some examples are provided below in terms of the sustainability of systems, programme delivery, and inclusion outcomes.

The review team acknowledges that the selection of sectors is ultimately the choice of the national stakeholders, yet at the same times misses references to environmental concerns, for instance in the STED presentations.

Examples regarding sustainability of systems

- In Ethiopia interviewees indicated regarding the SSCs that it is too early to talk about ownership and sustainability given the limited engagement they had thus far, but they believe that it is likely that a sense of ownership emerges over time (without further specifying how). Some cautioned that stakeholders face time and financial resource constraints to sustain the SSCs and others argued that while the involvement of high-level officials (from government) in the SSC would be important going forward, their involvement had thus far been low and inconsistent.
- In Ghana interviews make it clear that the SSCs are considered relevant, and the stakeholders are interested to engage generally, yet concerns were highlighted, namely regarding the legal status of the SSCs, organisational challenges, and financing constraints (see spotlight).
- In Tanzania interviewees noted that even though the constituents have made a political commitment to sustain the SSCs, this has not translated into a willingness to allocate the requisite financial resources. Another limiting factor are frequent changes in government.
- In terms of both the regional and global components interviewees stated that a lot of the preparatory work completed so far has fostered collaboration and partnership among the various stakeholder groups. They indicate that stakeholders are now committed to the programme and have expressed the importance of a follow-up phase in order to implement training interventions and harmonise certifications and standardisation of training.

Examples regarding sustainability of programmes

- In Lebanon interviewees believe that the interventions are likely to be sustained as the changes that were made are in the vocational training curricula that is offered in public institutions with the full involvement of stakeholders. Others are more sceptical and believe that for better sustainability there is also a need to enhance the capacity of institutions in the wider landscape.
- In Senegal respondents noted positively that the work on integrating digital skills into the TVET curriculum was done collaboratively and that capacities were strengthened – all crucial elements for the long-term sustainability – but that the sustainability ultimately hinges on finances.

Examples regarding sustainability of inclusion outcomes

- In Malawi interviewees mentioned factors that they believe are important to the sustainability of the interventions, including the extent to which existing systems have been used, the involvement of the employer associations, the adoption of interventions that take concerns around climate change into account, and that the implementation has been done in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and in ways that has increased the capacity of NGOs working in this sector. In addition, the involvement of young women in the programme who continue to *“meet regularly, ... on their own ... beyond their work with GES (the partner organisation)”* is also considered an indication of the future sustainability of the outcomes of the programme.
- In Niger the economic engagement of women who have been victims of forced labour, coupled with addressing their legal status, is seen as an important initiative in building the ability of these women to earn some income from their small businesses as well as enable their children to have access to education and healthcare. However, respondents note that there is still a dependence on donor funding and a need to offer on-going support to these women. More sustainable mechanisms, including through the collaboration between the ILO and state actors are needed in their view.

What needs to be done to enhance the sustainability of the programme, strengthen the uptake of the programme outcomes by stakeholders? (EQ 30)

In making these observations respondents comment that there is a need to understand sustainability within a longer planning cycle, noting that where the programme is already in its second phase (Malawi, Tanzania) it is only now possible to make comments on the possibility of sustainability. Nevertheless, they offered suggestions, building on their experiences as outlined above, as to what needs to be done in terms of sustainability. These suggestions are:

- A strong focus on building the systems, integrating interventions into the existing institutional offerings and working with key players in the eco-system.
- The need to recognise the constraints that stakeholders have, in terms of the competing pressures on their time, and with respect to their ability to finance the on-going activities of the institutions and interventions that have been initiated. This requires engagement with constituents to consider what will be required of partners to sustain the work. These views were also repeatedly expressed by respondents in the surveys.
- The need to include and consult partners across levels (global and local) so as to ensure that where there are global initiatives the local structures are aware of them but also their own responsibility for supporting the sustainability of the interventions in their country. Conversely, global partners indicated that if they are made aware of interventions taking place at a country level, then they can offer support to their members with a view contribute to sustainability.
- The need for a clear communication plan such that there is a greater level of awareness amongst constituents and partners was also highlighted by respondents in the survey. This would assist to strengthen and diversify partnerships and encourage increased levels of support from social partners and stakeholders.

Interviewees also suggested ways to strengthen certain aspects of the programme **to better sustain the results of the interventions**. Examples include selecting young people for enterprise development who are already involved in related activities to increase the likelihood that they will maintain the enterprises initiated; ensuring that graduates are supported after they complete programmes, specifically those who initiate enterprises regarding access to finance (including with mentors who are graduates of the programme).

4.7. Transversal topics: Gender

The ILO guidance on gender equality notes that its overall approach to gender is two-pronged:¹⁹

- The first aspect of the approach stipulates that all policies, programmes, and activities must aim to “...systematically and formally address the specific and often different concerns of both women and men, including women’s practical and strategic gender needs”.
- The second aspect focuses on implementing targeted approaches that take these differing needs into account, and which aim to enable women and men to participate and benefit equally from development efforts. This includes gender mainstreaming, which should be used throughout project lifecycles in order to achieve gender equality, as well as gender responsive objectives, outcomes, outputs, and gender specific indicators; setting up gender institutional structures within components; the involvement of both men and women in constituents’ and beneficiaries’ consultations and analyses; and gender responsive monitoring.

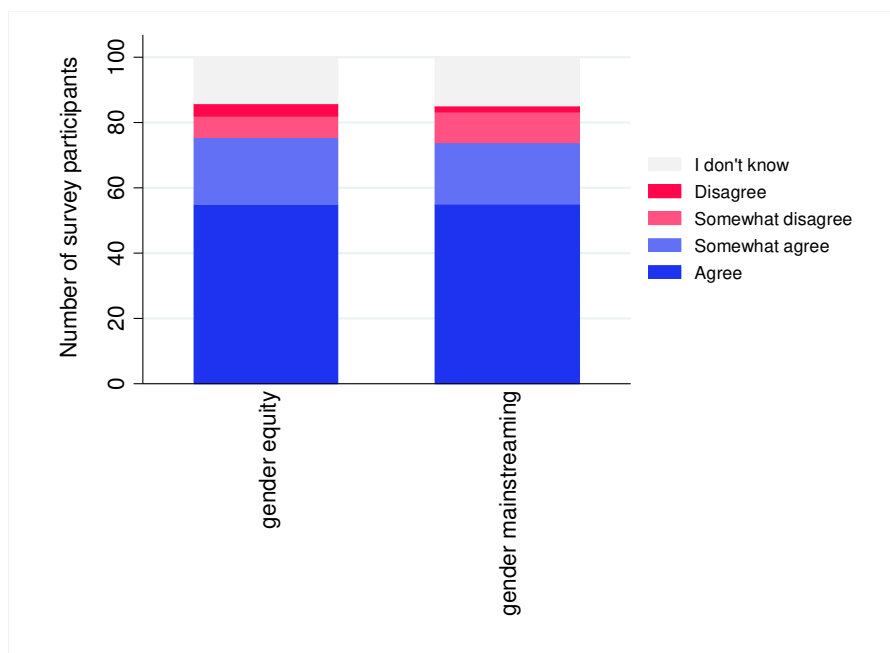
As part of the survey, we sought to understand the views of respondents in this regard (Figure 16). The results highlight that the majority of respondents confirm that the programme logic was informed by gender equity considerations. Interestingly, the proportion among women who agree is noticeably higher than among men.

Interviewees observed that this has been achieved through the focus on “skills for inclusion” as a key element of the design of country components. These populations – addressed in terms of the inclusion imperatives – include young women, people with disability, and people in the informal sector (Global ProDoc). The responses also suggest that the majority of respondents in the survey confirm that gender mainstreaming has been integrated in the implementation of the programme.

In the following we reflect on the approaches used in this regard, which broadly include: the need to address social and systemic barriers that lead to exclusion; barriers related to institutional capacity; and those that direct support to increasing enrolment in training for vulnerable populations.

¹⁹ ILO (2019). Guidance 1.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation.

Figure 16: Survey: Were the programme and its component gender inclusive?



Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The design and implementation of the programme and its components were informed by gender equity considerations. Gender mainstreaming was applied in the implementation of the programme and its components." Observations: 79, 79.

Challenging social and systemic barriers

The SKILL-UP Global ProDoc notes the importance of strengthening social dialogue as a means of contributing to gender equitable outcomes in skills development systems. Looking at the various component ProDocs, the one for Senegal is the only one that explicitly identifies social and cultural barriers as factors that may prevent young women from accessing training and employment. The Senegal ProDoc states: "The objectives are to create an enabling environment for women's skills development and inclusion in the digital labour market; strengthen the institutional capacity of sector actors in gender mainstreaming; and encourage young women to overcome prejudices and cultural barriers to learn a profession in the digital world."

These are important objectives, however, there is a need to examine what is meant by encouraging young women to overcome prejudices and cultural barriers. The project itself involved the training of 300 young women in coding for mobile applications. This is a positive contribution in a sector dominated by men but on its own will not address the underlying structural factors that maintain male dominance and in the absence of other interventions may place the responsibility for overcoming these barriers solely on women themselves.

In Malawi, SKILL-UP interventions aimed to influence the broader skills context using an awareness raising and knowledge sharing campaign. This campaign was intended to include women's success stories, promotional materials and television programmes promoting women's participation in project activities, and information packages on SKILL-UP targeting women. Ultimately only the information packages were developed. These were shared with stakeholders in the skills system, including social partners and the donor community. An indirect effect of the interventions on gender relations in the communities in which it was implemented was noted: young women who participated in the activities quickly established small farms and hired employees, who were mostly young men. In the context of a male dominated society, the impact of empowering young women in this way may have sustained impacts on gender relations.

Several projects aimed to contribute to addressing concerns about inclusion by focusing on interventions that impact on the skills system in its entirety. For example, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Senegal include indicators to this end in their logical frameworks, such as: *“Inclusion strategy and action plan for skills development system adopted by key stakeholders”*. These strategies and plans were to be based on assessments of the existing state of inclusivity policy and practice within their respective skills development systems. By December 2020, Ghana and Senegal had completed inclusivity assessments. Ghana’s assessment focused primarily on people with disability, while Senegal’s explicitly addressed gender in the country’s ICT sector and was presented to relevant ministries and stakeholders in 2019.

Project documents from Tanzania also identified the importance of understanding systemic barriers to gender equity in the skills development system and included identifying these constraints as part of the process of developing an inclusion strategy for TVET institutions. Stakeholders noted that education regulatory authorities and training institutions were supported to develop gender inclusion guidelines. Further, the project reportedly played an important role in raising awareness of the range of possible training courses available to women, including those traditionally dominated by men.

Addressing institutional capacity for inclusion

Capacity building for inclusive skills development is an important feature of several country component approaches to gender equity. Senegal, Tanzania, and Ghana all include some form of inclusivity-focused capacity building.

- In Ghana the approach was targeted and focused primarily on building the capacity of TVET stakeholders and educational staff to design and implement responses to identified inclusion priorities. Training on gender sensitisation was held for SSC members, but the component’s primary inclusion focus was on people with disabilities.
- In Senegal a broad approach as adopted, stating that it would *“strengthen the institutional capacity of sector actors in gender mainstreaming”*. These actors include training centres, employers’ and workers’ organisations, technology centres, and human resources professionals. As part of this process a research study was carried out focusing on the integration of gender into TVET for the ICT sector, which was presented to relevant ministries in 2019. However, no further capacity building on gender equity and inclusion was conducted.
- In Tanzania the approach to supporting inclusive skills development also focused on capacity building for partner institutions, including four training institutions and private companies. The interventions also included support to partner institutions in developing inclusion frameworks and manuals, support to constituents in designing and implementing awareness and advocacy programmes focused on inclusion, and support for training of trainers in adopting inclusive methodologies. Discussions were held on the development of inclusion strategies, but no further progress was made on this activity. However, in the interviewees stakeholders noted that guidelines on gender mainstreaming had been developed in the TVET sector with support from other donor organisations.

In addition, at a global level SKILL-UP contributed to the development of a guide and digital assessment tool on making TVET inclusive for all. The guide and tool built the basis for a new ITC/ILO course on Skills for Social Inclusion implemented in 2020 with 60 participants. The course has already been implemented a second time in 2021 (in EN and FR).

Direct interventions in support of gender inclusion

The third approach to address gender equity in SKILL-UP is the direct engagement of women, either through interventions focusing on working with particular groups of women, or by increasing women's enrolment into training programmes. As described in the section on effectiveness, 27% of the participants in capacity building trainings were women, while among trainings for ultimate beneficiaries, this proportion was 56%.

- In Ghana aspects of both of these approaches were included in its ProDoc but left the actual activities to be undertaken somewhat open-ended. In terms of targeted interventions, the ProDoc stated that pilot programmes in inclusive skills development would be developed. The M&E originally included an indicator tracking the percentage of disadvantaged students supported in TVET (yet this was later not reported on). As noted above, the actual implementation of gender focused activities was limited to training for SSCs on gender sensitisation.
- In Lebanon there was also a focus on young women, and we found that this had allowed for the inclusion of women in skills training that has typically only been available to men. The seven women involved were also provided with social and professional support to equip the women to succeed in a sector that is male dominated and work was also done with *employers* to encourage them to be supportive to start the journey towards breaking the stereotypes of women's work in the construction field.
- In Malawi the approach was a) to combine the previous initiatives that they had undertaken focusing on WiL and women farmers and b) to specify targets for women's participation for the various other training and skills development activities. The use of targets for women's inclusion was identified as a useful means of ensuring that efforts were made to engage women in trainings, and that even where targets were not met, female enrolment increased. This was emphasised by a stakeholder who noted that the significant increase in young women engaging in agriculture was an indication of the success of adopting a gender sensitive approach.
- In Niger the interventions exclusively addressed women who are victims of slavery, through various interventions (training enhance employability and self-employment, legal and judicial assistance, and the development of economic interest groups).
- In Senegal the approach involved a pilot intervention paying particular attention to engaging young women and out-of-school youth. It aimed to provide information about careers in the digital sector while building basic skills relevant to the sector. The training of 300 young women in coding for mobile applications was undertaken as part of this focus.
- In Tanzania the project aimed to engage in a gender responsive process to recruit 200 apprentices. Interviewees found that this was a challenging process due to stereotypical ideas about women's roles and the types of work appropriate for women. Additionally, some Muslim trainees were prevented from wearing hijabs during their apprenticeships which created an additional barrier to their participation. Finally, some female beneficiaries noted that they experienced sexual harassment from potential employers when they were looking for jobs.

4.8. Transversal topics: Tripartite issues

Tripartism is integral to ILO's governance structures and the ILO has privileged access to tripartite partners: this tripartism approach is one of the core cross-cutting principles of the SKILL-UP Programme. This is important in light of the fact that strong tripartite governance is seen as a key feature of the most successful skills development systems globally.²⁰

The ILO recognises that effective tripartite governance requires identifying and engaging with stakeholders who are relevant to the specific projects and programmes being implemented. This is not always straightforward, and care needs to be taken to ensure that employer and employee representatives are appropriate for the specific programmes being implemented. The SKILL-UP country components approached tripartism in a variety of ways. At a systems level, several of them focused on supporting tripartism by establishing or strengthening the involvement of social partners in various types of tripartite bodies, including Sector Skills Councils, and establishing social dialogue platforms focusing on skills development. Institution level activities focused mainly on capacity building and technical assistance in support of social partners. Finally, several countries implemented the ILO's STED skills anticipation process as a practical means of supporting tripartite engagement in the programme.

Establishing tripartite bodies and social dialogue platforms

As indicated above, the two countries that were involved in the previous phase of the programme have both addressed the establishment of structures that include all social partners.

- In Malawi, the component included the establishment of a National Steering Committee (NSC) and secretariat. The NSC included representatives from relevant ministries, the Employers Consultative Association of Malawi, the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions, and from relevant sector associations. The documentation indicates that ultimately, the NSC will transition into a National Skills Development Steering Committee. In addition to establishing the NSC, support was provided for engaging relevant partners in structured dialogues focused on improving the coordination and responsiveness of training provision in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. The establishment of the NSC was viewed by social partners as an important means of engaging in decision making around TVET with the Ministry of Labour and the TVET authority. Additionally, the NSC provided opportunities to access technical support from other donors and international organisations.
- In Tanzania the structures that were established included a social dialogue platform focusing on linking skills with labour market demand, facilitating trade and enterprise development, supporting inclusive skills development for disadvantaged groups, and enhancing work-based learning. In line with these aims, a steering committee with tripartite representation was established for the Zanzibar component and provided an important means of facilitating the implementation of various interventions. Although formal committees were not established on the Tanzanian mainland, stakeholders reported that they were able to effectively participate in the implementation of the SKILL-UP Programme in Tanzania.

²⁰ Emmenegger, P., Graf, L., & Trampusch, C. (2019). The governance of decentralised cooperation in collective training systems: a review and conceptualisation. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 71(1), 21–45.

Social dialogue is also included in the other country components. In Senegal for instance, a more focused approach to social dialogue was adopted that aimed to support engagement between the TVET sector and the employers' association in the digital sector. This dialogue focused on identifying skills needs within the sector and developing a skills development strategy and action plan. Stakeholders reportedly engaged meaningfully in these processes and identified relevant areas of focus within Senegal's digital sector that were translated into novel training curricula. Similarly, in Ghana relevant stakeholders were identified and invited to the project's inception meeting, but no high-level social dialogue platform was established, with the project opting to focus on establishing sector level bodies.

Tripartite dialogue has been an important feature of the broader level SKILL-UP partnership focusing on migration in Western and Central Africa. This dialogue has taken the form of workshops focusing on specific issues, including for instance the harmonisation of occupational standards in agriculture and construction in Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo.

Capacity building and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)

In Ethiopia, Ghana and Lebanon, project efforts focused on supporting the establishment of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

- In Ethiopia the programme provided training to national level stakeholders on skills needs anticipation and sectoral governance and facilitated the development of a sector skills strategy for the garment industry. SSCs were established in the Textile & Garment, and Agro-processing sectors. SSC members selected focus areas based on recommendations from STED and other studies. Stakeholders were generally supportive of the establishment of the SSCs and noted that while it was too soon to judge their impact, the SSCs had the potential to significantly change the Ethiopian skills development system.
- In Ghana capacity strengthening was provided for stakeholders by establishing a framework for SSCs. The process aimed for close collaboration between government and industry representatives (including workers) at both national and sectoral levels. Four SSCs were subsequently established (Agriculture, Construction, Tourism and Hospitality, Oil and Gas). Stakeholders reported that participation in the SSCs had increased their awareness of the skills gaps within their sectors, and of their roles in supporting the skills development system (see spotlight in the effectiveness section).
- In Lebanon, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has led efforts to establish SSCs, with the ILO project playing an advisory role (see concept note). However, the establishment of the SSCs was delayed for several reasons, including the need for further training and consultation on the role, composition, and function of SSCs as well as the multiple crises that affected Lebanon between 2019 and 2020.

The project did not include the establishment of SSCs in Malawi, Tanzania, or Senegal, but provided capacity building to so constituents in varied ways as relevant to the structures in the respective countries.

Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED)

The ILO's STED methodology for skills anticipation is based on a fundamentally tripartite process which anticipates sectors' development and growth opportunities, and analyses skills supply and demand in order to

support demand-driven skills development.²¹ Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal and Tanzania SKILL-UP components all included the use of STED. The methodology has the potential to strengthen tripartite governance processes in these countries' skills systems due to its inherently tripartite nature. We look at selected examples below:

- In Ghana the component included support for the STED process and the implementation of STED recommendations, and skills foresight workshops were facilitated with SSCs members. An additional STED workshop was organised for the ICT sector in late 2020. The priority sectors were driven by the Ghanaian government, which has a list of 20+ sectors in which it wants skills development to be demand driven through SSCs. A respondent to this report noted that the process of prioritisation of the sectors was mainly driven by the Ghanaian partners.
- In Malawi, the component supported the use of the STED methodology in two ways: Firstly, by analysing current and emerging skills needs. The implementation activities on agricultural entrepreneurship and WiL described in the Malawi spotlights were informed by STED. Secondly, by developing a simplified STED guide by social partners for wider circulation and use in the country. Support was provided to the Ministry of Labour to host the STED process by training key staff in the skills and TVET departments. Stakeholders noted that tripartism was critical for implementation, and that key stakeholders led the process and implemented activities, rather than simply participating in them.
- In Senegal support was provided for developing a detailed profile of the digital sector, focusing on its employment and development potential, current labour requirements, and existing educational resources. The study was intended to feed into the STED process to support the development of a skills development strategy and an implementation action plan.

4.9. Transversal topics: ILS

The authors of the 2016 high-level evaluation of ILO's skills development programmes write that *"while the ILO's work in skills supports opportunities for people to gain decent and productive work, it is not supported by the same imperative for action as its work in promoting fundamental rights. ... ILO skills interventions do not involve the implementation of basic principles or normative standards set out in any of the eight «fundamental» Conventions identified by the Governing Body. Rather, the ILO's skills work is underpinned by "technical" Conventions and their associated Recommendations"*, such as the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No.142); and Recommendation 2004 (No. 195).²²

This interpretation seems to hold also for the SKILL-UP Programme, although there is an obvious link to the International Labour Standards (ILS) through the work on combatting forced labour / modern slavery, both through the respective resource package developed and the piloting activities in Niger. Substantial programme resources (558,000 USD) were spent on these two interventions, and the interviewees and survey participants consider the work as both relevant and successful.

²¹ Gregg, C., Jansen, M., & von Uexkull, E. (2012). Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification: A Practical Guide.

²² ILO (2016): Independent evaluation of ILO's strategy and actions to promote skills development for jobs and growth (2010–2015).

There are also strong links to other ILS topics, including equality of opportunity and treatment, tripartite consultations, vocational training, migrant worker, and – through the winner of the challenge call – to domestic workers. There are further links to the apprenticeship standard which is currently being developed.

In the interviews, there was an understanding that the principles underlying the SKILL-UP Programme around strengthening skills anticipation, skills systems, and inclusion are aligned with the broader ILO agenda, including those on standards. There were also some explicit examples, for instance the ILO's advocacy towards the implementation of the National Employment Strategy that respects the workers' rights and duties in Lebanon, or the *"tools for disseminating and strengthening skills on the rights and duties of young people at work"* that were produced in Senegal in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour. Yet there was also the observation (in one country, but likely this account applies across all components) that some employers are reluctant to sign formal employment contracts with the graduates, and only engaged training participants on an informal basis.

5. Learnings and Good Practice

The ILO places emphasis on generating and sharing lessons learned and uses several tools to collect them, including the progress and other programme reports. Regarding the SKILL-UP Programme we were consequently able to collect learnings from these sources, the interviews as well as the survey. It emanates from the feedback that many stakeholders were able to build up knowledge, to enrich their experiences, and reflect upon ideas they held hitherto. However, only few of the learnings have the qualities that meet ILO's definition of what constitutes a lesson learned or good practice – namely observations that can be translated into significant, generalisable, and replicable knowledge.^{23, 24}

What overarching learnings were identified and were / will be shared? What good practices were developed and tested as part of the programme? (EQ 16 / 17)

One of the purposes of the evaluation is to identify learnings and good practice. To respond to this task, we collected what ILO staff reported in their Progress Reports as learnings and we also touched on learnings in our interviews with ILO staff. This led to a long list of insights, which cover various technical, procedural and management issues. Some of these insights are learnings for some stakeholders, while common sense for others; some contradict. Below we focus on those insights that were frequently mentioned. We combined and synthesised them as "learnings", guided by ILO's definition of lessons learned.

²³ The ILO defines lessons learned as *"an observation from project or programme experience which can be translated into relevant, beneficial knowledge by establishing clear causal factors and effects. It focuses on a specific design, activity, process, or decision and may provide either positive or negative insights on operational effectiveness and efficiency, impact on the achievement of outcomes, or influence on sustainability. The lesson should indicate, where possible, how it contributes to 1) reducing or eliminating deficiencies; or 2) building successful and sustainable practice and performance. A lesson learned may become an emerging good practice when it additionally shows proven results or benefits and is determined to be worthwhile for replication or up-scaling."*

²⁴ Maurer (2012): *"... Lessons learned are meant to be significant, to have a relevance to a wider context, and to be generalized and replicable."*

In Annexes 7-9, in alignment with ILO's evaluation requirements, we describe two Lessons Learned (based on Learning 2 and 4 below) as well as an emerging Good Practice (the Skills Innovation Facility).

Learning 1

Consultation, participation, and collaboration are essential to design relevant interventions that reflect different interests and vantage points and necessary to contribute to ownership for project implementation. Yet they are insufficient to ensure sustainability.

It emerges consistently and from several reports and statements related to different the SKILL-UP Programme components that frequent, transparent, meaningful interactions with the programme stakeholders and ILO constituents is an important element during all stages of the programme cycle. These interactions allow partners to understand their respective viewpoints, align interests, pool knowledge and experience, and seek solutions to problems collectively. Consultations can also minimise the risks that important issues are being left out. At the same time consultation, participation, and collaboration cause friction and require more resources – and thus they need to be realistically reflected in the programme workplan. Furthermore, whereas ILO's tripartite approach is an asset in this regard, the implementation experience suggests that formalising consultation, participation, and collaboration (for instance, in a Memorandum of Understanding) is important too. As much as frequent, transparent, meaningful interactions significantly add value to an intervention, they are themselves insufficient to ensure sustainability of an intervention or its results.

Learning 2

The outcome-based funding approach makes it easier to responding to constituents' requests flexibly but needs to be managed to minimise the risk of fragmentation. It can also contribute to reducing administrative overhead.

The outcome-based funding approach earmarks Norway's funding for the SKILL-UP Programme thematically and geographically. ILO staff stated in the interviews that the approach has beneficial effects, since it allows to accommodate requests from constituents flexibly and to respond to emerging needs within short delays – an asset for ILO's response to the pandemic. According to stakeholder feedback the approach renders cooperation more efficient and helps producing results faster. Also important in terms of enabling the programme to adapt considering constraints imposed by the pandemic. Conversely, the approach can lead to fragmentation with many diverse interventions being implemented as a result of constituents' requests, thus undermining the coherence of the entire component portfolio. In addition, it also emerges that it is a challenge for ILO's country offices to accommodate a range of constituents' requests.

Learning 3

Online forms of communication and capacity building have become commonplace in the SKILL-UP Programme. Whilst they can be very effective generally, several challenges need to be overcome for which close and active coordination with ILO's field offices is beneficial.

The pandemic has affected the delivery of capacity building activities under the SKILL-UP Programme, accelerating the use of online technology to bridge physical and geographical gaps. Both the ILO and its partners were quick to adapt and showed willingness to use online tools for communication and learning from distance. However, several hurdles emerged in the delivery of the activities, including poor internet access and connectivity. These challenges showed the importance of close and active coordination with ILO's field offices, who can complement online activities and resolve technical challenges when they arise. Closely related is the learning that many stakeholders use mobile devices, which necessitates that content is adapted to these devices to make it user friendly.

Learning 4

For work-based learning schemes to be successful, they need to be adapted to the specific context in which the schemes are implemented, including the structure of the economy, the market challenges that firms face and the opportunities that exist in these contexts, or the firm structure.

The success of work-based learning schemes also depends on the technical equipment, the social interactions, and the leadership skills within the firms in which trainees are placed. Closely related is the learning that online learning that combines different audio and video formats can support the work of instructors and enable alternative learning process – yet it cannot substitute the interactions needed between trainees and instructors.

Other learnings

In addition to the ILO internal sources we also asked the survey respondents to share other lessons learned, some of which we quote here to complement the aforementioned ones: knowledge sharing among thought leaders from across the world helps to understand the frontier of research that state authorities responsible for skills development should strive for; Sector Skills Councils need to be duly registered to function authoritatively; a revolving fund is an effective tool to assist women in building up income generating activities; there needs to be a good balance between the strive to include more apprentices and the quality in the classroom training and the availability of placement opportunities; skills training is needed to support e.g. farmers to produce to the required standards of the targeted markets.

Good Practice

The survey participants were asked to provide one emerging good practice example. Examples provided include (*Note: the following elements are based on single responses*): a “community of practice” for training participants, a WhatsApp group for students to help one another after the programme, engagement with other development partners to support parallel and complementary interventions to widen impact, resources / publication on programming provided by ILO, the KAB online tool (Lebanon), STED tools, the skills partnership approach as it is flexible and produces results / renders cooperation faster and can be applied in many different contexts, and the review of occupational standards to better meet the current demand of industry.

Good practice was also discussed in the interviews; these items are covered above in our responses to the questions on greatest achievements (EQ 14) and innovation (EQ 13).

6. Conclusions

Relevance

The findings have highlighted the relevance of the objectives and programme implementation of SKILL-UP with development plans, constituents' objectives and the overall programme of the ILO as well as the Norwegian Government. There are a few shortcomings that need to be borne in mind, however. Firstly, the limited involvement of social partners in the overarching design of the programme, and the finding that many respondents lacked an understanding of the relationship between its elements. In our understanding, this pointed to the absence of an articulated, and clearly communicated, overarching Theory of Change that is used as a basis for determining the relevance of specific activities. It is also related in some part to the ways in which the constituents are involved in decisions relating to the programme. Secondly, the evaluation has found that whilst most of the activities were considered relevant, there were not sufficient spaces created to reflect on what may be unintended outcomes of certain decisions that are made: for example, which sectors (or sub-sectors) the interventions are concentrated on in terms of understanding demand and determining supply. Thirdly, the need to consider the involvement of women in the design and management of the interventions may need to be critically reviewed given the relatively larger number of women who were unsure whether the interventions were aligned with their priorities.

Coherence

There is good internal coherence of the SKILL-UP Programme with other programmes of the ILO that are relevant for the skills domain; specifically the SCORE and BRIDGE programmes were mentioned several times and apparent interlinkages could be realised, including in Lebanon, Ghana, and Niger. It emerges from the interviews, however, that synergies between the programmes could be improved. The programme's consistency with international norms and standards is high, primarily because of ILO's own role in setting the latter and applying them in the delivery of its interventions. Regarding external coherence, which is the complementarity, harmonisation, and co-ordination of the SKILL-UP Programme with interventions of other agencies we found that some opportunities for collaboration were seized but not systematically identified. The survey results show that ILO staff believe that internal coherence was ensured whilst the ratings for external coherence were somewhat more critical.

Effectiveness

The majority of the outcome and output targets are achieved and the reasons provided for the dropped, delayed or otherwise unachieved items – waned interest by partner governments, political gridlock or turmoil, delays due to the pandemic – are reasonable. Most stakeholders believe that the interventions implemented under the programme have been successful, and that the objectives have been reached. Despite this overall very positive assessment, there were also critical voices, for instance relating to the unclear legal basis of SSCs or the lack of follow-up activities for training. Some stakeholders see the work as “preparatory”, now requiring additional work to reach ultimate beneficiaries, while other criticise that the “groundwork” has been done, yet more systemic changes are still lacking. These observations are relevant, yet given the short time frame and oftentimes small component budgets it seems natural that change was not sweeping on both micro and macro level. Again, the programme could be better explained if its Theory of Change entailed a more strategic discussion on the sequencing of interventions. The fact that there is no information on the ultimate beneficiary impact is a shortfall of the programme (although it should be noted that some tracer studies are still forthcoming).

Efficiency

Several of the elements that were assessed to measure the extent to which the programme is efficient were rated positively. This holds true for the political, technical, and administrative support that the programme received from its stakeholders, the programme management structure, as well as the communication among the stakeholders. The outcome-based funding approach is appreciated both by the donor and the ILO for its flexibility and literature suggests that such “softly earmarked” approaches are overall efficient. ILO staff mentioned that they procured services through competitive bidding process and tried to negotiate favourable terms, to improve value for money. Issues that undermined the programmes efficiency include the delays that it experienced to launch the activities, including those due to the initial appointment of staff as well as staff changes, coupled with the late fund disbursement dynamics. Several activities had thus to be implemented in the late stages of the programme, leaving little room to deliver, monitor, learn, and adapt the activities. The Covid-19 pandemic caused additional delays, yet the ILO’s response to this external factor was considered to be effective by the majority of the ILO staff and this was also confirmed by constituents in interviews.

Impact

The long-term objective of the programme is *“more and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects”* (P&B 2018-19 Outcome 1) and *“Constituents have taken action on skills development systems, strategies and programmes to reduce skills mismatches and enhance access to the labour market”* (P&B 2018-19 Indicator 1.3). The activity-based component of the two, related to Indicator 1.3, has clearly been fulfilled through the various SKILL-UP interventions – if “take action” by constituents is understood as being involved in planning and implementation. There is no evidence yet for the programme’s contribution to “youth employment prospects”, yet we believe that in theory such a contribution is likely, at least as soon as labour market conditions improve, and given enough time for systems-related development to manifest themselves in concrete improvements. Such time lags are even more true for contributions to “more and better jobs”, an ambitious target for a skills development project. Given the right conditions, such contributions develop through improved productivity and competitiveness leading to company growth. The fact that SKILL-UP has focused on growing economies makes a contribution to such aggregate employment effects more likely. While acknowledging that the selections of industries was taken based on the STED methodology, together with the stakeholders, we wonder if a stronger focus on “future of work” and “green” jobs could or should have been achieved.

Sustainability

The findings have highlighted that whilst the level of ownership of the SKILL-UP Programme is positive this does not directly equate to sustainability which is yet too early to assess. Interviewees were confident that a strong foundation for the current PCA 2020-21 has been created and highlighted a number of factors in this regard. The evaluation found that key factors in this regard includes the strong relationships between partners, the emphasis on building the structures and systems to drive skills development, the integration of interventions into the existing institutional offerings and the work that has been done with key players in the eco-system. However, the evaluation also highlighted certain cautions in this regard. There is a need to recognise the constraints that stakeholders may face in terms of time and finance to effectively participate in, and sustain, these processes. There was also a view that there is a need to ensure that high level individuals from within partners are effectively brought on board such that they are aware of what may be expected of them and that this engagement takes place with partners across levels (national, regional and global). Finally, in realising these changes it is our view that the way in which the programme is being implemented in terms of the emphasis on capacity building and the development of resources is also contributing to the resilience of the structures. That is the capacity of these structures to adapt to changes and respond to needs that

emerge. This is important as the development of resilience is seen as integral to the on-going sustainability of change.

Gender equity and inclusion

Gender equity and inclusion is addressed to varying degrees across the country components, at the system level, the institutional level, and the intervention level. Ghana and Senegal were the only country components that included a focus on gender equity at all three of these levels. The programme components vary in the extent to which they meet gender mainstreaming goals. Niger and Lebanon, for instance, reflect on how to address factors that may prevent young women from accessing training. Tanzania's project focused on building capacity within the skills development system to support more inclusive outcomes and develop inclusive modular apprenticeship programmes. Respondents in the interviews in both Senegal and Ghana highlight the implementation of inclusivity-focused capacity building. The successes realised in this regard, for example in Malawi, highlight that increasing the number of women beneficiaries contributes to changing norms. Ethiopia is less explicit in their focus on gender although the component does include the development of an inclusion strategy and action plan for the skills development system in its logical framework. What is evident in this evaluation is how much work there still is (including harassment of young women seeking to enter certain sectors). This suggests the need for further reflection on ways to strengthen the focus on building gender imperatives in social dialogues.

Tripartism

Tripartism is embedded in the SKILL-UP Programme through its support for tripartism at the systems level, and well as through directly assisting institutions to implement more practical aspects of tripartite governance, such as the STED methodology. The direct support for social dialogue on skills development is also an important systems level intervention. In terms of capacity building, most efforts focus on developing the skills required to implement sectoral skills councils, with the exception of Senegal, where the focus is specifically on developing a skills development strategy for the digital sector. Generally, the country components appear to include member states, employers' and workers' organisations in their implementation plans to at least some extent. The Malawi component, having built on existing collaboration, has the most clearly developed tripartite strategy and in particular in terms of their oversight role. This is also true, at least to some degree in Tanzania and specifically Zanzibar. In Ethiopia, Ghana, Lebanon, and Senegal the components typically include tripartite partners in the implementation.

7. Recommendations

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

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the programme-wide Theory of Change

Related to findings	Relevance, Coherence
Addressee	SKILL-UP Programme management team (HQ and CO)
Time frame	Planning phase PCA 2020-21
Resource implications	Medium

Why it is important: A well-articulated ToC provides an indispensable basis for programme design and implementation and to respond to questions related to coherence (what should be in/out of the programme; what should be done by ILO, given its strengths in system development/tripartism, what by partners; linkages between these?), effectiveness/impact (how can “at risk assumptions” be addressed, where could / should space for innovation be created?), efficiency (In what areas are the largest contributions to the intended change expected; where should more funds flow to?) and sustainability (what needs to be consolidated, where to go “deeper” and where “wider”?)

What SKILL-UP has achieved: The ProDocs and proposals for additional funding contain strong narratives why the various programme activities are important. Interviewees can talk to each element of the programme and explain its relevance. Yet there are also some concerns that elements of the programme feel “cobbled together”. Few people could discuss the causal chains across the entirety of the programme, and there is the view that there is a need for a clearer articulation of the ToC.

Recommendation: We recommend strengthening the programme-wide ToC with a clear articulation how activities/outputs support the realisation of outcomes and contribute to impact. This should explain the interrelations of the country, regional and global components, and within the components (such as the work on skills systems and the selection of training for beneficiaries), explain the various assumptions which lead to behavioural change, and identify assumptions which are “at risk” and deserve particular attention. This will also assist to focus the monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) work related to the programme.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen learning orientation

Related to findings	Efficiency
Addressee	SKILL-UP Programme management team (HQ and CO), SKILLS

Time frame	Planning phase PCA 2020-21 (concept, improving M&E), main phase PCA 2020-21 (implementation, capacity building)
Resource implications	Medium

Why it is important: The ILO places much emphasis on generating and disseminating learnings as part of its result-oriented management.

What SKILL-UP has achieved: Each Progress Report had a section on “learnings”, a very accessible Results Book was produced, as well as many studies and policy briefs. Yet the interviews also suggest that implementation was prioritised, leaving limited time for reflection and learning, and that the sequencing of – and space for - the learning opportunities could be enhanced (incl. the evaluation). Some stakeholders (ILO internal and external) would have preferred a more self-critical discussion of the programme results as well as on unintended outcomes of particular interventions with a view to building on the knowledge within the ILO and refining products and tools.

Recommendation: We recommend developing a concept – covering responsibilities, timelines, milestones, and requisite resources – that defines and operationalises how learning will be gathered and disseminated during the next phase. The recommendation also extends to improving the M&E so that, for instance, it allows for comparison of the same activities across components; and that there are opportunities for different role players to engage and reflect critically upon successes and failures (without risking ramifications) in ways that strengthen practices and strategic approaches within the ILO and with partners. Supplementary capacity building might be required for the programme / component managers to ensure the reporting related to learning is pertinent and significant.

Recommendation 3: Share and apply learnings regarding gender equality

Related to findings	Efficiency, gender
Addressee	SKILL-UP Programme management team (HQ and CO), SKILLS
Time frame	Planning phase PCA 2020-21
Resource implications	Medium

Why it is important: The ILO and Norad share a commitment to working towards gender equality as part of the wider just transition process towards a sustainable future.

What SKILL-UP has achieved: The evaluation has highlighted the ways in which this programme has addressed gender mainstreaming and it is evident that countries have implemented different strategies. However, it is also evident that the challenges very much persist and that these are heightened when combined with other forms of discrimination related to class, migration status, and religion. Despite this in some countries the focus remains on “counting the numbers of women who participated” rather than on addressing the systemic barriers to the effective participation of women and on developing the capacity of the different players to ensure gender equality.

Recommendation: It is therefore important that spaces be created to share the very good examples that are emerging so as to deepen the understanding of meaningful gender mainstreaming across the programme.

Recommendation 4: Identify good training practice

Related to findings	Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact
Addressee	SKILL-UP Programme management team (HQ and CO), SKILLS
Time frame	Planning phase PCA 2020-21 (concept, roll-out Service Tracker), main phase PCA 2020-21 (assessment and identification good training practice)
Resource implications	Medium - High

Why it is important: With its access to constituents, its strong role in policy dialogue, and its presence in every corner of the world, the ILO is in a unique position to identify good practice and scale-up successful training activities, coupled with the development of quality resources (e.g. studies, policy-briefs and tools), whether related to capacity building of direct beneficiaries, or skills development of ultimate beneficiaries.

What SKILL-UP has achieved: The 25 capacity building activities and 15 trainings / RPL activities for ultimate beneficiaries produced learning for the immediate application context. With the Service Tracker, a potentially powerful tool is being developed to systematically assess trainings. Yet the potential of the tracker – or more conventional methods – have not yet been leveraged, and good practice and success factors were not identified systematically across the programme.

Recommendation: Develop and implement a concept on how to identify good training practice. For instance, similar interventions might need to be applied in different contexts, or different interventions in similar contexts. The evidence produced needs to be comparable. This requires a strengthening of key mechanisms such as finalising the tracker technically to this end, and conceptualising the tool to support this learning process (e.g. how can trainings be compared, given different content, participants, labour markets? Does information on the status before the training need to be included to learn about the effect or does benchmarking among trainings suffice?).

Recommendation 5: Adapt the evaluation approach to support learning processes

Related to findings	Efficiency
Addressee	ILO Evaluation Office
Time frame	Planning phase PCA 2020-21 (identification of evaluation focus / process), main phase PCA 2020-21 (implementation)
Resource implications	Low

Why it is important: Evaluations can be an important part of the learning process, particularly if they are strategically used by the evaluation stakeholders, i.e. focussing on elements deemed important for the programme implementation, the design of a subsequent phase, or for institutional learning more generally.

What SKILL-UP has achieved: The present evaluation provides a broad assessment of all programme components implemented as part of the PCA 2018-19. Considering the short duration of programmes such as SKILL-UP and the complex interactions of the components with other ILO and non-ILO interventions, we believe the ILO could improve its institutional learning by carrying out selected impact studies, which would look how the ILO’s interventions in a certain country, region, or thematic area have together created impact over a longer time span.

Recommendation: We recommend that the ILO Evaluation Office initiates a discussion with Norad, SKILLS, and the SKILL-UP Programme management team what type of evaluation would best serve the needs of the evaluation stakeholders. This could be a final evaluation like the one which was just implemented; a formative evaluation which provides information as the programme is implemented; an evaluation which looks at a wider time span (including the PCA 2016-17, 2018-19, and 2020-21); or a combination of these types. If one of the first two types of evaluations (final evaluation, formative evaluation) serves the immediate needs best, we recommend the ILO Evaluation Office to further examine whether an impact evaluation could furnish additional insights for ILO’s learning processes more broadly. The discussions should extend to the processes and the timing of the evaluation.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen constituent engagement process

Related to findings	Relevance, Efficiency
Addressee	SKILL-UP Programme management team (HQ and CO), SKILLS
Time frame	2021
Resource implications	Low

Why it is important: The strength of the constituent’s engagement is in the ILO’s “DNA”. The challenge is to maximise participation whilst ensuring effective implementation. As observed by one respondent, “there is a tightrope that is walked between guiding and supporting and ensuring that the ILO continues to listen to constituents”.

What SKILL-UP has achieved: There was frequent and multi-layered engagement with constituents during design and implementation, although the involvement differs between the components and activities, in frequency, in type, and in quality. Where the programme has continued (Malawi, Tanzania) particularly strong engagement mechanisms have been created. Yet there is also some feedback that engagement did not consistently take place in ways that felt meaningful, that constituents are not taking responsibility for sustaining the outcomes, and that (selected) stakeholders who should have a high-level overview across the programme elements, and how it relates to the broader skills work of the ILO, do not have it.

Recommendation: It should be assessed whether and how a global structure (such as an overarching steering committee for SKILLS) could benefit engagement and coherence, without creating too much additional

overhead. Second, the engagement process should ensure that space is created for constituents who have low institutional capacity to express their needs (this includes capacity building, ensuring local officials can support initiatives effectively as well as through informing global partners who can provide direct support to constituents where possible). Third, the engagement process could further extend to beneficiary groups if there is a risk that they are not sufficiently represented by those stakeholders involved in the dialogues.

Recommendation 7: Map the ecosystem, strengthen external coherence

Related to findings	Coherence
Addressee	SKILL-UP Programme management team (HQ and CO)
Time frame	Planning phase PCA 2020-21
Resource implications	Low

Why it is important: Understanding the eco-system is both important to determining what the ILO can do in a space - based on its strengths - and what others can do. This is also critical to enhancing the effectiveness of the programme as well as to create a basis for the sustainability of the programmes and outcomes.

What SKILL-UP has achieved: Most survey respondents and interviewees indicated that the SKILL-UP interventions are well aligned with those that are being implemented by other development and social partners but a few respondents indicated that the programme would have been more relevant if aligned with other interventions. In some cases, respondents involved in other related initiatives were not aware of the SKILL-UP Programme that was being implemented. While key ILO staff is likely to have an overview, this does not seem systematically used for design and implementation; ProDocs / proposals do not contain much information on what other development actors do.

Recommendation: The ILO should undertake a practical and focused mapping of the landscape in all its components in order to strengthen coordination with other development partners and actors. This with a view to both actively bringing in – or working with – other development partners to support aspects of the programme so as to enhance the effectiveness of its interventions. In other cases, it may make sense to agree amongst partners ways to ensure that interventions complement each other such that ILO can focus on its strengths in terms of bringing in, and supporting, constituents, building systems and signalling demand whilst others may focus on implementation within this context.

Recommendation 8: Consolidate, complete, sustain results

Related to findings	Effectiveness, Sustainability
Addressee	SKILL-UP Programme management team (HQ and CO)
Time frame	Planning phase PCA 2020-21 (identification of what to consolidate, complete, sustain), main phase PCA 2020-21 (roll-out)

Why it is important: The ILO delivered a wide range of activities within a limited period of time and the context of the pandemic. Several of the activities were of a policy and systems nature, not yet at the stage of being translated into practice / operationalised or have otherwise not fully matured yet.

What SKILL-UP has achieved: With the decision to stay active in the same partner countries, Norway and the ILO signal their understanding that skills development reforms require time and also their ambition to bring about significant changes in the skills developments systems. Likewise, the concept note of the next programme phase indicates the plan to ensure continuity.

Recommendation: We recommend using the momentum that was created with the SKILL-UP Programme and to screen systematically during the design phase which activities of the programme necessitate additional resources to complete, consolidate, and sustain the results that were achieved hitherto. Activities for which inclusion targets could not be met during the past phase could be prioritised to improve SKILL-UP's relevance for ultimate beneficiaries. Notwithstanding, diverting attention to other interventions can be necessary if they are more relevant, including for SKILL's long-term strategy, and likelier to be more effective and efficient.

Expectations and suggestions from the stakeholders

In addition to our own recommendations, we summarise below expectations and suggestions that were captured with the online survey. We believe that many of the responses are aligned, at least partly, with our recommendations, and hence structure them accordingly. *Note:* Each segment between semi-colon is a comment by one survey participant. If the suggestion was repeatedly mentioned, then the number of responses is added in brackets. We have translated and shortened the responses.

- **Strengthen learning orientation:** Improve assessment of impact; closer monitoring and evaluation; share experiences, results and new tools (e.g. on STED and the anticipation of skill needs); more cross-regional exchange.
- **Identify good training practice:** Extend training to the entire (farming) production process (2); improve delivery through a needs assessment and taking stock of what is already being offered; smaller intake; post-training support to ensure social and economic integration; help with equipment; financial incentives to participating companies (especially during the pandemic).
- **Strengthen constituent engagement process:** Ensure ownership of all stakeholders; better involvement and information of the constituents in / about the programme; involvement and participation of the social partners in the entire process (from design to evaluation); more engagements with the private sector; more engagement of employers at the planning stage of most of the activities and not for just stakeholder consultation; partnership with trade union organisations to improve impact on the lives of workers; a plenary of all stakeholders across all regions to generate an overview of needs; meetings and workshops for everyone to understand their roles and responsibilities; the government to be approached and advised to endorse the program and implement the adoption; truly involve national policy makers (incl. ministers and head of governments) to ensure commitment.
- **Map the ecosystem, strengthen external coherence:** Greater synergy of actors; strengthening relationships with all relevant stakeholders; align with the government priority area and have continuous engagement with the government; know what is going on in ILO and outside of ILO.
- **Consolidate, complete, sustain results:** Capacity development so as to sustain the programme; follow-up with the groups to ensure that the training received under the project is put to good use; continuing interactive exchange of experience through community of practices, virtual clubs, and think tanks; follow up on the activities implemented by the people supported by the projects; build on the solid foundation rather than starting completely new activities. *Note:* Numerous responses expressed the wish to continue the programme.

Then there were additional types of recommendations, not linked to our ones:

- **Cover more beneficiaries:** Wider spread of the programme to cover more participants and have more impact; offer the training to a wider audience for free; increase the number of beneficiaries; more diversity in terms of countries and regions covered; replicate sectoral approaches in other sectors; support other occupations; involve all sectors and institutions in the programme.
- **Deepen the assistance:** Support the establishment of a vocational training centre in the areas where slavery persists in Niger; support villages already targeted by the creation of community-based infrastructures e.g. schools and learning centres; provide education for children of communities victims of slavery; a holistic program taking into account the multisectoral needs of communities victims of slavery and similar practices; trainings [should be] be followed by a practical component within the participating organisations; strengthen the institutional capacity of Sahel countries to address the various challenges that undermine migration governance.
- **Strengthen the SSCs:** Strengthen independent status of SSC, provide further capacity building (3) or other support (e.g. office space); the SSCs to take ownership and not the government.
- **Programme management:** Release funds timely; give autonomy to CO to ensure quick decision making; better visibility; give more detail and continuous information for this program [for the evaluation], closer communication.
- **Other:** Take into account the issue of social security for migrant workers; further exchange on methodologies for big data analytics and sharing of results; the ILO to involve more state structures in charge of managing the diaspora communities; the follow-up of the operational phase be entrusted to national consultants with international coordination and that the range of participants be broadened; establish model TVET centre accessible to all and providing market oriented training using inclusive training methodology in cooperation with government and organisations of persons with disabilities; tools and necessary equipment should be made available to the participants to work on practical terms and favourable conditions for knowledge sharing and documentation; regional alignment of skills for integration of ideas on migration and creative development is recommended; to provide everything in French (not just subtitles); extend the project's support to men to minimise imbalances; the market research should be followed by occupational analysis by certified professionals in order to define the duties and tasks for each occupation; promote them [apprentices] as success stories around the world.

8. Annex

The Annex contains:

- Evaluation Matrix
- Methodological notes
- List of interviewees
- Additional survey results
- Additional M&E information
- Lesson Learned “Work-integrated Learning” (ILO format)
- Lesson Learned “outcome-based funding” (ILO format)
- Good Practice Skills Innovation Facility (ILO format)
- Terms of Reference

The Inception Report as well as the data collection instruments are available on request (EVAL@ilo.org).

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

The following table lists the evaluation questions and the sources foreseen in the inception report.

Relevance	Int G/R	Int C	Survey	M&E	Docs	Comment
1. How was the programme focus (topics, countries, objectives) determined?	■	■				– Including process and analytical framework
2. How does the programme align with relevant national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents?	■	■	■			– Focus on skills dev. and employment – Incl. DWCP and UNSDCF
3. To what extent are the programme interventions relevant to the achievement of ILO P&B outcome 1 and indicator 1.3?	■	■			■	
4. To what extent is the programme aligned with the donor’s priorities?	■	■				– Interview with NORAD and Norway Embassies
Coherence						
5. To what extent are the programme design (objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities) and its underlining theory of change logical and coherent?			■		■	
6. To what extent did the programme build on knowledge developed during the previous phase of the ILO-Norway partnership?	■	■				– Global component only

7. To what extent is the programme compatible with other ILO interventions? (consistency, complementarity and synergies)	■	■				
8. To what extent is the programme compatible with other interventions of other donors? (consistency, complementarity and synergies)	■	■	■			- Focus on World Bank and EU
Effectiveness						
9. Has the programme achieved its objectives and targets?	■	■	■	■	■	
10. What national capacities have been targeted by the programme, and what does evidence suggest has changed?	■	■	/■/		■	- Survey <i>potentially to include question</i>
11. How have the programme's products and knowledge been used by national policy makers and social partners in countries that have participated in the programme or been involved in capacity building activities?	■	■				
12. Is there evidence of outcomes of training on final beneficiaries, e.g. have they been able to find employment or increase their income?	■	■		■		- Just looking at the data might be misleading, given Covid-19, hence also covered in interviews
13. How much innovation did the programme generate?	■	■	/■/			- Survey <i>potentially to include question</i>
14. In which area did the programme have the greatest achievements and in which the least achievements?	■	■	■	■		
15. What were the major factors influencing the success or non-achievement of the programme objectives?	■	■			■	
16. What good practices were developed and tested as part of the programme?	■	■			■	
17. What overarching learnings were identified and were / will be shared?	■	■			■	
18. To what extent has the programme been effective and timely in providing an adapted Covid-19 response and guidance to constituents through the intervention?	■	■				
Efficiency						
19. Have activities supporting the programme been cost effective?	■	■	■			- Elements: quality, timeliness
20. Has the programme's budget structure and financial planning process been conducive to efficiently use, allocate and re-allocate financial resources?	■	■				
21. Was the results framework appropriate, given the expectations of the ILO and the donor and the lightly earmarked approach adopted by the PCA?	■				■	- Interviews with ILO HQ and Norad
22. How effectively did the programme monitor performance and risks?	■	■		■	■	
23. Did the programme receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from its partners?	■	■				

Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters?						
24. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the “lightly earmarked partnership» as applied in the ILO-Norway Programme Cooperation Agreement?	■	■				– Interviews with ILO HQ and Norad
25. To what extent was the programme management structure and approach conducive to achieving objectives?	■	■				
26. How effective was the communication between the programme team, the donor and other stakeholders?	■	■				
Impact						
27. Is the programme on track towards achieving its long-term objective, “more and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects”?	■	■	■	■	■	
Sustainability						
28. To what extent has the programme contributed to increased resilience in the skills system eco-system (such as increased collaboration, capacity, etc)?	■	■				
29. What is the likelihood that the results of the programme will be sustained and utilized after the end of the programme?	■	■				– Incl. ownership and extent to which the eco-system has taken on the purpose of the programme
30. What needs to be done to enhance the sustainability of the programme, strengthen the uptake of the programme outcomes by stakeholders?	■	■	■			

Annex 2: Methodological Notes

Document review

Overall, the ILO provided more than 2,000 files which we structured, categorised and screened for keywords and content. We undertook a comprehensive review of the most pertinent of them, primarily the respective programme documents or concept notes; progress and completion reports; monitoring and evaluation M&E documents; and project budgets. Other documents such as studies (e.g., STED studies) and other deliverables were reviewed selectively, for instance, when prompted to a document during the interviews. The most important other literature that was consulted in the context of this evaluation is directly referenced in the text.

Data assessment

To assess the effectiveness of the programme, we collected, collated, and summarised relevant M&E data and produced tables. Data sources were primarily the progress reports and the data from the Service Tracker pilot in Tanzania, with additional data being provided directly by the programme management. The main products

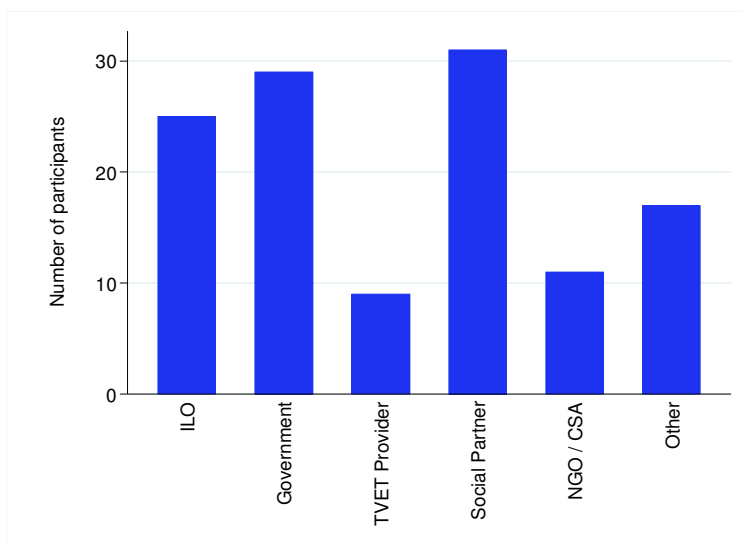
of this work are shown in Chapter 4.3. The respective data was fact-checked by ILO programme managers and national coordinators to ensure that the figures and information have been correctly captured.

Online survey

With a view to collect structured feedback from programme stakeholders and to give voice to persons who might otherwise not have had the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation we designed, programmed, managed, and analysed an online survey. It was implemented in English and French. Following a pre-test, the survey was launched on 4 February 2021 and closed on 7 March 2021, with one reminder being sent 26 February 2021. The survey contained a set of closed questions covering each evaluation criteria with at least one question, including regarding the programme’s alignment with national strategies; results achievement; quality of process, activities, outputs; and likelihood of sustainability. Based on several contact lists that the ILO provided, we collated a single stakeholder list which contained 458 persons, who were then invited to take part in the online survey. 122 persons responded during the four-week period during which the survey was accessible, which is equivalent to a response rate of 27%. Figure 17 shows the number of participants, distinguishing between different types of stakeholders. Altogether, 73 men, 44 women, and 2 persons who did not disclose their gender took part.

The results of the survey were qualitatively and quantitatively assessed and are presented throughout the report.

Figure 17: Number of survey participants per stakeholder group



Note: Other includes other donors and academic institutions. “Social partners” includes 15 respondents from employer (organisations) and 16 from worker organisations.

Interviews

Interviews are our main tools to collect information. We carried out semi-structured interviews with 114 SKILL-UP Programme stakeholders and other informants, covering all the components:

- Ethiopia: 12 interviews
- Ghana: 11 interviews
- Lebanon: 18 interviews
- Malawi: 11 interviews
- Niger: 4 interviews
- Senegal: 6 interviews
- Tanzania: 19 interviews
- Regional: 13 interviews
- Global: 9 interviews
- Programme: 11 interviews

The interviewees were chosen from a pre-selection made by the programme and component managers and supplemented with own contacts. Final beneficiaries were reached out to in the context of the case studies (see below). Due to Covid-19 restrictions and the prime consideration that the health and safety of the local consultants and respondents shall not be compromised, all of the interviews were conducted remotely (online / phone). Whilst most of the interviews were done by a member of our evaluation team, two members attended interviews with key stakeholders or for triangulation purposes.

Case studies

Five case studies (“spotlights”) complement the methods. Their purpose is to show in more detail the changes that took place as a result of the SKILL-UP Programme within the respective context and specifically for ultimate beneficiaries.

Stakeholder workshop

A virtual stakeholder workshop on 10 March 2021 brought together representatives of the ILO and of the Norwegian government to present, discuss and validated the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. The workshop was recorded and shared among those invitees who could not attend. Prior to the workshop an internal presentation provided the opportunity to triangulate the results among the entire evaluation team.

Reporting

In the last work step, we processed and interpreted the findings to deliver the draft evaluation report. Feedback received during the stakeholder workshop were reflected in the draft report, submitted on 17 March 2021. The report adheres to ILO’s evaluation report requirements.

Annex 3: List of interviewees

Interviewee	Institution
Ethiopia	
Alemayehu Zewdie	ILO
Ayalneh Abawa	Ministry of Trade & Industry
Aynalem Tadesse	Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development
Blen Masresha	CBA Garment Factory PLC
Blene Beatamariam	Job Creation Commission
Dawit Moges	Ethiopian Employers' Federation
Hilina Belete	Hilina Enriched Foods Processing PLC
Measho Berihu	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions
Mekeru Denbi	Ethio Agri-CEFT
Nigist Melaku	Federal TVET Agency
Seud Theodros	Ethiopian Employers' Federation
Tsegaye Gebrekidan	Policy Studies Institute
Ghana	
David Dorkenoo	ILO
Dominic Aheto	Tema Technical Institute
Emmanuel Frimpong	Tourism & Hospitality SSB/GHATOF
Frank Kwasi Adetor	ILO
Kwesi Eyison	Tour Operators Union of Ghana
Madam Comfort	TUC
Mary Karim	TUC
Michael Andivi Naah	GIZ
Naa Sejyere	TUC
Rita Kusi Kyeremaa	Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations
Theophilus Zogblah	Council for Technical & Vocational Educational Institute
Lebanon	
Alexandre Schein	UNICEF
Fadi Majzoub	Westford Foundation
Farah Charif	Safadi Foundation
Fouad Hassanieh	Syndicate of Engineers North of Lebanon
Francois el Jurdi	
Georges Fadel	National Employment Office

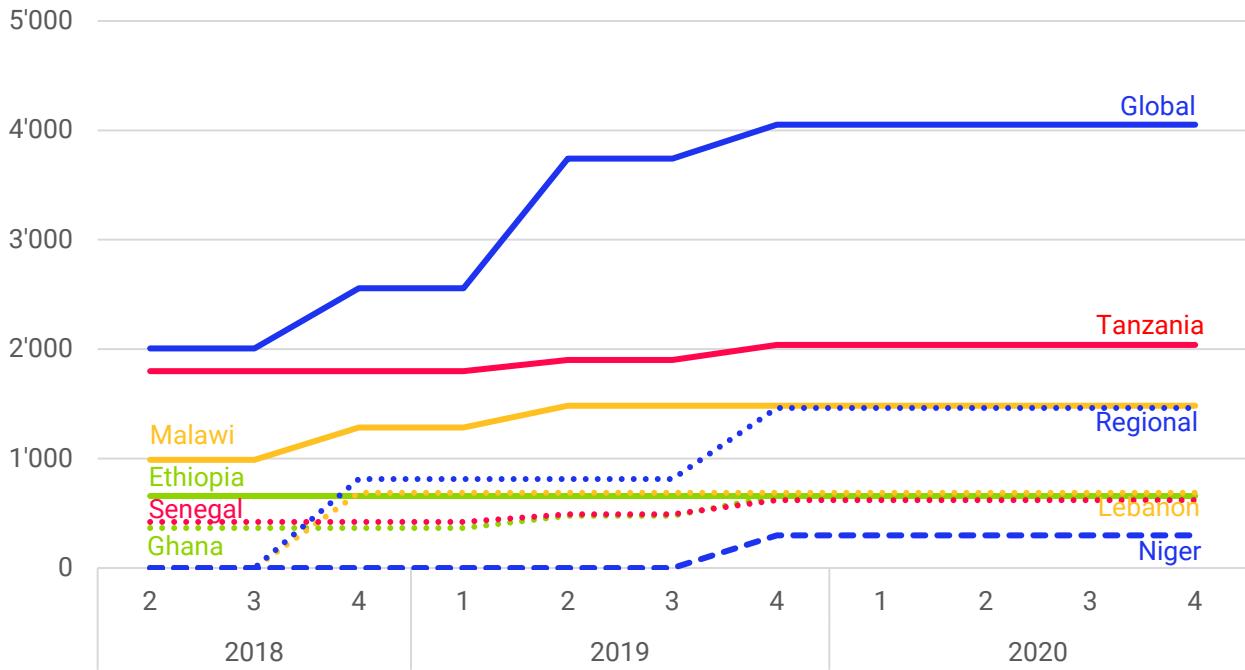
Ghida el Kaissi	ILO
Lamia Yammine	Ministry of Labour
Khaled Hannouf	Safadi Foundation
Kishore Kumar Singh	ILO
Marwah Moulki	Safadi Foundation
Mohamad Abou Haidar	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
Mustapha Said	ILO
Rania Hokayem	ILO
Rayann Kodaih	ILO
Samar Boulos	Safadi Foundation
Simona Rinaldi	European Training Foundation
Tarek Alam	Safadi Foundation
Malawi	
Ancy Banda	Ministry of Agriculture
Augustin Kaliyati	DAPP Mikolongwe Vocational School
Emmanuel Magomero	ECAM
Grace Kunchulesi	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
Jonathan Gama	DAPP Mikolongwe Vocational School
Joseph Chirombo	Ministry of Labour
Joseph Kankhwangwa	Malawi Congress of Trade Union
Matildah Mwandira	Girls Empowerment Society
Mike Ching'amba	Natural Resources College
Modesto Gomani	TEVETA
Stevier Kaiyatsa	Ministry of Finance
Thomas Nkhonjera	Girls Empowerment Society
Niger	
Ali Bozou	TIMIDRIA
Omar Diallo	FAFPA
Samaila Ibrahim	ILO
Souley Sidi Yacouba	FAFPA
Senegal	
Bitilokho Ndiaye	Ministère de l'économie numérique et des télécommunications
Daouda Ka	ILO
Dramane Haidara	ILO
Ilca Webster	ILO
Karmi Cessé	Ministère du Travail

Ousmane Seck	Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Formation Professionnelle, de l'Apprentissage et de l'Insertion
Tanzania	
Aley Nassoro	Zanzibar Institute of Tourism Development
Ameer A. Ameer	Ministry of Labour Zanzibar
Beatrice Mwakyusa	Graduate National College of Tourism
Comoro Mwenda	ILO
Dan Sora Tandasi	Association of Employers
Frank Chalamila	Trade Union Congress of Tanzania
Hafidh Abdu Hamisi	ILO
Hassan	Trainee Apprenticeship Programme
Humaira Juma	Trainee Apprenticeship Programme
Jacob Mwinula	Prime Minister Office - Labour Youth and Employment Development
Khamis Mohammed	Zanzibar Trade Union Congress
Lisenka Beetstra	Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors
Mwita Ong'oso	National College of Tourism
Nahda Abdallah	Trainee Apprenticeship Programme
Salahi S. Smahi	Zanzibar Employers Association
Sharifa Mwinyi	State University of Zanzibar
Stella Ndimubanya	Vocational Education Training Authority
Tecla Barnabas	Graduate National College of Tourism
Yuda Amos	Graduate National College of Tourism
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Aida Awel	ILO
Christine Hofmann	ILO
El Bechir Abd Razagh	Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes, Mauritanie
Honore Minche	Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques, Cameroun
Jean Folly Koumondji	Confédération Syndicale des Travailleurs du Togo
Kassougué Housseinou	ILO
Lotte Kejser	ILO
Mahmoud Khairou	Union des Travailleurs de Mauritanie
Nteba Soumano	ILO
Paulin Sangata	Ministere du Travail Emploi et Formation professionnelle, RCA
Prosper Soou	Ministère de l'Enseignement Technique, de la Formation et de l'Insertion Professionnelles, Togo

Vassily Yuzhanin	IOM
Global component	
Ahmed Abdelmohsen Mohamed Ebrahim	Vocational Training and Employment Center, Egypt
Aicha Lagdas	Agence du Partenariat pour le Progrès, Morocco
Anastasia Fetsi	European Training Foundation
Angela Ayala	Consultant
Audrey Hanard	Dalberg
Bolormaa Tumurchudur-Klok	ILO
Mendy Lerato Lusaa	Domestic Workers Association of Zimbabwe
Nazrene Mannie	GAN Global
Prachi Ubale	e-Zest Solutions Ltd
Programme-wide interviews	
Erling Hess Johnsen	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Gen Nakatomi	ILO
Helge Brochmann	Norad
Michael Watt	ILO
Milagros Lazo Castro	ILO
Paul Comyn	ILO
Peter Rademaker	ILO
Rafael Peels	ILO
Samuel Asfaha	ILO
Sergio Iriarte	ILO
Srinivas Reddy	ILO

Annex 4: Overview additional funding

Table 7: Development of budgets over programme duration

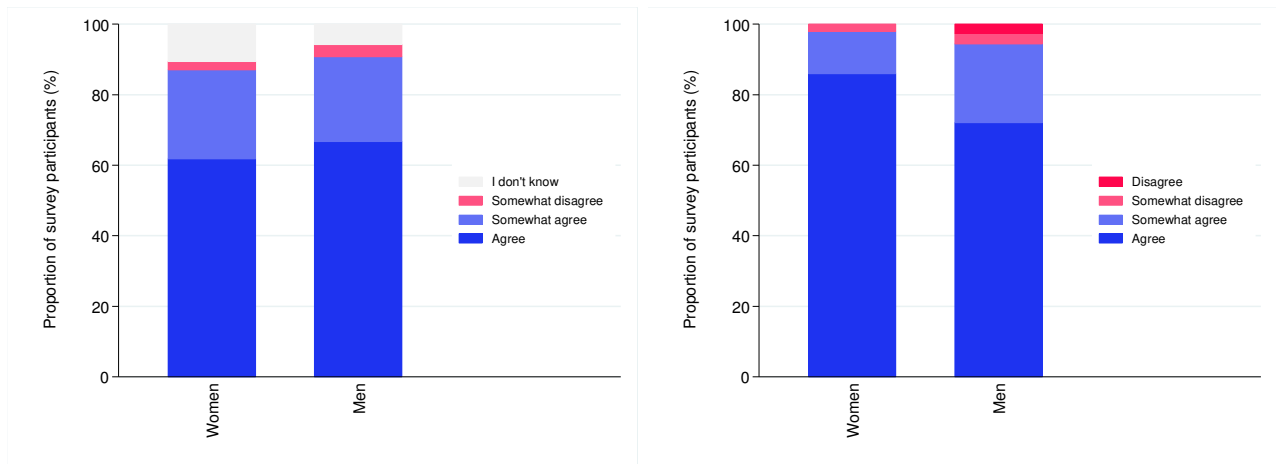


Source: ILO SKILL-UP 2020 Breakdown.xlsx. Global includes global component and programme management costs.

Annex 5: Additional survey results

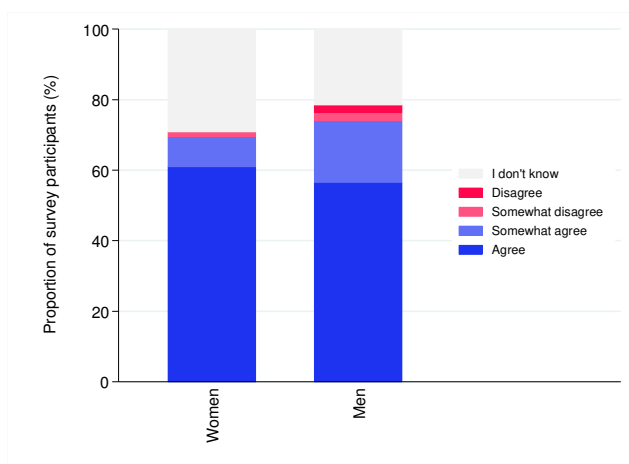
This section contains additional results which are referenced to in the main body of the report, or give otherwise supplementary insights.

Figure 18: Survey: Are the objectives aligned with the priorities of your organisation? (left) Are the activities aligned with the priorities of your organisation? (right) / Gender



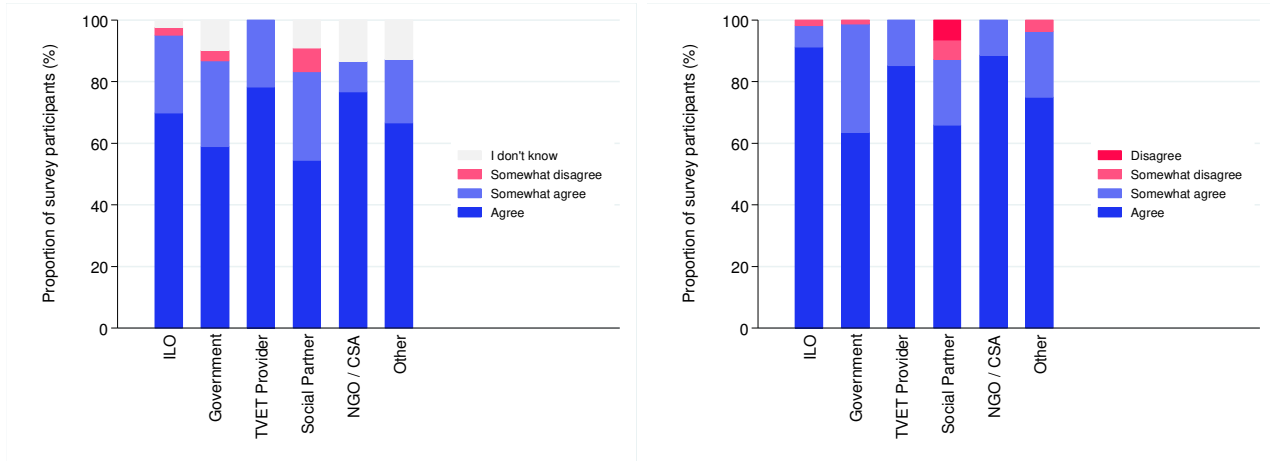
Note: The survey question was: "The objectives of the programme in [insert programme component] are aligned with the priorities and strategies of your organisation. / The activities of the programme in ... are aligned with the priorities and strategies of your organisation." The "I don't know" response was dropped for activities as participants did not observe all activities in a component they took part in. If a participant responded to several components / objectives / activities, all responses are included as separate observations. Observations: 123, 174 (left), 149, 233 (right).

Figure 19: Survey: Are the activities aligned with the priorities of your organisation? (right) / Gender – including "I don't know" (Note: To explore whether women and men were equally involved in activities)



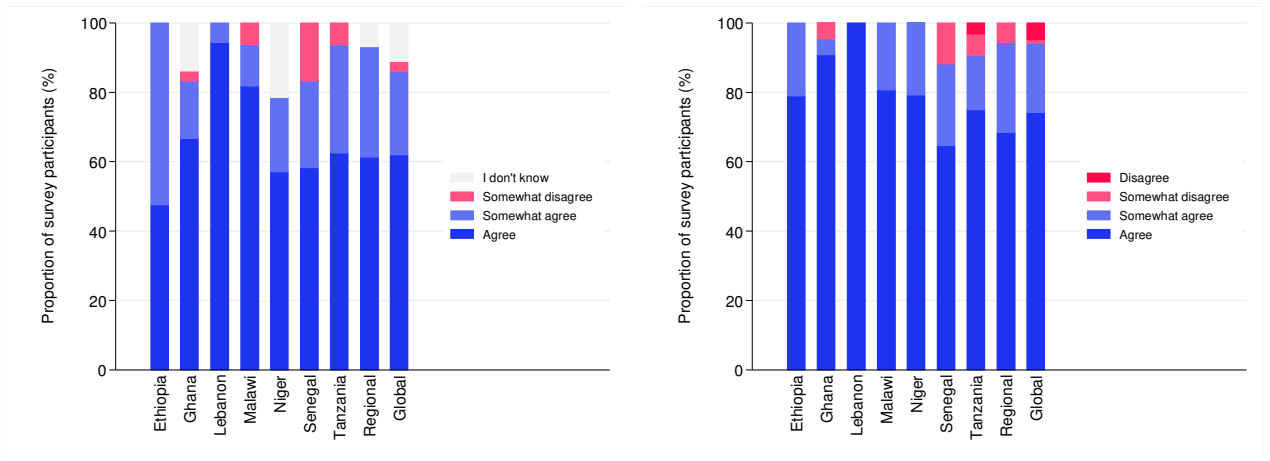
Observations: 210, 297.

Figure 20: Survey: Are the objectives aligned with the priorities of your organisation? (left) Are the activities aligned with the priorities of your organisation? (right) / Role



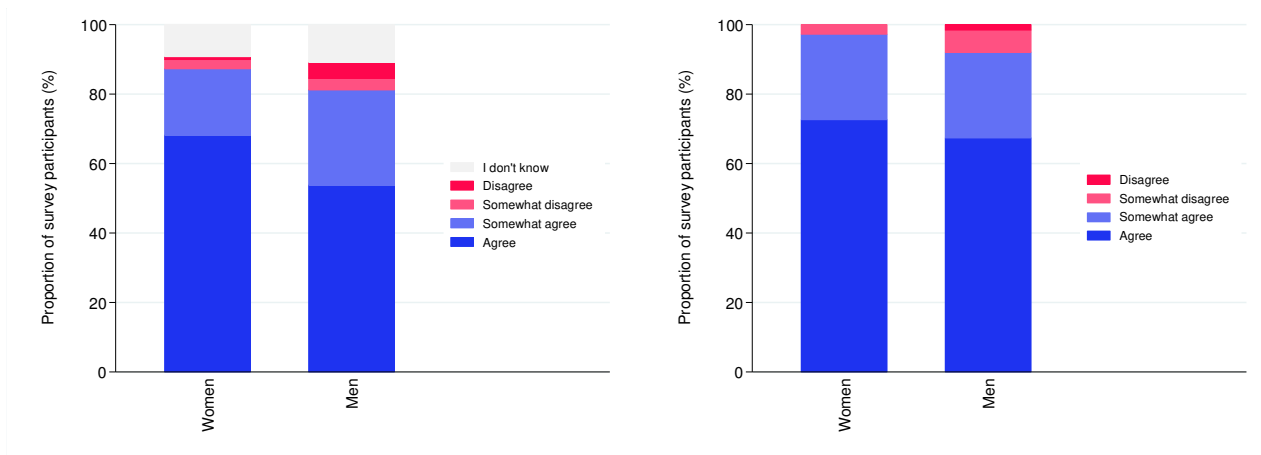
Observations: 83, 61, 23, 66, 30, 39 (left), 115, 77, 34, 94, 35, 28 (right)

Figure 21: Survey: Are the objectives aligned with the priorities of your organisation? (left) Are the activities aligned with the priorities of your organisation? (right) / Component



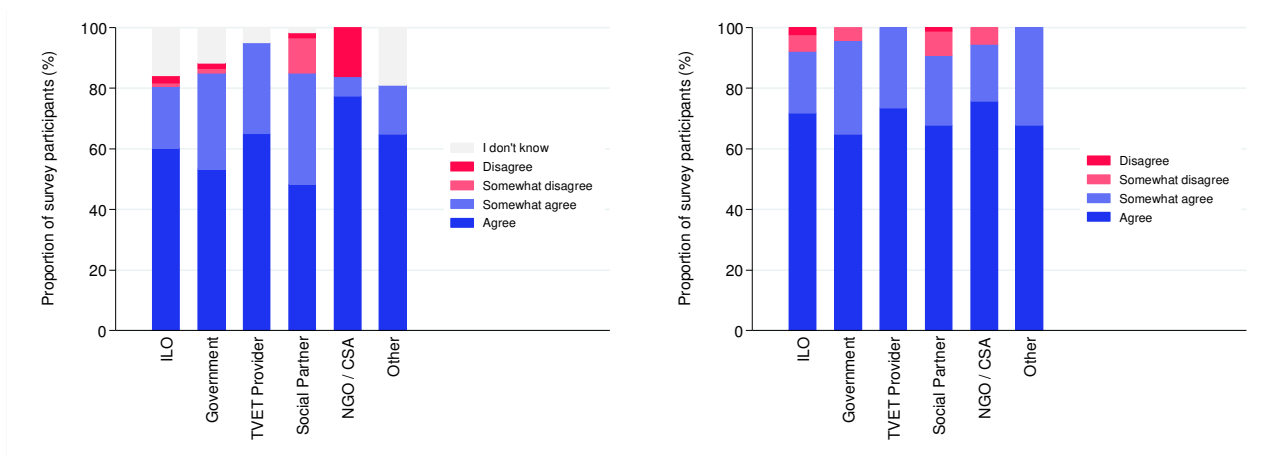
Observations: 21, 36, 18, 33, 14, 12, 16, 44, 100 (left), 38, 44, 12, 57, 24, 17, 32, 54, 105 (right)

Figure 22: Survey: Were the objectives achieved? (left) Were the interventions successful? (right) / Gender



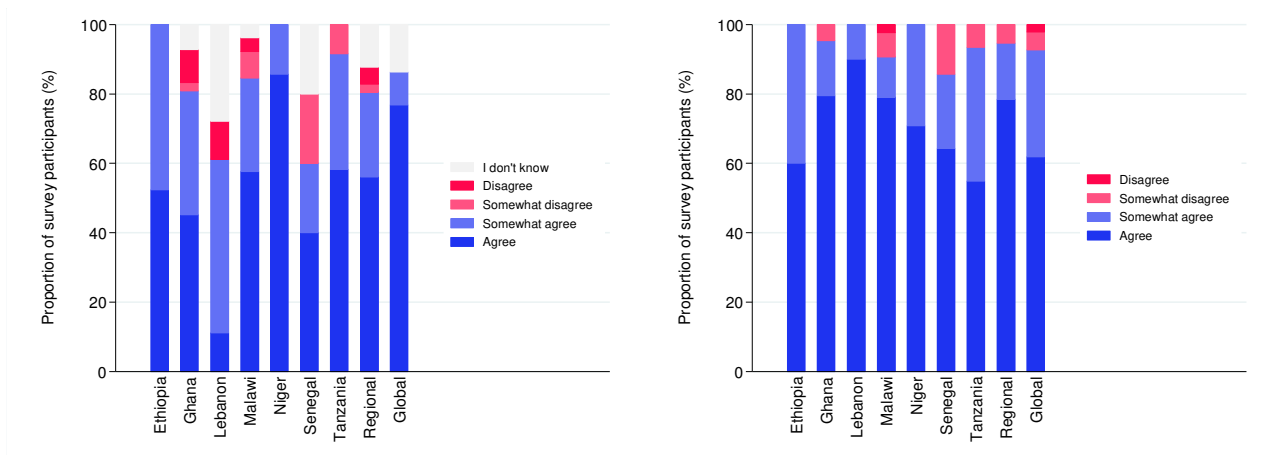
Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The objectives of the programme in [insert programme component] have been achieved. / The activities of the programme in ... were successful." The "I don't know" response was dropped for activities as participants did not observe all activities in a component they took part in. If a participant responded to several components / objectives / activities, all responses are included as separate observations. Observations: 119, 175 (left), 146, 202 (right)

Figure 23: Survey: Were the objectives achieved? (left) Were the interventions successful? (right) / Role



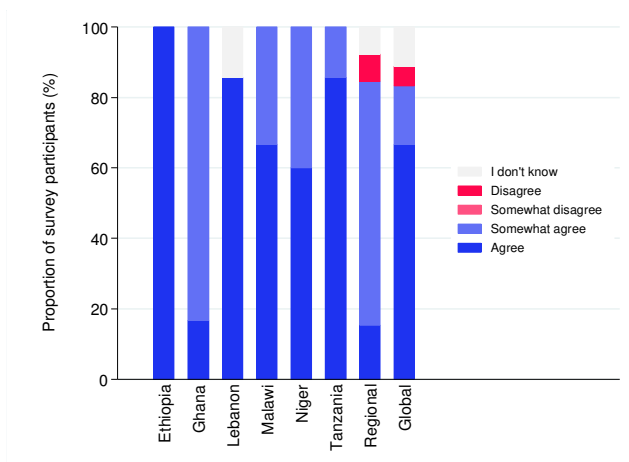
Observations: 88, 60, 20, 60, 31, 37 (left), 89, 71, 34, 87, 37, 31 (right)

Figure 24: Survey: Were the objectives achieved? (left) Were the interventions successful? (right) / Component



Observations: 21, 42, 18, 26, 14, 15, 24, 41, 95 (left), 30, 44, 10, 43, 24, 14, 31, 56, 97 (right)

Figure 25: Survey: Did you get the support you needed? / Component



Note: The survey question was: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Overall, the program has provided the technical support that your organisation or institution required." ILO participants were asked "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Overall, the program has provided the technical support that the constituents ... required." Senegal was dropped because there were only 2 observations. Only stakeholders who participated in a single component are observed, because otherwise it's not possible to assign the responses for this question. Observations: 5, 6, 7, 6, 5, 27, 13, 18.

Annex 6: Additional M&E information

This section contains additional results which are referenced to in the main body of the report.

Table 8: System and policy related results

Component	Target	Achievement	Sector
Ethiopia	SSC established in 1 sector	SSC established in 2 sectors	agro-process. garment/text.
	STED strategic skills recommendations endorsed in 1 sector	Recommendations endorsed in 2 sectors	agro-process. garment/text.
	Development of sector wide core skills strategy and action plan	Development of a core skills framework and RPL system, incl. one entry-level core skills modular training programme	Garment
	Inclusion strategy and action plan for skills development system adopted	Guidelines for TVET institutions to improve access for IDP with disabilities developed	-
Ghana	SSC established in 1 sector	SSC established in 4 sectors	Agric., constr., tourism/hosp., oil and gas
	Sector skills strategy implemented	4 STED strategic recommendations endorsed	See above
	Inclusion strategy and action plan for skills development system adopted	2 studies published	
Lebanon	SSC established in at least 2 sectors	On hold, some preparations implemented	Agriculture, construction
	A model for entrepreneurship education is piloted and proposed for upscaling	Pilot has taken place, assessment not yet	-
	Non-formal market based training approach is piloted for replication	Pilot has taken place, assessment not yet	Construction
Malawi	WiL approach piloted and institutionalised within the TVET system for the informal sector	Yes	Horticulture
	Level 2 and 3 of the horticulture curriculum developed and integrated into TVET system	Yes	Horticulture
	Build capacities on RPL	RPL guidelines developed and endorsed by authorities, various trainings	-
	Simplified STED Guide for Malawi, report on dairy	Yes	Dairy
Niger			
Senegal	A sectoral skills strategy and recommendations for skills development developed with constituents and key partners	Skills dev. strategy and STED strategic recommendations validated by national stakeholders	ICT
	Structuring framework written for at least two supporting subsectors	5 new ICT-related training programmes developed and endorsed by authorities	ICT

	Strategy and Action Plan for Women's Digital Orientation Adopted by Stakeholders	No	ICT
	Priority actions to improve the inclusion of women in TVET and in employment implemented	No	ICT
Tanzania	STED recommendations defined and programmes piloted	Dropped	
	TVET aligned to strengthen apprenticeship programmes	Zanzibar Apprenticeship Development Policy; joint monitoring by tripartite committee; 2 apprenticeship and RPL prog. implemented	Banking, ICT
	Inclusive skills strategies adopted	Strategy postponed. 2 inclusive modular skills training programmes developed and implemented	
Regional	3 subregional mapping reports and 6 country level mapping reports	15 studies published	
	3 regional tripartite consultations to explore future skills partnerships; 5-year implementation plans; joint resource mobilisation strategy	Consultations took place; implementation plans were defined; discussions regarding resource mobilisation ongoing.	
	Follow-up activities in Nigeria / Ghana / Togo	Consultations regarding harmonisation of skills standards	Construction, agriculture
	Follow-up activities in Mauritania/Senegal	RPL online training and piloting activities; equipment for a training center next to a refugee camp; revised actional plan being prepared	
	Follow-up activities in Central Africa	ECCAS workshop replaced with individual country consultations; consultations skills strategy DRC ongoing; consultations sectoral occupation DRC/Congo postponed.	
	Tripartite workshop on skills partnerships IGAD	<i>Cancelled, funds re-allocated</i>	
Global	Research and tools on the impact of global drivers of change on skills needs/systems	Digitalisation report, Big Data Workshop, ToT Certification Programme on Skills Anticipation and STED	
	TVET Systems are mapped	A collection of 36 country profiles	
		Skills Innovation Facility, Service Tracker	
		MOOC) on the design and implementation of quality apprenticeships, as well as a self-guided course on upgrading informal apprenticeships	
		Resource package on modern slavery	

Note: Most important elements (as assessed by the evaluators) mentioned in the ProDoc, the last Progress Report, and the Results Book are listed.

Annex 7: Lesson Learned “outcome-based funding”

Project Title: SKILL-UP

Project TC/SYMBOL: ILO TC/SYMBOL: GLO/18/54/NOR, RAF/18/50/NOR, MWI/18/50/NOR, ETH/18/50/NOR, SEN/18/50/NOR, TZA/18/52/NOR, GHA/18/50/NOR, LBN/18/07/NOR

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal

Date: 31 March 2021

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

<p>Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)</p>	<p>The outcome-based funding approach (alternatively referred to as “lightly earmarked partnership”) makes it easier to responding to constituents’ requests flexibly but needs to be managed to minimise the risk of fragmentation. It can also contribute to reducing administrative overhead.</p>
<p>Context and any related preconditions</p>	<p>The ILO receives “voluntary non-core contributions [that] support specific global, regional and national programmes. This includes earmarked project-based funding with a clear timeline and pre-defined geographic focus and lightly earmarked funding for broader ILO global or country outcomes.”¹ As part of its Results Based Management the ILO reports on its different funding sources.</p>
<p>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</p>	<p>ILO and ILO funding parties.</p>
<p>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</p>	<p>The outcome-based funding can have disadvantages. Several respondents from the ILO cautioned, for instance, that this kind of approach can result in fragmentation as a result of constituents’ requests and affect coherence of a programme.</p> <p>Striking a good balance between responding to the needs that constituents and beneficiaries voice, seizing opportunities where they arise, shifting attention towards another activity rather than sticking with one when it stalls – these ambitions all reinforce the importance of a clear ToC that holds things together (see Recommendation 1).</p> <p>In terms of effectiveness and efficiency the approach requires to reflect changes in the M&E system. It generates transaction costs when budgets are shifted or when additional funding is released during programme implementation.</p>

<p>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</p>	<p>The interviewed representatives of the ILO and Norway generally hold the view that the outcome-based funding approach is an asset. The donor is of the opinion that advantages typically associated with earmarking (for example more control, visibility, goal orientation) can be sufficiently achieved with the outcome-based funding too. Unlike more prescriptive modalities, the approach leaves the ILO the opportunity to design the programme responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries and emerging issues in skills development, leveraging its expertise and outreach. Other advantages relate to the flexibility that the approach allows because, as one interviewee put it, it is “easier to reallocate funds if [the ILO] see things being stalled” and that administrative overhead can be reduced.</p> <p>These views were shared by interviewees from the ILO, stating that it is more difficult to balance the needs and priorities of countries and constituents if the donor is more prescriptive. It was also indicated that in the SKILL-UP Programme, the ILO could focus on those countries that had indicated that skills development is a priority and then had the space to respond to specific needs. Others argued that an arrangement with more earmarking might have stifled creativity. Both Norwegian and ILO interviewees see the long-term partnership that builds on shared objectives as an asset and pre-condition for the “lightly earmarked partnership”.</p> <p>With a view to both supplement and contrast the perceptions and experience of the interviewees, reference is made here to a recent study on the practices and consequences of earmarking in multilateral development cooperation (Weinlich et al. 2020). The study showed that only about 10% of the funds made available to the organisations observed were so called “softly earmarked funds” – the category in which the “outcome-based approach” can be placed. The study concludes that <i>“softly earmarked contributions all score better in terms of efficiency, coordination and ownership”</i> – even though earmarked funds can have positive effects too. Yet the study acknowledges that data and literature on earmarking is still too thin to substantiate the effects.</p> <p>Literature:</p> <p>Weinlich, Baumann, Lundsgaarde, Wolff. Earmarking in the multilateral development system: Many shades of grey, German Development Institute, Bonn 2020</p>
<p>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</p>	<p>See above comment on the need for a strong programme-wide ToC (including Recommendation 1)</p>

ⁱ Source: <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/results-based-management/funding/lang-en/index.htm>

Annex 8: Lesson Learned “Work-integrated Learning”

Project Title: SKILL-UP

Project TC/SYMBOL: ILO TC/SYMBOL: GLO/18/54/NOR, RAF/18/50/NOR, MWI/18/50/NOR, ETH/18/50/NOR, SEN/18/50/NOR, TZA/18/52/NOR, GHA/18/50/NOR, LBN/18/07/NOR

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal

Date: 31 March 2021

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

<p>Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)</p>	<p>For work-based learning schemes to be successful, they need to be adapted to the specific context in which the schemes are implemented, including the structure of the economy or the market challenges that firms face in these contexts.</p> <p>The learning from the Work-integrated Learning (WiL) example highlighted the importance of partners being effectively involved in the process as a condition for the success of the intervention. This included the ability of the farmers to play a leadership role in the farms in which trainees are placed.</p> <p>The review also found that central to the success of this intervention was the extent to which the ILO worked with the TVET institutions and the farmers to build the requisite capacity to implement the programmes. Interviewees commented that the ILO played a facilitating role and was willing to walk the journey with these institutions.</p>
<p>Context and any related preconditions</p>	<p>The WiL intervention of Malawi’s SKILL-UP programme component focused on the agricultural sector, and involved the development of a TVET curriculum at level 2 and 3 of the TVET system (Progress Report). The intervention is divided between theory (25%) and practical experience on farms (75%), with farmers acting as mentors to trainees. The combination of theory and practice in the training process reportedly provided the trainees with an advantage over other graduates and the intervention has been particularly successful in supporting young women to become farmers. The trainee cohort for 2020 was gender balanced, but more female participants have remained in the horticulture sector than male participants (Stakeholder interview, 2021).</p> <p><i>“The intervention has largely impacted the girls. They are very industrious, start small farms, and in no time at all start employing farmers who turn out to be most young boys. And the young boys are eager to work for the female. Considering the power dynamics in Malawi this is a shift.”</i> (Stakeholder interview, 2021).</p>
<p>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</p>	<p>The direct beneficiaries were the women who participated in the WiL. However, the intervention also benefitted those individuals who were subsequently employed in the farms. Further, the intervention also developed the capacity of the TVET Colleges and the farmers to support Work-integrated learning.</p>

<p>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</p>	<p>COVID-19 has created a formidable challenge to the intervention. It has influenced the extent to which the young women have been able to sustain their employment and highlights the need for effective support to be put in place to enable these young women to scale up their farming and generate a sustainable income.</p> <p>Interviewees also suggested that the intervention could have been extended further (it was already extended by a month so that the young women had longer to internalise their learning and establish themselves). This has implications for the effort that is required by the mentors and ways to compensate them for their time needs to be explored.</p>
<p>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</p>	<p>Evidence suggests that when employers engage in a meaningful manner, the TVET provision is improved. Mourshed et al. (2012) found that, in a survey of youth, education providers and employers in 9 countries, companies with regular contact with education providers and young people and willing to offer time, skills and money, are successful in obtaining the talent and skills they need to grow (Partnership for Young London, 2015). This finding - that in order to be effective, skills development strategies must at the very least take account of, but preferably involve, the private sector, is now generally recognised (Dunbar M, 2013). This evidence reinforces the importance of the relationships that have been developed in this intervention as well as the inclusion of theory and practice in an integrated manner.</p> <p>Whilst there have been challenges in terms of this intervention realising its full impact, including the COVID-19 pandemic, there is evidence that the intervention has already developed the skills of the young women and created the relationships and infrastructure that they require. Interviewees suggest that the initial success enjoyed by the young women, and the sense of agency and resilience that they have demonstrated, will allow the young women to rebuild their businesses. Interviewees suggest that this is evidenced by the extent to which these young women continue to collectively discuss ways that they can overcome the challenges that they face. Interviewees commented that the girls have been given the skills to farm so they can improve their standard of living individually, however, they are leveraging on their meetings to discuss issues such as HIV/AIDS, early marriages and other social issues confronting them in their communities.</p> <p>The possibilities of success is also evidenced by experiences elsewhere in Africa, including Kenya and Zambia, that have been documented by the World Bank and that point to the relationship between work-place training and increased incomes.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the programme – if expanded – will support young women to play new roles in the economy and the society in ways that address stereotypes and ultimately change norms.</p> <p>Literature: Mourshed, M., Farrell, D., Barton, D., 2012, Education to Employment: Designing a system that works, McKinsey Partnership for Young London, 2015, From School to Work in London Learning from Germany - education and employers Dunbar M, 2013, Engaging the Private Sector in Skills Development, HEART/ DFID World Development Report, 2018, Learning to Realize Education’s Promise (Ch8 – Build on Foundations by Linking Skills Training to Jobs); World Bank</p>
<p>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</p>	<p>There were a few issues that were raised relevant here including: The need for the intervention to be long enough to both develop the skills of the beneficiaries and support them as they move into their next phase. The budget should allow for the training as well as the start-up costs and other ad-hoc costs that emerge as central to the success of the intervention.</p>

Annex 9: Good Practice Skills Innovation Facility

Project Title: SKILL-UP

Project TC/SYMBOL: GLO/18/54/NOR, RAF/18/50/NOR, MWI/18/50/NOR, ETH/18/50/NOR, SEN/18/50/NOR, TZA/18/52/NOR, GHA/18/50/NOR, LBN/18/07/NOR

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal

Date: 31 March 2021

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)

As part of the SKILL-UP programme, a Skills Innovation Facility was launched, consisting of three elements:

1. "Skills Challenge Innovation Call", to identify innovative ideas,
2. "Skills Innovation Lab", to strengthen the winning idea further, with a view to upscale, and
3. "Skills Innovation Connection Network", which is used to connect the innovators behind short-listed ideas.

These elements together worked towards four goals set for the pilot phase: "1. Sourcing ideas and early-stage solutions that are untested within the ILO; 2. Developing new solutions to entrenched challenges, in partnership with actors in the ecosystem; 3. Sharing solutions and ideas across the organisation, especially by country offices, including existing solutions that can be replicated in other places; 4. Strengthening the culture of innovation within the ILO Skills branch, and where possible, the wider ILO." (Dalberg 2020) These goals are relevant not least in terms of the recommendation of the "Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy and actions for skills development for jobs and growth: 2010–2015" to "encourage innovation by allocating funds for new models".

The SKILL-UP programme evaluation found that the facility in its entirety, and the call in particular, are considered a great success by the interviewees. There is pride in what has been achieved: concerning the numerous entries to the call, the attention received within the ILO and beyond, and the fact the call has been replicated in Cambodia, with other regional offices also showing interest. It should be noted that the evaluation team was not able to observe how the facility changed innovation culture within the SKILLS branch as a long-term objective. Dalberg, which has accompanied the process, confirms the achievements, and has several suggestions how to strengthen the facility further (Dalberg 2020).

Relevant conditions and context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	<p>A basic yet important condition is that the objectives of such a tool – sourcing, developing, and sharing ideas, strengthening the innovation culture – are a relevant need of the replicating unit / department and one which is not yet served sufficiently by other instruments. From our interviews we learned that the call has resulted in numerous entries (almost 500), which would mean that launching such a call has significant resource implications – unless the call is limited to a more specific topic (for the pilot, “skills shortage” was selected). Resources are also needed to support the winning ideas to become effective, visible, and thus scalable projects.</p> <p>Dalberg (2000) mentions that the facility has been “filling in a gap in the existing landscape and that there is strong external interest in partnering with the ILO and leveraging its resources to innovate” pointing to further conditions. The report entails several recommendations to strengthen the facility further, related to the scope of the call, the call evaluation process, technical assistance for the winner, support for other participants, increasing ILO staff engagement, including sourcing innovative ideas from internal teams, and strengthening the culture of innovation within the SKILLS branch, reinforcing sustainability, and the governance structure.</p>
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	<p>The cause-effect relationship is a relatively tight one – at least for the pilot implemented through SKILL-UP – in light of the very specific activities launched, and in absence of other major innovation initiatives. There are of course many other factors which impact on the innovation culture of the SKILLS branch and its staff members, yet none of the magnitude of the Innovation Facility. As explained further above, the effect on the innovation culture could not be explored further in the evaluation.</p>
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	<p>The impact depends on the solutions selected. For the winner of the first call, it is yet too early to tell, given that the Domestic Workers Association of Zimbabwe (DWAZ) is currently implementing activities to strengthen its idea in Zimbabwe itself, and is not yet in the scaling-up stage.</p>
Potential for replication and by whom	<p>There is potential to replicate the call in other departments / branches / regional offices of the ILO. This can be implemented by the ILO itself, or together with other partners, including constituents and other organisations, agencies, initiatives that have innovation on their agenda – be they governmental, non-governmental, private sector ones.</p>
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	<p>The first innovation call focused on the topic “skills shortage”, which is related to Outcome 1 (P&B 2018-19) and Outcome 5 (P&B 2020-21), as well as to many DWCPs and country programme outcomes. The strength of these linkages depends on the specific topics chosen for the call.</p>
Other documents or relevant comments	<p>Concept: Dalberg (2019). ILO Skills Innovation Facility. Research Report.</p> <p>Status Report: Dalberg (2020). ILO Skills Innovation Strategy. Taking stock of the last 18 months.</p>

Annex 10: Bibliography

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The evaluation team screened a selection of the over 2,000 documents the programme management team made available, including internal documents, Excel spreadsheets, and emails. The most important of these were the design documents, the latest Progress Reports and the Results Books (Note: some documents are undated):

ILO (2021). Impact Report SKILL-UP Programme

ILO (2021). SKILL-UP Final Progress Report April 2018 – December 2020

ILO (2020). Skills Partnerships on Migration in the West and Central Africa region: Progress May - Nov 2020

ILO (2020). SKILL-UP Ethiopia: Progress Report April – December 2020

ILO (2020). SKILL-UP Ghana: Progress Report April – December 2020

ILO (2020). SKILL-UP Lebanon: Progress Report July – December 2020

ILO (2020). SKILL-UP Malawi: Progress Report April – December 2020

ILO (2020). SKILL-UP Senegal: Progress Report April – December 2020

ILO (2020). SKILL-UP Tanzania: Progress Report April – December 2020

ILO (2020). SKILL-UP Results Book Final December 2020

ILO (2020). SKILL-UP Programme results

ILO (2019). Additional Funding Proposal December 2019

ILO (2019). Additional Funding Proposal May 2019

ILO (2018). Additional Funding Proposal

ILO. Concept Note Lebanon

ILO. Concept Note Taking Action on Skills (TASK) Initiative

ILO. SKILL-UP Ethiopia ProDoc

ILO. SKILL-UP Ghana ProDoc

ILO. SKILL-UP Global ProDoc (revised version)

ILO. SKILL-UP Malawi ProDoc

ILO. SKILL-UP Senegal ProDoc

ILO. SKILL-UP Tanzania ProDoc

ILO-Norway Programme Cooperation Agreement 2020-21

Association Timidria (2020). Rapport technique d'avancement du projet, 31 décembre 2020.

Association Timidria. Promote legal assistance, emancipation and socio-economic empowerment of communities affected by slavery practices in the regions of Tahoua, Agadez, Tillabéri, Dosso, Maradi and Zinder. Technical Proposal.

Annex 11: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Final Independent Evaluation

ILO-Norway Programme Cooperation Agreement 2018-19

Project title: SKILL-UP Programme: Upgrading skills for the changing world of work

Project DC codes: GLO/18/54/NOR, RAF/18/50/NOR, MWI/18/50/NOR, /ETH/18/50/NOR, SEN/18/50/NOR, TZA/18/52/NOR, GHA/18/50/NOR, LBN/18/07/NOR

Administrative units: SKILLS, CO-Addis Ababa, CO-Dar es Salaam, CO-Lusaka, CO-Abuja, DWT/CO-Dakar, RO/DWT Beirut

Technical unit: SKILLS

Type of evaluation: Final independent

1. INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The SKILL-UP Programme (Upgrading Skills for the changing world of work) is a 26-month, 11,965,808 million initiative funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by the ILO. The objective of the SKILL-UP Programme is to assist member States in preparing their skills systems for the opportunities offered by the global drivers of change. It focuses on helping ILO constituents find national-relevant answers, building from evidence and experience, to the following questions:

- What are the skills needs of a specific economy to ensure future economic success?
- How can a skills system enable the economic potential of trade integration, technological progress, international migration, or other global drivers of change?
- What improvement and reform of the skills development system is needed to better deliver on the skills needs of industry and workers? How can such reform be planned and implemented?
- How should tripartite governance mechanisms be organized and what institutions should participate?
- How can a skills system remove all barriers to access and leave nobody behind? The Programme aims at supporting and monitoring the development of national apprenticeship systems in the framework of the G20 Initiative to Promote Quality Apprenticeships, by developing the capabilities of beneficiary countries to improve the delivery of demand-led training in the technical and vocational education and training system, working in close partnership with the private sector.

The SKILL-UP Programme is designed to assist constituents in finding nationally-relevant answers to the above questions. The project aims to achieve this objective through two channels. First, by working at country level, through daily support to constituents, provision of technical expertise, capacity building, and support to implementation of pilot programmes. Second, by providing global support to country-level work.

The Programme has a two-pronged approach:

- A Global component that focuses on generating innovative knowledge and practical tools on the impact of different drivers of change on skills systems. SKILL-UP Global also contributes to strengthening partnerships, capacity development and advocacy.
- Country components are implemented in the following seven countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Lebanon, Malawi, Niger, Senegal and Tanzania. The SKILL-UP Country Projects have the responsibility to support directly skills systems and their reform. They work in four areas: skills anticipation; skills policies and systems; and skills for social inclusion.

Additionally, the Programme supports dialogue between countries of origin and destination in two Sub-Saharan African regions to forge skills partnerships that make migration more demand-led and better informed.

The project is scheduled to be completed in December 2020 after two years of implementation. As stipulated in the project document, it is subject to a mid-term impact report and an independent final evaluation. The mid-term impact report was completed in April 2020. It provided a description of what was accomplished by the project team, in conformity with the terms of the grant. It included a description of the progress made toward the achievement of the goals of the project and lessons learned.

2. BACKGROUND ON PROJECT AND CONTEXT

The SKILL-UP Programme aims to address fundamental questions entailed by the drivers of changes affecting skills development, such as international trade integration, technological change, large international migration flows and others. The drivers themselves are global-level dynamics, but they have a profound impact on national economies and societies. Each driver entails opportunities for structural transformation, socio-economic progress, and decent work creation. At the same time, they also present challenges that countries will need to face to ensure that such progress materializes. National skills systems are asked to enable this potential for positive change, but the how is often a question. For this reason, the main entry points of SKILL-UP's intervention strategy are fundamental questions such as: How can skills systems enable the benefits of TRADE integration? How can skills systems help economies and individuals benefit from TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE? How can skills systems support fair and smooth labour MIGRATION?

These questions put enormous pressure on skills systems, especially in countries where the system itself is in a process of development. Constituents often ask for ILO assistance to address weaknesses of their TVET, such as low institutional capacity, weak tripartite governance, inefficient inclusion mechanisms, and others. These weaknesses are bound to affect the ability of the system to be effective in the specific context of supporting international trade or harnessing the benefits of technological progress. For this reason, the SKILL-UP intervention strategy looks at overall skills system reform as well.

Skills system reform can help countries take advantage of the economic benefits stemming from global drivers of change, and beyond. In addition, skills can also contribute to the inclusiveness of economic prosperity. A wealth of research shows the linkages between education, skills, income, and decent work. For this reason, the SKILL-UP intervention strategy devotes special attention to inclusion issues. At country level, each project has an inclusion component looking at access to skills development for vulnerable groups. Depending on the context and needs, they include young women, people with disabilities, and workers in the informal sector.

In sum, the project takes as an entry point the assessment of skills needs determined by global drivers of change. This represents one component of country-level interventions. From there, SKILL-UP supports skills system reform, to address weaknesses that limit the system's ability to perform, both in response to the global drivers of change as well as beyond. This work constitutes a second component of field interventions. Finally, work on skills system reform is especially attentive to inclusion issues, since not all workers are equally likely to benefit from new skills opportunities, unless specifically targeted with support. Inclusion is the third component of country-level interventions.

This combination of skills development reform, approached from the perspective of contributing to economic growth (by anchoring skills to the global drivers of change) in an inclusive manner is expected to eventually contribute towards the achievement of ILO P&B Outcome 1 for the biennium 2018-19 , in line with the expectations of the partnership between the ILO and Norway. Both global and field components follow this strategy, though they do so in different and complementary ways.

The project as it stands now is structured around the following results:

A. Global component

Outcome 1: Constituents and other partners access new knowledge of the impact of emerging global drivers of change on skills systems.

Outcome 2: Partnerships on skills development for decent work are informed on how to respond to the impact of drivers of change

Outcome 3: The overall SKILL-UP results and lessons learned are identified, assessed, and available to the public

B. Field-based components

Ethiopia

Outcome 1: Skills supply is better aligned with the needs of international trade sectors.

Outcome 2: TVET system's building blocks are strengthened to support economic expansion and decent job creation

Outcome 3: TVET system's ability to provide equal access to skills development is improved.

Ghana

Outcome 1: Capacity of national stakeholders on skills governance strengthened

Outcome 2: Skills governance in a target sector is responsive to the needs of trade and/or economic diversification

Outcome 3: Skills system inclusiveness informed by sector skills initiatives is strengthened to meet the needs of women and youth

Lebanon

Outcome 1: Improved TVET system governance and inclusiveness in Lebanon

Malawi

Outcome 1: Business organizations, relevant ministries and constituents have stronger capacity to effectively participate in identification of skills needs for trade and private sector growth and contribute to skills development both at national and sectoral level.

Outcome 2: Skills system becomes more responsive to current and future labour market needs.

Outcome 3: Disadvantaged groups and workers in the informal economy have increased access to skills development programmes in tradable areas at community, sectoral and national level

Senegal

Outcome 1: Governance of skills development processes in the digital sector is improved to meet labour market needs through evidence-based decisions / plans

Outcome 2: The skills development system is strengthened through the structuring of a key educational sector and improvement of capacities of national stakeholders concerned with the Technical Vocation Education and Training (TVET) system.

Outcome 3: Gender dimension is integrated into TVET for the digital sector

Tanzania

Outcome 1. Skills supply is better aligned with the needs of international trade sectors

Outcome 2: TVET system that is better aligned to strengthen quality apprenticeship programmes

Outcome 3: Improve access to TVET for women and people with disability

Skills Partnerships on Migration in the West and Central Africa region

Outcome 1: Knowledge is created to inform social dialogue on skills for labour migration in G5 Sahel, ECOWAS and ECCAS countries

Outcome 2: Regional Economic Communities and countries formulate regional strategies to form skills partnerships for the effective management of labour migration

Institutional and Management Set-Up

The project's funds and management of the Global component is centralized and based in the ILO Headquarters in Geneva, while the management and funds of each component is decentralized to the respective countries. The project is located within the ILO Employment Policy Department in Geneva, under the Skills and Employability branch.

The current project management team consists of:

- Project Manager - Global Coordinator
- Two Project officers
- Nine National Project coordinators/ Officers
- Five Administrative Assistants
- Two Communications Officer

The head of the Skills and Employability branch and skills specialists are providing general oversight and technical support.

The project collaborates with ILO Regional Offices, ILO Country Offices and ILO decent work teams. It is also engaged with the Global Apprenticeship Network, national employers and workers' organizations, national ministries of labour, trade and industry and education/TVET, and national industry skills councils and sector education and training authorities where possible.

Summary of project deliverables:

OCTOBER 2018 → SEPTEMBER 2020

Understanding the current and future state of skills:

- 36 skills country profiles developed;
- 2 regional studies on skills and migration produced;
- 1 study on the impact of digitalization on skills needs produced;
- Guidelines and MOOC on apprenticeships developed;
- Resources package on modern slavery.

Promoting an innovation shock:

- New ILO SKILLS Innovation Facility launched;
- Innovation Challenge Call launched;
- Skills Tracker developed;

- Big data workshop organized.

Strengthening national skills systems:

- Sector skills Councils/Committees established
- National stakeholders trained in skills needs anticipation
- STED Strategic Recommendations for skills developed and endorsed.

Delivering quality skills development programmes:

- Young women and men trained on horticulture production
- Young women and men acquired digital skills
- Young women and men participated in apprenticeship programmes
- TVET teachers built their capacity on entrepreneurial skills

Without leaving anyone behind:

- 1 guide and interactive digital assessment tool on Making TVET inclusive for all developed;
- 13 country studies on skills and migration prepared
- 3 skills partnerships on migration in Africa identified and supported
- Low-skilled workers and Refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples trained and/or their skills recognition supported;
- 4 background studies on skills for prevention of modern slavery and reintegration of victims produced;
- 2 global guidelines on skills to combat forced labour through prevention and reintegration developed;
- Capacity building E-learning course on training for prevention and emancipation from forced labour and modern slavery organized with ITC-ILO;
- Women victims of slavery received training.

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

The evaluation will be planned and implemented in accordance with the ILO Evaluation Policy and the ILO Results Based Evaluation Strategy, using the ILO policy guidelines for evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations

(http://www.ilo.ch/eval/Evaluationpolicy/WCMS_571339/lang--en/index.htm)

Purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation is to indicate to the ILO, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its partners the extent to which the project has achieved its aims and objectives and to determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of project outcomes.

The knowledge generated by the evaluation will also feed in the design of future intervention models and contribute to documenting management and delivery approaches.

The main objectives of the evaluation are to:

- a. Assess the relevance of the project design, theory of change and the validity of the assumptions in light of the results achieved;
- b. Identify the supporting factors and constraints that have led to achievement or lack of achievement;
- c. Assess the management and implementation of the project including approach to delivery and partnerships;
- d. Identify, document and publish lessons learned, especially regarding models of interventions that can be applied further; and
- e. Provide recommendations relevant to the future development and implementation of projects of this type.

Clients of the evaluation

The primary clients of the evaluation will be the ILO, the ILO constituents and the donor. Secondary clients will include other development partners active in the same field, other project partners and indirect project beneficiaries.

Scope

The evaluation will cover the entire duration of the programme since its inception. All the stakeholders involved in the project will be assessed.

While the evaluation will cover the entire scope of the project, it is expected that more in depth assessment will be conducted in at least 4 out of the 7 countries covered by the project. The selection criteria for country selection and final list of countries will be validated as part of the inception report.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation utilises the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) evaluation criteria as defined below:

- Relevance and strategic fit – the extent to which the objectives are in keeping with sub-regional, national and local priorities and needs, the constituents’ priorities and needs, and the donor’s priorities for the project countries;
- Coherence: the extent to which other interventions support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa. This includes internal coherence and external coherence, in particular, synergies and fit with national initiatives and with other donor-supported projects and project visibility
- Validity of design – the extent to which the project design, logic, strategy and elements are/ remain valid vis-à-vis problems and needs; the extent to which the flexibility granted to the national chapters of the programme allowed for an improved alignment of the programme with national policies and institutions; the extent to which the methodologies used were adapted to the national and local context;
- Effectiveness - the extent to which the project can be said to have contributed to the development objectives and the immediate objectives and more concretely whether the stated outputs have been produced satisfactorily; in addition to building synergies with national initiatives and with other donor-supported projects and project visibility;
- Efficiency - the productivity of the project implementation process taken as a measure of the extent to which the outputs achieved are derived from an efficient use of financial, material and human resources; Progress towards Impact - positive and negative changes and effects caused by the Project at the sub regional and national levels, i.e. the impact with social partners and various implementing partner organisations; how was impact measured and tracked and is there some measures of impact or unintended (positive and negative effect) with ultimate beneficiaries.
- Sustainability – the extent to which adequate capacity building of social partners has taken place to ensure mechanisms are in place to sustain activities and whether the existing results are likely to be maintained beyond project completion. The extent to which the recipients have the mandate, the capacity, the financial means to replicate the approaches promoted by the project.

In addition, effectiveness of management arrangements and knowledge management as the extent to which lessons learnt during the project were documented, validated, shared with participants, and used for changing methodologies and approaches, is an additional focus.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation will examine the programme and its different components on the basis of specific evaluation questions (final list to be validated as part of the inception phase) and against the standard evaluation criteria mentioned above. The evaluators will start from the proposed set of questions given in the final TORs based on a consultation process and develop a more detailed analytical structure of questions and sub-questions.

1. Relevance and strategic fit

- Are the needs addressed by the project in the various countries and at global level still relevant?
- To what extent are the programme interventions relevant to the achievement of ILO P&B outcome 1 and indicator 1.3?

- To what extent is the programme aligned with the donor's priorities?
- How did the project align with and support national development plans and priorities of the ILO constituents (including DWCPs, UNSDCF, etc) ?
- Was the demand for the project outcomes, which provides the rationale for the project intervention and country selection, relevant at national levels?
- Are the activities and outputs of the SKILL-UP programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Does the design of the SKILL-UP project reflect adequate background knowledge on the kind of analytical frameworks that currently exist pertaining to the promotion Skills development?
- To what extent does the project design take into account synergies and fit with national initiatives and with other donor-supported projects?
- To what extent has the programme been repurposed based on results from COVID-19 diagnostics, UN socio-economic assessments and guidance, ILO decent work national diagnostics, CCA, or similar comprehensive tools?
- To what extent has the programme provided a timely and relevant response to constituents' needs and priorities in the COVID-19 context?

2. Validity of design

- Was the results framework appropriate, given the expectations of the ILO and the donor and the lightly earmarked approach adopted by the PCA?
- To what extent are the project design (objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities) and its underlining theory of change logical and coherent?
- To what extent did the project build on knowledge developed during the previous phase of the ILO-Norway partnership?
- How realistic were the risks and assumptions upon which the project logic was based?
- How appropriate and useful are the indicators used to assess the progress and verify the achievements of the project?

3. Effectiveness

- Has the project achieved its objectives and targets ?
- How have the project's products and knowledge been used by national policy makers and social partners in countries that have participated to the project or been involved in capacity building activities?
- To what extent do the government and social partners (workers and employers organisations) demonstrate an increased capacity as a result of the programme?

- Is there evidence of outcomes of training on final beneficiaries, e.g. have they been able to find employment or increase their income ?
- How effective has the project been, within the limits of its resources and work-plan, in ensuring that its results are utilized in the most appropriate manner for policy dialogue, engagement and improvement?
- Are there lessons to be learned from countries that have been more engaged in the project? Can such lessons be replicated in other countries in similar projects?
- What were the major factors influencing the success or not of achieving the Project objectives?
- What national capacities have been targeted by the project, and what does evidence suggest has changed?
- How effective has the communication strategy been at disseminating the project's products and knowledge? What evidence exists regarding its reception?
- In which area did the project have the greatest achievements and the least achievements?
- To what extent did the implementation of the project influence policy formulation and implementation?
- To what extent did the project address the impact of the Covid crisis and contributed to the ILO policy response

4. Efficiency of resource use

- Have activities supporting the project been cost effective?
- Given the distribution of project's human and financial resources across outputs and the progress made on each of them, are such resources efficiently allocated?
- Has the project's budget structure and financial planning process ever represented an obstacle to efficiently use, allocate and re-allocate financial resources?
- Has the project managed to synergise with other activities of the ILO, develop partnerships for leveraging impact or create efficiency gains?
- To what extent has the project leveraged new or repurposed existing financial resources to mitigate COVID-19 effects in a balanced manner? Does the leveraging of resources take into account the sustainability of results?

5. Effectiveness of management arrangements

- Did the project receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from its partners? Did it receive adequate support from the ILO offices in the field and the responsible HQ units in Headquarters?
- To what extent was the project management structure (global with decentralised country components) conducive to achieving objectives?
- How effective was the communication between the project team, the donor and other stakeholders?

- How effectively did the project monitor project performance and results?
- How effective was the management approach?
- How far did the project monitor and control risks? How effective was the project in mitigating and adapting to the impact of the Covid crisis?
- To what extent has the programme been effective and timely in providing an adapted COVID-19 response and guidance to constituents through the intervention?

6. Impact and sustainability of results

- What contribution did the project make towards achieving its long term objective?
- How effective and realistic is the exit strategy of the project?
- What is the likelihood that the results of the project will be sustained and utilized after the end of the project?
- What needs to be done to enhance the sustainability of the project, strengthen the uptake of the project outcomes by stakeholders?
- Have the stakeholders taken ownership of the project since the design phase?

5. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology is expected to use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, to be defined and approved as part of the evaluation inception report.

The evaluation methodology should include examining the interventions' Theory of Change, specifically in the light of logical connect between levels of results, its coherence with external factors, and their alignment with the ILO's strategic objectives, SDGs and related targets, national and ILO country level outcomes. The methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods, including those related to representation of specific group of stakeholders.

Envisaged steps include the following:

1. Desk Review: Review of programmes and its components materials, publications, data, among others.
2. Inception meeting with the programme team and technical backstopping unit in ILO HQ.

The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority assessment questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final evaluation report. The following topics will be covered: project background and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, list of stakeholders, criteria for country selection, outline of the inception and final report.

3. Initial interviews through conference call or surveys with key stakeholders including (but not limited to) representatives from partners and entities who have participated in project activities.
4. Submission of an Inception Report with the final methodology and Work Plan. The Inception Report and the Work Plan will be subject to approval by the Evaluation Manager, and it will indicate the steps/phases and dates of the process in which the Evaluation will take place.
5. Additional documents review and analysis, data collection prior or in parallel to the evaluation interviews as required by the proposed methodology.
6. Evaluation interviews (individual or collective) with stakeholders:
7. Debriefing with the ILO and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs after submission of the draft final report.

Implications of the COVID crisis on the evaluation

The current COVID-19 pandemic severely restricts the mobility of staff and consultants. Based on the matrix developed by the ILO on the Constraints and risks as measured against the criticality of the evaluation to the ILO, the global component evaluation will be conducted in a totally remote way, relying on online methods such as online surveys, telephone or online interviews, whereas for some country components it will be feasible to use a hybrid face to face/remote approach for collecting data. ILO Evaluation Office guidance on the evaluation process during Covid19 is available here:

https://www.ilo.org/eval/WCMS_744068/lang-en/index.htm.

When and where relevant, evaluation questions will also be guided by the ILO protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's Covid-19 response measure through project and programme evaluations, available at:

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf

The evaluation manager may propose alternative methodologies to address the data collection that will be reflected in the inception phase of the evaluation developed by the evaluation team. These will be discussed and require detail development in the Inception report and then must be approved from the evaluation manager.

Cross-cutting Themes

The gender dimension should be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. Moreover, the evaluator should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and gender and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve lives of women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.

The evaluation should also include International Labour Standards, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology.

6. CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELIVERABLES

This evaluation will comply with UN norms and standards for evaluation and ensure that ethical safeguards concerning the independence of the evaluation will be followed. UNEG code of conduct will be followed: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

The consultant should not have any links to project management, or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation. The evaluator will abide by the EVAL's Code of Conduct for carrying out the evaluations: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_649148.pdf

The contractor (lead evaluator) will report to the Evaluation Manager appointed by the ILO in line with the process of managing and implementing independent evaluations as overseen by the ILO independent Evaluation Office. Any technical and methodological matters should be discussed with evaluation manager. The Evaluation will be conducted with logistical support and services of the Project Secretariat and the ILO Office in Geneva.

The contractor will be responsible for:

- The design, planning and implementation of the evaluation and the write-up of the evaluation report, using an approach agreed with ILO, and for delivering in accordance with the ILO's specifications and timeline;
- Drafting of a report on lessons learned and good practices collected during the desk review;
- Consulting and liaising, as required, with ILO and any partners to ensure satisfactory delivery of all deliverables;
- Making themselves available, if required, to take part in briefings and discussions, online or, if judged necessary, at the ILO Geneva Office or other venue, on dates to be agreed, in line with the work outlined in these ToRs.
- If any, supervise the other team members which will be contracted individually by the ILO and ensure quality assurance for their deliverables.

The contractor should provide the following deliverables:

Deliverable 1: Inception report with methodology (not more than 20 pages excluding the annexes)

Upon the review of available documents and an initial discussion with the project management. The inception report will:

- Detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures.
- Elaborate the methodology proposed in the TOR with changes as required;

- Set out in some detail the data required to answer the evaluation questions, data sources by specific evaluation questions, (emphasizing triangulation as much as possible) data collection methods, and sampling
- Selection criteria for countries to be visited ;
- Selection criteria for individuals for interviews (as much as possible should include men and women);
- Detail the work plan for the evaluation, indicating the phases in the evaluation, their key deliverables and milestones;
- Set out the list of key stakeholders to be interviewed and the tools to be used for interviews and discussions;
- Set out the agenda for the stakeholders workshop;
- Set out outline for the final evaluation report;
- Interview and focus group guides.

Deliverable 2: Draft evaluation report

To be submitted to the evaluation manager in the format prescribed by the ILO http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_mas/--eval/documents/publication/wcms_165967.pdf

Deliverable 3: Presentations of draft report

A presentation should be prepared for the ILO and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the draft report, to be used during the debriefing (via videoconference).

Deliverable 4: Final evaluation report with executive summary

To be submitted to the evaluation manager. The quality of the report will be determined based on quality standards defined by the ILO Evaluation Office. The report should be professionally edited; The contractor will be responsible for scheduling all meetings with stakeholders.

7. ILO RESPONSIBILITIES

The ILO evaluation manager will have the following responsibilities:

- Review the evaluation questions with the evaluation team and liaise with concerned stakeholders as necessary.
- Monitor the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate and in such a way as to minimize bias in the evaluation findings;
- Review the evaluation report and provide initial comments;

- Circulate the draft evaluation report to all concerned stakeholders;
- Collect comments on the draft from all stakeholders and forward to the evaluator;
- Liaise with Skills that work project staff whenever their engagement is needed to fulfil the requirements above.
- Liaise with the Departmental Evaluation Focal Point for the EMPLOYMENT department and the ILO Evaluation Office on issues regarding the management of the evaluation

The project team will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide all necessary information, documents and contact lists available;
- Facilitate the scheduling of meetings with key stakeholders when necessary.

8. COMPLETION CRITERIA

Acceptance will be acknowledged only if the deliverable(s) concerned are judged to be in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract, to reflect agreements reached and plans submitted during the contract process, and incorporate or reflect consideration of amendments proposed by ILO.

Completion and acceptance of the final report will be based on the criteria set out by the ILO Evaluation Office, which are outlined in a note accessible at the following link:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_165968.pdf

Gender equality issues shall be explicitly addressed throughout the evaluation activities of the consultant and all outputs including final reports or events need to be gender mainstreamed as well as included in the evaluation summary (please see ILO Evaluation Guidance on Integrating gender in monitoring and evaluation of projects:

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

The evaluation approach should also consider the ILO normative and tripartite mandate, using ILO Evaluation Office guidance Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate: http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_721381/lang--en/index.htm

Deliverables will be regarded as delivered when they have been received electronically by the Evaluation Manager and confirmed acceptance of them.

9. SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All draft and final outputs, including supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible with Word for Windows. All data and information received from the ILO for

the purpose of this assignment will be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to the ILO. Use of the data for publication and other presentation can only be made with the agreement of ILO. Key stakeholders can make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

10. TIMING OF THE EVALUATION

The Final Evaluation is expected to be carried out between November 2020 and February 2021. Final completion of the evaluation is set to March 2021.

11. EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The independent final evaluation will be conducted by a lead international evaluator, who will work with the support of a team of consultants.

This call for expression of interest is open to:

- International consultants interested in the role of lead evaluator;
- Evaluation consultancy firms or teams of consultants already organized under the leadership of an evaluator.

In case a candidate from an individual submission is chosen as lead evaluator, the ILO will select additional consultants to perform specific tasks in consultation with the lead evaluator.

Gender balance in team composition is required for submissions by teams of consultants.

The selection of the consultant (or team of consultants) will be based on the qualifications and experience of potential candidates as described in their expression of interest (Eoi) for the assignment.

The lead evaluator should have:

- Master's Degree in social sciences, economics, development studies, evaluation or related fields, with demonstrated strong research experience;
- A minimum of 10 years' experience in conducting projects and programme evaluations, with demonstrated experience in evaluating skills development-related programmes.
- Proven experience with program evaluation, logical framework approaches and other strategic planning approaches, M&E methods and approaches (including quantitative, qualitative and participatory), information analysis and report writing;
- Full proficiency in English with working knowledge of French.

- Knowledge of the ILO mandate, tripartite structure and technical cooperation activities, as well as experience with the UN System;
- Excellent communication, interview and report writing skills;
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines.
- Good interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills; and
- Facilitation skills and ability to manage diversity of views in different cultural contexts.