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TRADE IMPACT
FOR GOOD

2016 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report

ITC EVALUATION UNIT



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Acronyms

AESR	Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report
AfT	Aid for Trade
BIR	Business Information Register
CABES	Commerce et Artisanat pour le Bien-Etre Social, Burkina Faso
CBTPSD	Capacity Building towards Trade and Private Sector Development Programme
DCP	Division of Country Programmes
DD	Difference-in-Differences
DFID	Department for International Development
DMD	Division of Market Development
DPS	Division of Programme Support
EU	European Union
EFI	Ethical Fashion Initiative
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
ES	Export Strategy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
ITC	International Trade Centre
IVATEX	Initiatives de Valorisation du Textile Artisanal, Burkina Faso
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System
KBS	Kenya Bureau of Standards
MOITE	Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment, The Gambia
MTR	Mid-term Review
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute, The Gambia
NAWFA	National Women Farmers' Association, The Gambia
NTF II	Netherlands Trust Fund Programme Phase II
NTM	Non-Tariff Measures Programme
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OIF	Organisation internationale de la Francophonie
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PACIR	Programme d'Appui au Commerce et à l'Intégration Régionale
PCME	Performance Compliance Monitoring and Evaluation
PCR	Project Completion Report
PIRT	Promoting Intra-regional Trade in Eastern Africa
RCT	Randomized Control Trial
SCED	Sector Competitiveness and Export Diversification Project

SECO	Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SIDO	Small Industry Development Organization, Tanzania
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
TGSB	The Gambia Standards Bureau
TISI	Trade and Investment Support Institution
ToC	Theory of Change
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WATP	Women and Trade Programme Phase I
WBE	Women-Based Enterprises
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZBS	Zambia Bureau of Standards

I. Background and methodology

1. In line with the good practice of facilitating institutional learning, promoted by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the Evaluation Unit presents in its Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report (AESR) a synthesized learning view based on interpreting key messages taken from recently completed evaluations. This is the fourth consecutive edition since 2013. The UNEG/ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Professional Peer Review of the ITC evaluation function (2016) confirmed the quality of past AESRs, and commended their value in enhancing learning and accountability across the organization.
2. The clients for the AESR are, in a broad sense, development practitioners and policy-makers in the Aid for Trade (AfT) development sector. In operations, the Evaluation Unit focuses on communicating the compacted learning messages to management and staff, representatives of member states, trade support practitioners within the World Trade Organization (WTO) and United Nations (UN) system, and other stakeholders, with an aim of including evaluation-based learning in decision-making and strategic planning.
3. To broaden the learning scope and enhance a common understanding with ITC supporting organizations, the AESR 2016 includes a section on learning from external evaluations of ITC operations (Chapter IV). These evaluations are usually commissioned by funders and cover projects fully or partly implemented by the ITC. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reviews of ITC operations are also included and reflected in learnings as they complement the work of evaluations, covering JIU recommendations issued to ITC from 2012 to 2015¹ (Chapter VI and Annex 1).
4. As seen in past editions, the other sections include: an analysis of the progress in evaluation culture and function development (Chapter II), key messages taken from ITC's evaluations (Chapter III), the implementation status of evaluation recommendations (Chapter V), and a learning theme related to how the ITC programmatic approach is clarifying accountability issues and how this development is enabling impact evaluation, which is *inter alia* based on the findings of the ongoing evaluation of the Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) programme and the impact evaluation of the NTF II programme (Chapter VII).
5. With regard to the evaluations covered, there are six evaluations and one mid-term-review (MTR)²:
 - The evaluations completed by the ITC between May 2015 and April 2016 are as follows:
 - Evaluation of the Women and Trade Programme Phase I, (WATP) (UK-funded),
 - Final evaluation of the Sector Competitiveness and Export Diversification in the Gambia (SCED) programme (EIF-funded), and,

¹ JIU is a UN system-wide organization that looks at cross-cutting issues across the UN system, to secure administrative efficiency and to achieve greater coordination between UN organizations, including the ITC.

² In ITC, a Mid-Term Review is a form of informal self-evaluation. It is a management tool, often considered effective for delivery managers for the purposes of reviewing performance at a critical point of the project cycle and integrating learning through redesigns or adjustments to project implementation. The MTR can also serve as a preparation for a final evaluation.

- Mid-term Review of the Promotion of Intra-regional Trade in Eastern Africa Project (PIRT), (Finland-funded).
- The external evaluations completed last year:
 - Ethical Fashion Initiative, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali (SECO-funded),
 - Support to Trade and Private Sector Development Project, Zimbabwe (EU-funded),
 - Capacity Building towards Trade and Private Sector Development programme, Malawi (EU funded), and,
 - Programme d'Appui au Commerce et à l'Intégration Régionale (PACIR), Côte d'Ivoire (*Support programme for commerce and regional integration, Côte d'Ivoire*) (EU-funded)

II. Enhancing an evaluation culture

6. An evaluation culture is gaining momentum at ITC, as witnessed by the high acceptance of the Evaluation Policy (2015), increasing support of management and staff for the evaluation function, growing demand of evaluations of programmes/projects, and more frequent consultations with clients on evaluation matters. In light of the demands, the Evaluation Work Programme 2016 presents an ambitious set of evaluations tasks to be completed.
7. **Evaluation Policy 2015.** As per the recommendations provided by the Independent Evaluation of ITC (2014) and the OIOS Evaluation of ITC (2015), the Evaluation Unit prepared an updated Evaluation Policy in 2015, which was peer reviewed at ITC and among the evaluation communities. The quality of the new policy was endorsed and commended by the aforementioned UNEG/OECD-DAC Professional Peer Review (2016), considering it, as comprehensive and in line with good practices.³
8. The Evaluation Policy is aligned with ITC corporate strategies for the measurement and demonstration of results and impact. It represents a significant advancement in ITC evaluation culture, particularly in terms of:
 - emphasizing evaluation-based learning and consensus building,
 - indicating the process of preparing evaluation programme and budget,
 - providing guiding principles to maintain independence and avoid conflict of interests,
 - standardizing and operationalizing ITC evaluation criteria,
 - mainstreaming evaluation criteria on women's empowerment and environmental impact,
 - promoting evaluation practice as a capacity building process for staff, and,
 - enhancing follow up on evaluation recommendations, communication, outreach and partnership.
9. **Two sets of evaluation operational guidelines.** With the enhanced 2015 Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Unit has started to prepare Operational Guidelines for Independent Evaluation and Impact Assessment, and Guidelines for Self-Evaluation. This is a three-tier coverage initiative with a combination of independent evaluation, self-evaluation, and project completion report (PCR). The Guidelines for independent evaluations and self-evaluations will be implemented accordingly

³ web link: <http://www.intracen.org/itc/about/how-itc-works/about-itc-evaluation/>

for enhancing quality, and the Evaluation Unit will conduct quality validation on self-evaluation and PCR.

10. To keep abreast of evaluation development in the UN system and international organizations, the Evaluation Unit conducted an extensive literature review, incorporated the good practices of ITC and other organizations in the draft Guidelines, deliberated on the balance between methodological rigor and feasible utility in operations, and solicited feedback from peers. The UNEG/OECD-DAC Professional Peer Review of the ITC Evaluation Function has also lent a hand on advising and deliberating the matters addressed by the two draft operational guidelines.
11. **Evaluation advisory services.** Within ITC, the Evaluation Unit has been increasing its activities to support the management and staff in better use of evaluations in learning and accountability, although there is significant space for improving advisory services such as providing training on Evaluation Policy and related guidelines. In recent years, demand for evaluations has been increasing steadily. The need for incorporating evaluation learning into planning, intervention design, programme management, reporting results to partners and clients is gaining momentum. One example is that the Mid-term Review of the PIRT project, supported by the Evaluation Unit, provided timely feedback on progress and results to stakeholders including donors and clients and provided information on the ongoing operations. The Evaluation Unit extended outreach to operational managers and staff regarding the use of evaluation.
12. **Results measurement practices.** In 2015, Management tasked the Evaluation Unit to analyze the quality of existing results measurement and assessment tools at ITC, and identify good practices. The study covered the results measurement and assessment tools used by a sample of programmes and projects, including surveys, assessments, feedback forms and questionnaires. It confirmed that the examined results measurement tools offered great potential to further support the ITC Results Assessment Frameworks, and presented learning on these programmes and projects have measured their contribution to ITC development goals.
13. The main lessons learned are that: these results measurement tools should include indicators of long-term results in line with ITC corporate results framework, and the data already collected using these results measurement tools could be better analyzed, to enable ITC to understand how and why these changes happened along the results chain. There are cases where the projects have collected rich data on the results on beneficiaries, but not fully analyzed it to help understand whether and how ITC has contributed to development causes. The lessons highlight the need for the Evaluation Unit to provide customized technical guidance to project teams in refining the result-measurement tools.

III. ITC evaluations

14. The Evaluation Unit completed two evaluations between May 2015 and April 2016, and supported one project self-evaluation. The implementation time of the three projects covered different periods in the past six years, including: Women and Trade Programme Phase I (WATP) 2010-2012; Sector Competitiveness and Export Diversification in The Gambia (SCED) 2012-2015; and Mid-term Review of Promoting Intra-regional Trade in Eastern Africa (PIRT) 2014-2016.
15. **Evaluation of the Women and Trade Programme Phase I (WATP).**⁴ The evaluation of the WATP is an independent evaluation of the performance and results of the programme in 2010-2012, undertaken by a consultancy firm and managed by the Evaluation Unit. As the WATP **Phase II** has made significant progress since 2013, the evaluation also covered selected ongoing activities as references for analysis, not for evaluation judgment.
16. The Programme designed and implemented six interventions including one mainstreaming strategy at ITC and five projects in countries: (i) delivery of training and other internal capacity building to mainstream gender in trade projects and programmes in ITC, (ii) development of the Global Platform for Action on Sourcing from Women to link women entrepreneurs, through their associations, with corporate and institutional buyers, (iii) support to women entrepreneurs in the coffee sector in Africa, (iv) support to women entrepreneurs in the jewelry sector in Mexico, (v) support to women entrepreneurs in the textile and clothing sector in Arquipa in Peru, and, (vi) support to women entrepreneurs in alpaca in Peru to enter the US market.
17. **Final evaluation of the Sector Competitiveness and Export Diversification in The Gambia (SCED).**⁵ This project was funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF). The evaluation was conducted by a national evaluation service provider, and the the evaluation report was quality-reviewed by the Evaluation Unit. The findings and recommendations contained in the final evaluation of SCED built on the midterm evaluation completed in early 2015; the latter was included in the AESR 2014-2015.
18. The project included three components: (i) Sector strategies and quality enhancement for cashew nut, groundnut, and sesame sectors, (ii) Sector cross-cutting assistance in the area of trade information, to enable the private and public sectors to access relevant trade related information, and, (iii) Inclusive tourism development opportunity study, to identify and assess the potential for the development of inclusive tourism activities.

⁴ This three-year intervention has been funded mainly by DFID, with contributions from other funders as well, for a total cost for Phase I of about USD 5.8 million. The target groups were women entrepreneurs, women owned small businesses, and women working in export-oriented value chains.

⁵ The SCED has been funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Trust Fund, Tier 2 for implementation in 2012-2015. It has been implemented with support from the National Implementation Unit housed in the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional integration and Employment (MOTIE). It has a budget of USD 2.3 million. Other sources of funding included in-kind contributions from the Government in the amount of 413,500 USD.

19. **Mid-term Review of the Promoting Intra-regional Trade in Eastern Africa Project (PIRT).**⁶

This MTR was conducted by the Project Management, with technical support from the Evaluation Unit. The draft MTR report was reviewed by the Project Steering Committee members and quality-reviewed by the Evaluation Unit. This MTR also served as a preparation for the final evaluation of PIRT, due to take place in 2016.

20. The expected project outcome at the enterprise level is increased export competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in selected agro-food value chains. At the Trade and Investment Support Institution (TISI) level, the planned outcome is enhanced performance for trade and business support service providers in selected agri-food value chains at national and regional levels.

21. **Performance and results: relevance.** The high relevance of ITC solutions to countries' trade development demands has been a consistent and notable conclusion in the three evaluations.

22. The evaluation of WATP concluded that the relevance of the Programme was high in terms of its alignment with ITC strategic objectives, contribution to ITC comparative advantage in the trade and women's empowerment field, consistency between project objectives and project strategies, and some elements of consistency with the country context. For its time, the Programme was highly innovative in developing practical tools for project management and mapping demands of women entrepreneurs, combined with gender mainstreaming in operations.

23. Regarding the quality of the programme design, the logic behind the WATP was generally strong. The mainstreaming project focused on integrating gender considerations into operations; the projects implemented in various countries took mainstreaming and business orientation into consideration and aimed at providing women-owned enterprises with customized support, addressing areas of weakness and building personal confidence and empowerment.

24. The relevance of the SCED was initially confirmed by a midterm evaluation and then reaffirmed by the final evaluation. SCED is a tightly integrated project, with rational cause-effect logic leading to the expected effect of the intervention. In the event of successful implementation of all elements, the whole would be larger than the sum of the parts:

- The strategy development component provided a long-term road map for the cashew nut and sesame sectors and reinforced the existing roadmaps for the groundnut sector. The quality enhancement sought to address pressing obstacles along the value chain in terms of farming activities, cross-cutting regulatory oversight, quality certification, and support for intermediaries who process and/or trade for the domestic and export markets,
- The trade information component was vital in the context of a poorly developed system in The Gambia, in that planning and implementation of trade activities are only feasible when relevant trade information is available for strategic and tactical decisions in good time,
- The inclusive tourism study, if implemented after the project, would provide immediate benefits to value chain actors. It can be seen that this study does not, by itself, add to the systemic improvement actions offered by the other two components (production and trade

⁶ This is a three-year project funded by the Government of Finland, with a total budget of Euro 4.25m. The implementation period was January 2014 - December 2016. The project covers countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, and it aims to contribute to regional trade integration by enhancing selected agro-food sectors and accessing new markets in Africa and beyond. The selected sectors were honey, mango, chili and spices.

information) i.e. it is a desirable rather than a mandatory action. This slightly affected the relevance of SCED.

25. In the case of the ongoing operations of PIRT, the MTR, which was reviewed by the Project Steering Committee members, considers that the relevance of the project is satisfactory.⁷ The project coherently articulated its goal, outcomes, activities and related conditions and assumptions for successful implementation.
26. According to the MTR, after 18 months of implementation, collaboration networks between ITC and implementing partners, related initiatives and donors have been well established, and considerable momentum has also been achieved in the private sector. Adequate interventions in critical parts of the value chain will still be essential – some of these are not addressed by this project or only to a very limited extent, especially on the production side. The MTR already anticipated that follow-up interventions would be needed to sustain the initial results and generate visible impact.
27. **Performance and results: effectiveness.** In terms of effectiveness, the three projects excelled in implementing and/or completing planned activities and reporting immediate outputs and some *initial outcomes*, but were less successful in proving results at the level of the project outcome and impact such as policy influence at the national and international levels or poverty reduction through trade support activities. Although the effectiveness of each of the three projects is satisfactory to a varied extent, as seen in the evaluations, there is space for improvement in terms of setting up SMART objectives and result indicators⁸ and focusing on tracking those aligned with the objectives.
28. Based on evaluation findings, the effectiveness of the WATP Phase I was mixed during the various interventions. Regarding gender mainstreaming interventions, the programme made progress in terms of integrating gender considerations into ITC policies, processes and activities. It was also effective in building capacity of TISIs to support women-based enterprises (WBEs).
29. WATP largely met the target of influencing national and international programming and policy. For example, the Platform intervention had a target of 22 trade development programme documents under the component on advocacy and communication, which was exceeded with an actual figure of 33, according to the PCR submitted to DIFD.⁹ The clear output was that policy makers and policy agreements took women's economic empowerment into consideration. WATP has no information on how, or how often, these agreements were translated into action.
30. WATP partly met the objective of strengthening the competitiveness of WBEs. The PCR reported that 1,198 WBEs improved their skills against a target of 2,000. Due to limited data availability, the evaluators were unable to verify the performance indicators because lack of evidence and only obtained anecdotal evidence on impact on WBEs. Moreover, TSIs' impact was limited by capacity constraints and the short-term nature of their involvement with WBEs.

⁷ In line with ITC Guidelines for Independent Evaluation (draft), a rating should be assigned to each evaluation criterion and overall performance and results, as per a 4-point rating scale : unsatisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, moderately satisfactory, and satisfactory.

⁸ SMART Objectives: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely

⁹ The Platform project included a component of Monitoring, advocacy and communications. Under this component, the project produced country reports analyzing the gender dimensions of NTMs and had a communication strategy. The PCR reported that there was a target of 22 trade development programme documents, which was exceeded with an actual figure of 33.

31. With regard to SCED's objective to increase incomes and reduce poverty, the evaluation noted there is indicative, but inconclusive, evidence that some incomes, primarily intermediary firms, have improved – even with the incomplete status of some activities (e.g accreditation of aflatoxin test). Sector sales revenues are not yet tracked by the Trade Information System or any available alternatives, and the extent of improvement in sector sales and of individual incomes cannot be identified.
32. For most specific outcomes of SCED, the project registered acceptable progress, given the challenging operating context.
- SCED's support for quality certification resulted in assistance to the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) toward certification of the content of aflatoxin in produce. It was seen as an important hurdle to secure greater market access for Gambian produce, especially ground nuts. Significant strides have been made, and a basic level of operability has been established. However, the accreditation will not be secured within the project time.
 - The involvement of The Gambia Standards Bureau (TGSB) in establishing sectoral quality frameworks and standards appears to have been successful, with TGSB possibly positioning itself as a certification body for HACCP accreditation of enterprises. Hazard Analysis and critical Control Point (HACCP) compliance support has been well received by beneficiaries.
 - The implementation of sector strategies was hampered by the late development of the strategies.¹⁰ Some deliverables have been well received, such as the export packaging support to enterprises; others have been poorly managed, such as the tarpaulin support to the sesame sector, or with unclear benefit, such as the seed multiplication support to the sesame sector.
 - The trade information activity appeared to have reasonably met its target through the establishment of the basic delivery infrastructure. The operation of management of regular and reliable collation and dissemination of information is still at an early stage. The actual trade information may be lopsided with some evidence that the cashew nut sector is far more active.
33. In the case of the progress made by PIRT, as outlined in the MTR, achievement of the project objectives has been on track. Signs of early impact were identified, especially on the Lean Production and Quality component. SMEs which have received support are making changes to processing products, which should mean potential for increased export competitiveness. According to the MTR, practical capacity building in enterprises has led to improvement in business practice among the 15 enterprises in Tanzania and the 10 in Zambia. Evidence also shows that three SMEs in Kenya have increased productivity and competitiveness as a result of ITC training in Lean Production. Moreover, in Tanzania and Zambia, the project has an emphasis on the training of trainers, which seems to have been important for disseminating awareness and knowledge on HACCP and Food Standards, supply chain management, access to finance, and market development.
34. **Key learning themes: Gender equality and women's empowerment.** Since 2014, the Evaluation Unit has been assessing the performance of ITC programmes and projects in supporting gender equality and women's empowerment, which is now an essential evaluation criterion at ITC. The evaluations of past operations did not always find a defined gender approach

¹⁰ The SCED evaluation report mentioned that "There were significant delays in the finalization and launch of the sector strategies due to public sector inertia."

in each programme and project and gender disaggregated data on results was not always available.

35. The evaluation found that WATP has been instrumental in mainstreaming gender into ITC policies, processes and activities, and that management showed strong commitment to mainstreaming gender equality in operations. One highlight of WATP performance is ITC commitment to gender equality (i) as an integral element of wider development and trade objectives, and, (ii) as a normal and necessary part of staff capacity and programme design. Evaluation findings confirmed that staff members have been trained with WATP-designed tools offering a gender perspective in project work, and that the gender dimension has been embedded within HR systems and reporting.
36. Based on the findings up to 2013, the evaluation recommended to replicate and scale up these innovations in broader operations at ITC and facilitate integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into ITC corporate development goals, programmatic approaches, theories of change, monitoring and reporting activities, evaluations and thematic learning practices, auditing, and strategy and policy formulations. It should be noted that, since 2013, ITC has made great strides toward mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment both in trade development interventions and in staff capacity development, which were not included in the evaluation scope of WATP phase I. This is well illustrated at the corporate level, by the inclusion in the ITC Strategic Framework of gender-sensitive corporate indicators as of 2016.
37. In the case of SCED, the evaluation found that the project information systems did not systemically track the established indicators on gender equality and women's empowerment.¹¹ It acknowledged that the limited cross-sectional evidence gathered by the evaluation team was not sufficient, given the absence of the project's collation of evidence based on the indicators identified in the logical framework, to allow for a conclusive statement on this evaluation criterion.
38. In PIRT, the support on gender equality and women's empowerment is included in project design and implementation. The selected sectors/products employ a majority of women who are involved in cultivation, grading, collecting, packing, and most other activities throughout the value chains in the project countries. The MTR acknowledged that women producers remained excluded from the more lucrative parts of the value chains, and that the project was seeking to proactively involve women producers and entrepreneurs in activities that would strengthen their capacities and increase their incomes. According to the MTR, respondents to a survey considered the project useful in improving opportunities and benefits for women.
39. **Key learning themes: Innovation, replication and scaling up.** Based on recent evaluations, projects are considered good at innovating and piloting solutions to the unique challenges faced by client countries. However, they fall short in the area of initiating replication and scaling up of effective approaches and innovations.
40. The evaluation of WATP found that the conceptualization of the programme was visionary and, for its time, relevant and innovative. The innovations promoted by the programme regarding the

¹¹ Some of the project activities have had high women participation, such as that of the NAWFA which was a focal entity for sesame interventions. One of the seven enterprises selected for quality assurance support and eventual HACCP certification was led by a woman, and she was convinced that, together with other past and current donor interventions, her domestic market competitiveness has been enhanced.

integration of gender equality in trade development and the advocacy of women's economic empowerment are well recognized at ITC and by stakeholders in countries. For example, the Platform for connecting WBEs to international buyers through events, forum, and business generations tools, and other channels, is considered highly innovative, especially in project countries. This kind of business match-making service at enterprise-level is not often offered by other organizations. It created visible value to WBEs in developing countries, and was highly valued by project clients and other stakeholders.

41. The plan of replication and scaling up of innovations was not explicit. In design, it was unclear whether the in-country projects were intended as demonstration projects, so that the innovations could be replicated and scaled up. In some sense, they must have been, given ITC pioneering role and the small budget size for each project. However, project plans did not include the necessary actions for replication and scaling up. The observation of ongoing Phase II activities showed that this weakness is being addressed in Phase II to a certain extent.
42. Based on the evaluation findings on SCED, the intervention did offer scope for innovation. The support provided to the food safety and quality authority and the certification services offered by the NARI are innovative in the country context, and were valued by small producers and traders. The evaluation also considered that there was a pressing need for short-term scaling up for the sector strategies and trade information activities, since it did not find evidence of scaling up or replication.
43. PIRT has been piloting innovative solutions in the selected sectors, especially in terms of sharing good practices among project countries. During the design of PIRT, local implementing partners were selected partly in consideration of the potential to replicate and scale up activities. One reason Kenya was included in the project was to enable Zambia and Tanzania to capitalize on some good practices developed in Kenya. According to the MTR, the networking of Tanzania's Small Industry Development Organization (SIDO) and Kenya's Packaging Institute seems to have led to the establishment of the Packaging Centre in Tanzania. Similarly, the collaboration between Kenya Bureau of Standards (KBS) and Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZBS) led to Zambia developing similar Packaging Standards to Kenya. Besides, it was also within PIRT's plan to leverage synergies with other key stakeholders to replicate and scale up the project activities.¹²

IV. External evaluations

44. The Evaluation Unit has also analyzed external evaluations that were completed in the period 2015-16, commissioned by funders of projects fully or partly implemented by ITC. The analysis was organized around three learning pillars: Theory of Change (ToC) project quality, learning about in country management and coordination, and common issues identified in external

¹² For example, in Kenya, the project partnered with Bosch on Lean Technology for capacity building for SMEs. The Kenya Institute of Supply Management was also closely involved in the joint training, so that it could replicate and scale up the training in later stages of the project, and in 2016 PIRT replicated the Bosch capacity building on Lean technology to SMEs in Zambia. Another example is that SIDO in Tanzania has geographical coverage across the country with regional offices offering training to SMEs; once the project is completed, SIDO should have the potential to promote the learned practices in broader areas.

evaluations related to sustainability and exit strategy. For this analysis, four external reports were selected out of five that were completed in 2015.¹³

Table 1: External evaluation reports examined

Funder for evaluation	Project title, country	ITC delivery amount, planned	ITC share in total cost	Other execution agencies
SECO	Ethical Fashion Initiative, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali	USD 3.77 m	100 %	no
EU	Support to Trade and Private Sector Development Project, Zimbabwe	EUR 2.96 m	100 %	no
EU	Capacity Building towards Trade and Private Sector Development programme, Malawi	EUR 0.41 m	4 %	UNDP & UNIDO: 40% WB: 40% Gov't contribution
EU	Support programme for commerce regional integration, Côte d'Ivoire (PACIR)	EUR 6.4 m	46 %	UNIDO: 35% OMD: 6 % Gov't contribution

45. **Theory of change (ToC).** To a certain extent, the assessment on the quality of the project-level ToCs represents external views on ITC technical capacity to deliver results in countries. As ITC has been working on programme-level ToCs, the review of evaluations from this angle is of interest. The ToC quality is strongly related to technical capacity in designing relevant and effective solutions to address specific needs and related challenges in a given context. In the external evaluation reports, the ToC quality is reflected mainly in the analysis of intervention design relevance and the related strategy for delivering and monitoring results.
46. According to the evaluation commissioned by SECO, the Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI) excelled in terms of relevance of project design and strategy for delivering and monitoring results. ITC was the only execution agency for EFI, and ITC designed and implemented the project. The intended value-addition behind the ToC is that the project would introduce a new offering of ethical fashion products to international buyers by introducing a concept of “Made in Africa”: i.e. the products’ handicraft quality and internationality. The project’s objective was “to establish a sustainable export market for ethical fashion and lifestyle products supplied by micro-entrepreneurs”. The project was well-aligned with countries’ priorities and needs and relevant for all stakeholders involved including the beneficiaries along the value chain and international buyers. The evaluation also noted that gender consideration was well-integrated in the design and implementation of the project.
47. The evaluation considered EFI as being successful in monitoring and delivering results. It used a relevant results framework and indicators. Through results achieved at the output and outcome level, EFI contributed to the establishment of the export market and has been able to promote a

¹³ The other two were excluded for the following reasons: the non-disclosure requirement for one draft report and it not qualifying as an evaluation report for the other, respectively: EU-funded evaluation “Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Countries (AMSP) Fiji”; and, SECO-funded evaluation “Trade Sector Development Programme, Market Value Chains relating to Horticultural Products for Responsible Tourism Market Access Project, Tanzania, monitoring report”.

different Africa, with a positive and high fashion connotation which has the potential to attract investors and change the image of the region at a global level.

48. Its monitoring and reporting system was a highlight presented by the evaluation. The well-developed and methodologically sound Performance Compliance Monitoring and Evaluation (PCME) approach was used in all three countries to collect data on the living conditions of the beneficiaries of the project. The PCME baseline studies were useful for understanding the situation in the field. The evaluation recommended that this should become a best practice in the reporting activities of the ITC, and that SECO should always ask for this type of reporting.
49. The assessments of theories of change contained in the three external evaluations of EU-funded projects challenged the quality of design and the project strategy for achieving results, which indicates that the ToC in those projects were not optimal. The EU evaluation of the Support Programme for Commerce and Regional integration, Côte d'Ivoire (PACIR) considered that the programme design reflected a good analysis of the problem, and was in line with the provisions of the EU-Côte d'Ivoire Economic Partnership Agreement, needs and priorities expressed by the Government and the beneficiaries. The evaluation considered that the choice of project activities appeared lower quality ("*de moindre qualité*") by relying on the implementing agencies on the analysis and the initial identification of needs, and that the performance indicators were not adequate, although improvements had been introduced during the implementation.
50. The evaluation of the Capacity Building towards Trade and Private Sector Development Programme, Malawi (CBTPSD), mentioned that the intervention objectives and logic were well defined, but there were challenges with the ToC: SMART indicators were missing, in particular quantifiable milestones; related risks were not properly defined in the logical framework; and assumptions were very generic. Also the evaluation challenged the selection of certain national implementation partners institutions, staffed primarily with economists and statisticians, to learn and manage "the complicated EU procedures" in addition to pursue their core business of collecting and processing data.
51. The evaluation commissioned on the Support to the Trade and Private Sector Development project in Zimbabwe (TPSDP) rated the relevance of the project "average" and attributed this project assessment to poor design for construction of the internal institutional capacity.¹⁴
52. **In-country coordination.** In-country programme coordination has been one of the key themes considered in external evaluations. The learning points relating to in country coordination are often conveyed in an evaluation through the analysis on efficiency, synergy and coordination. Based on meta-analysis, one management issue emphasized by almost all external evaluations is that: the slow start-up and delays in implementation were often related to insufficient coordination of in-country partners and among execution agencies.
53. For the EU-funded CBTPSD in Malawi, in which ITC played a small implementation role, the evaluation considered that design of capacity building component was relevant, as it was supposed to improve generation, processing and dissemination of trade-related information and statistics for policy-making. However, the utilization of allocated resources was only about 50% due to slow progress. One reason for slow progress was that the coordination among partners had

¹⁴ In the TPSDP, ITC was the only execution agency responsible for performing activities with a total budget of EUR 3 million.

been challenging. To achieve sector-wide impact, the evaluation stated that it required well-coordinated implementation of policies amongst the productive sector institutions, at the highest levels of decision-making. It recommended better coordination and connection of the government agencies working in the same sector and the provision of a dedicated technical advisor or a small Project Management Unit to specifically assist project implementation among partners.¹⁵ Particularly for ITC, the evaluation recommended to better coordinate among national partners: for the Business Information Register (BIR), to create working linkages between the BIR and the Registrar of Companies under the Ministry of Justice; for capacity building, to study the request by Malawi Revenue Authority for training of customs officers in collecting data at the border and devise an appropriate response; and to consider having a dedicated national technical advisor or small PMU to specifically assist the implementation of the National Statistics Office.

54. The SECO-founded EFI project, working with social enterprises as in-country implementing partners in Burkina Faso and Ghana, faced challenges in coordination and capacity building as well. In Burkina Faso, IVATEX, a social enterprise grouping many weaving associations, was at the center of many of the initial commercial and financial operations. Cooperation with IVATES saw many issues, including the fact that the organization's legal papers were not in order (no unique fiscal identification number). Thus, the project management team had to develop a new social enterprise, CABES, grouping the associations and their representatives. Establishing CABES from the ground up was time-consuming for those responsible for management of the project. Based on these reasons, the evaluation considered that it may be useful and important to take into consideration the idea of transferring some of the management structure to national execution, which could enhance the in-country management and the cost efficiency.
55. The EU evaluation of the PACIR in Côte d'Ivoire identified a weakness in the collaboration between the executive agencies, ITC and UNIDO. According to the evaluation, at the time of preparation of agreements between the EU and the different implementing agencies, details of the planned activities were formulated without specific reference to the intervention logic between the components of the agencies,, in particular the link between ITC and UNIDO interventions. In future operations, in-country coordination arrangement should be further emphasized and enhanced in intervention design, to assure donors and partners of ITC capacity to manage and perform in-country activities.
56. **Sustainability and exit strategy.** One of the conclusions of the SECO evaluation of EFI, despite the project being on going, was that the sustainability of results seemed unlikely in terms of the beneficiaries and the business infrastructure continuing the activities on their own. In addition, a lack of buy-in and ownership of some beneficiaries was observed in both Ghana and Burkina Faso. For a potential phase II of the project, it was recommended that the project focus on maintaining and strengthening the two social enterprise hubs, with more focus on the establishment of a permanently-structured team which would take responsibility for the day-to-day control of the production and trade.
57. The EU evaluation of the Malawi project found that the sustainability prospect was mainly constrained by the capability-building activities with government agencies. It recommended that the operation be fully embedded in the national and local structures and that the capacity-building

¹⁵ No specific recommendation was addressed to ITC.

of Government staff be covered by the Malawian National Budget. The evaluation of the Zimbabwe project made similar conclusions on sustainability.

58. An effective exit strategy is a necessity for achieving sustainability of results after an – on average - three-year project implementation period, but it has been missing in past interventions. It is clearly an aspect which needs to be emphasized more in project quality assurance process.

V. Follow-up to ITC evaluations

59. This section provides information on the implementation status of evaluation recommendations as of 31 March 2016. Delivery managers responsible for related projects submit status reports which indicate the implementation status of each recommendation (i.e. implemented, ongoing, and not started).

Table 2: Overview of implementation of recommendations status as of March 2016

Evaluation (year of issue)	Recommendations				Implementation Status			
	Total	Accepted	Partially Accepted	Rejected	Not started	Ongoing	Final Status	
							Partially implemented	implemented
South-South Programme Evaluation (2012)	12	7	5			1	1	10
NTF II Evaluation (2013)	12	11	1					12
Export Strategy Evaluation (2013)	12	11	1			5		7
EIF midterm evaluation The Gambia (2014)	14	11	3				3	11
Trade and Environment Evaluation (2015)	10	10						10
EIF midterm evaluation Lesotho (2015)	12	8	3	1	3	4		4
Total	72	58	13	1	3	10	4	54

60. **South-South Trade evaluation.** As of March 2016, out of the 12 recommendations, ten were implemented, one partially implemented, and one was ongoing. Most of the recommendations focused on the need to better involve partners for the fulfilment of results and more efficient results-measuring monitoring system. As a result of the evaluation, the South-South project increased the integration of economic and trade missions' activities as well as the buyer/seller meetings for enhancing synergies and optimize logistics. Particular attention was placed on project coordination and communication as a result of the implementation of the recommendations. The role of the country focal points as facilitators responsible for monitoring the activities implemented under the project at the national level has been clearly defined. The objectives of the project (including the logical framework indicators as well as its results-based management) have been shared with the TISIs partners, and the project was further communicated to other project partners in each country. A reporting system was agreed upon which helped generate information on the

degree of achievement of objectives and indicators of the logical framework, which helped to avoid any loss of information on project results.

61. The evaluation lessons were used in the tripartite programme between ITC, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and OIF. Furthermore, ITC has been cited alongside FAO as a strategic partner of the OIF in the implementation of the francophone economic strategy and the OIF tripartite programme on South-South cooperation, which started in 2015.
62. **NTF II evaluation.** As of March 2016, all of the 12 recommendations were implemented. The evaluation validated the programme approach and recommended to pursue enhancing the effectiveness of umbrella institutions and supporting them in addressing value chain constraints, in particular those related to exports. One of the recommendations was that the programme should undergo an impact evaluation. In late 2015, the impact evaluation was scheduled to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2016, covering NTF II projects in Uganda and Bangladesh.
63. **Export strategy evaluation.** The evaluation resulted in 12 recommendations focusing on the following aspects: implementation of export strategies, link between implementation and technical assistance, market positioning and marketing, adapting focus to emerging needs, developing offers according to market segmentation, maintaining competitive edge through innovation, optimization of the use of resources, and planning and monitoring. Eleven recommendations were accepted and one was partially accepted. As of March 2016, out of the 12 recommendations, seven were implemented, and five were ongoing. Activities supporting the implementation of two of the ongoing recommendations (development of an e-learning course, and a publication) are currently postponed due to funding limitations. Two of the recommendations have been adopted in the new Trade Strategy programme plan.
64. In terms of the improvements identified as a result of the evaluation, this has contributed to the design of a new section strategy. The implementation of recommendations included efforts toward increased pro-active focused marketing efforts, updating existing gender-mainstreaming tools, launching of national trade strategies with an investment component, developing a strategy approach focusing on taking advantage of bilateral trade agreements; refining methodologies, and the finalization of the analytical paper on emerging trends.
65. **EIF Final evaluation in The Gambia and Midterm evaluation in Lesotho.** In the case of The Gambia project, the evaluation presents arguments for more flexibility and specifically recommends relying more on business-oriented institution partners to pursue export sector competitiveness and export diversification. The evaluation provided 14 recommendations; 11 were accepted, and three were partially accepted. As of March 2016, 11 of the recommendations were implemented, and three had a final status of partial implementation. Outstanding activities supporting the three recommendations were to be carried out by the National Implementation Unit and the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (to organize a donor round table for funding of follow-up activities, and send a proposal to the EIF for funding) and the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) (an internal audit of an accredited laboratory to help secure the increased competitiveness and sales volumes for companies and exporters targeted by the project).
66. Concerning the EIF midterm evaluation in Lesotho, the most important recommendation was to renew the project to seek a more inclusive involvement of strategic partners' for the successful completion of the project could be best achieved. The evaluation provided 12 recommendations;

eight were accepted, three were partially accepted, and one was rejected. The recommendation which was rejected called for the replacement of one development corporation with another, which was thought to be better suited. The recommendation was rejected by the national implementing partners as the decision was made to engage both development corporations in the project. As of March 2016, four recommendations had been implemented, four were ongoing, and three were not yet started. Of the ongoing and not-yet-started recommendations, they were still in accordance with the plan scheduled for completion throughout 2016.

67. In both countries, the evaluations resulted in one-year extensions of the projects in order to achieve sustainable results, which also included new work plans, and a revised budget in the case of The Gambia. They proved to be a valid means through which partners, at the country level, were in a position to provide feedback on the appropriateness of the project design and implementation process. It should be noted that EIF partner government are the project owners, and many of the recommendations are directed at them. As a result, ITC has limited control over the implementation of the recommendations.
68. **Trade and environment evaluation.** This evaluation resulted in two main strategic recommendations:
- To articulate the strengths and strategic intervention areas of the programme and further enhance partnership for effective implementation in project counties, and,
 - In accordance with ITC strategic plan, to develop a programmatic approach for addressing the priority needs of beneficiaries, building coherent intervention logic in the programme and each project, measuring results and impact, and strengthening sustainability prospects.
69. Within these two strategic recommendations, the evaluation provided ten specific recommendations, all of which were accepted. As of March 2016, all had been implemented.
70. **Benefits of implementing recommendations.** All of the evaluations had recommendations related to improving monitoring and reporting for results. As a result of their implementation, the evaluated projects were better positioned to validate their contributions to results. This is the case for example, of the South-South programme which, with its enhanced monitoring system was able to substantiate the project's contribution to a sharp rise in trade between 14 African nations and three Mekong countries (Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam). In other cases, monitoring systems were retained and adapted to a subsequent phase as in the NTF III programme. As recommended in the NTF II evaluation, the quality assurance function was retained and adapted to the NTF III programme. In other cases, the implementation of the recommendations enabled partners to take ownership over the monitoring systems as seen in the EIF project in Lesotho, where actions supporting appropriate support for agricultural production groups for monitoring the beneficiaries have been taken over by Lesotho authorities.
71. Most of the evaluations recommended better use of potential of partnerships, highlighting the importance of involving a range of complementary partners (i.e. internal and external, national and international, public and private sector) in order to garner commitment, coordination, funding, technical collaboration, innovation, replication, scaling up, and sustainability. Putting into practice these partnership-related recommendations enabled Management to consolidate alliances with other Aid for Trade (AfT) providers as in the case of the South-South tripartite ITC/FAO/OIF alliance and to leverage on new international and national partnerships to replicate piloted services as in the case of Trade and Environment programme.

72. Many evaluations also included recommendations related to enhancing sustainability after the lifespan of the intervention. In the case of the Export Strategy programme, monitoring and tracking mechanisms have been developed to ensure better ownership over strategy implementation. Similarly, the EIF project in The Gambia ensured sustainability of achieved knowledge and structures after the project's life span, with measures put in place for implementing partners to follow-up on strategy implementation. The Trade and Environment programme has developed a new theory of change, which has been integrated into its new programme document in line with ITC partner-focused programmatic approach.
73. **Utility of evaluation.** In order to ensure the utility of the evaluations, evaluation users and stakeholders should be involved and consulted throughout the evaluation process, including the management response and action plan stage. In the case of the EIF projects where recommendations have been issued to country ministries and/or implementing partners, it has been found that Managing Officers are, at times, facing challenges as far as implementation completion is concerned. In the case of EIF in The Gambia, two recommendations have a "partially implemented" final status, since the project is now closed. One of the recommendations is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment (MOITE), and the other recommendation is with NARI. As experienced with the EIF project in Lesotho, the management response was delayed by nine months due to changes in the government at the country level.
74. One factor that contributed to the success of the NTF II evaluation was the timing. The evaluation was planned to provide evaluative evidence towards the design of the NTF III, and the recommendations were used to streamline and strengthen the NTF III programme, particularly in the areas of results-based management and with the use of national consultants trained under the NTF II programme.
75. Limited funding was identified as a cause behind the slow implementation of some recommendations. In the case of the South-South evaluation, it was recommended that the project transfer to a new version of software for its MatchMaker activities in the management of the agenda of the business-to-business buyer/seller meetings. In response to this recommendation, an expression of interest was launched, and a company was selected, but due to lack of funding, the contract was not signed. Action plans designed for the implementation of recommendations should bear budgetary limitations in mind, in order to ensure practical and timely implementation.

VI. JIU reviews (2011 – 2015)

76. The Evaluation Unit acts as the JIU focal point within ITC. It supports the Executive Director by circulating draft reports, coordinating comments on draft reports and recommendations for submission to JIU, disseminating final documents, and following up on recommendations. The Unit also collects data on the implementation status of JIU recommendations and reports to the JIU twice a year. During the period 2011 – 2015, the JIU issued a total of 67 recommendations to ITC from nine reports¹⁶. By December 2015, ITC had responded to 50 of these recommendations¹⁷ of

¹⁶ For more information see: <https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/Pages/default.aspx>

which, 39 were issued to the Executive Director. Of these 39 recommendations, 54 per cent were implemented, 13 per cent were in progress, 26 per cent were not started, and eight per cent were not relevant.¹⁸

77. JIU recommendations to ITC concentrated on the area of administrative support and programme support, with a special emphasis on enhancing compliance, coordination, transparency, and accountability. Out of nine reports, six were exclusively addressed to the Division for Programme Support (DPS) (four focusing on Human Resources issues, and one on Central Support Services), and the Office of the Executive Director (OED) (focusing on the Evaluation Function):
- Staff-management relations in the United Nations specialized agencies and common system (2012),
 - Use of Retirees and Staff Retained Beyond the Mandatory Age of Separation at United Nations Organizations (2014),
 - Use of Non-Staff Personnel and Related Contractual Modalities in the United Nations System Organizations (2014),
 - Evaluation of mainstreaming of full and productive employment and decent work by the United Nations system organizations (2015),
 - Contract Management and Administration in the United Nations System (2014), and,
 - Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System (2014).
78. The two remaining reports were mainly focused on issues of joint interest between the Division of Country Programmes (DCP) and the Division of Market Development (DMD):
- Review of the Management of Implementing Partners in the United Nations (2013), and,
 - Post-Rio+20 Review of Environmental Governance within the United Nations System (2014).

VII. Learning theme – ITC programmatic approach and impact

79. As in the previous AESR editions, the Evaluation Unit introduces a “learning theme” to draw ITC’s and stakeholders’ attention on important evaluation-related trends. This year, we are analyzing how the ITC programmatic approach is clarifying accountability issues and how this development is enabling impact evaluation in a diverse and complex AfT context.
80. The analysis is derived from a combination of sources including the above-described findings and research of ongoing 2016 evaluations, including in particular, the evaluation of the NTM programme and the current impact assessment of the NTF II programme in Uganda (2009–2013). Working with different intervention logics, these two programmes exemplify how ITC works in complex environments and how it enables trade.¹⁹ In both cases, the main objective of the

¹⁷ It was only possible to report on the remaining 17 recommendations through the JIU web-based tracking system in the first quarter of 2016.

¹⁸ Please refer to the Annex for full details.

¹⁹ The NTM programme has been deployed in 24 countries and its main objective is to bring to the forefront SMEs’ concerns regarding regulatory and procedural trade obstacles, and to enable decision-makers to take concrete actions to overcome these barriers. The second project objective was to create sustainable exporter competitiveness in the coffee sector in Uganda by

evaluation that has been identified with management is the assessment of the impact on beneficiaries. Since these two projects are two very different types of AfT initiatives, it raises the question of the appropriate evaluation approach of measuring results towards achieving ITC's vision "to foster inclusive and sustainable growth and development through trade and international business development."²⁰

81. To address this question, it is necessary to refer to the building up the new programmatic approach and the current process of operationalization of ITC corporate goals.²¹ ITC has developed a corporate logical-framework which is aligned with its corporate ToC. It is organized as a map of intermediate outcomes and related expected changes in the behavior of ITC partners and actors (decision-makers, TISIs and enterprises). These changes include: (1) increased awareness and interest, (2) increased knowledge, skills and exchange, (3) improved consensus and feasible action plans, and (4) action / initiative, and they build on each other leading to the achievement of the programme outcome. ITC has internalized this corporate logical-framework into each of ITC corporate programmes.²²
82. According to this approach, ITC's role is defined as a change facilitator that supports its partners and actors to test and find their own solutions. Some partners will focus on solution "A" while others on a solution "B", with ITC support, or on their own. A wide range of activities can happen as a result of similar interventions implemented by ITC. Thus, from an impact assessment perspective, it is appropriate to look for the programme's influence on partners' behavioral changes, not for causal attribution of these changes uniquely to the intervention.
83. As change is taking place within an interconnected web of relationships and systems, it is necessary to recognize that change is continuous, complex, non-linear, and multidirectional.²³ It can be influenced, but not directly controlled. ITC interventions can support and influence partners and actors. ITC has control over programme inputs, activities and outputs, but it only has influence in achieving intermediary outcomes and outcomes. The ultimate responsibility for achieving intermediary outcomes and outcomes rests with the partners and actors working in countries.
84. The key question is *whether partners and actors will change their behavior as part of ITC activities, and whether this change will affect the behavior of others?* If we want partners and actors take ownership of our technical assistance, what must we do to stimulate them take ownership, and what conditions need to be in place?

enhancing the effectiveness of umbrella institutions and farmer organizations to enable them to address value chain constraints, in particular those related to exports at coffee farmer household levels.

²⁰ ITC Strategic Plan 2015-2017, page 6, available at:

http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/About_ITC/Corporate_Documents/Strategic_Plan/strategic%20plan%202015-2017_web.pdf

²¹ Three corporate goals: (1) Strengthen the integration of the business sector of developing countries and economies in transition into the global economy; (2) Improve the performance of trade and investment support institutions for the benefit of SMEs, and; (3) Improve the international competitiveness of SMEs.

²² The 15 corporate programmes have been identified as the technical interventions by which ITC achieves trade impact. Each corporate programmes logical-framework has been aligned with the corporate logical framework, thus ensuring proper mapping between programme and corporate outcome indicators.

²³ Robert Chipimbi and Simon Hearn, "Outcome Mapping, Bringing learning into development programmes", 2009, www.outcomemapping.ca

85. Referring to the map of outcomes drawn in the generic logical-framework, ITC's accountability is whether ITC has changed the landscape. By focusing ITC's accountability on its contribution to partner- and actor-focused performance, the implementation of the ITC programmatic approach creates an evaluation framework that clarifies accountabilities. It paves the way for the development of an integrated set of methodological and quality standards for impact evaluation, which is adapted to the complexities of AfT interventions.
86. Monitoring programme progress is to document changes in partners' and actors' attitudes, skills, and behaviors, to take the actions that lead to project outcomes and impact. It is about adjusting the project strategy; look at the progress markers to see if the project is off track and if partners and actors are moving toward the landscape that the project is hoping for.
87. In terms of evaluating impact, randomized control trials (RCT) and difference-in-differences (DD) approaches are often difficult to realize in the field because programmes could not control the environment in which they are operating, sample sizes are small and cost is high. RCT and DD approaches remain valid in cases where the intervention affects a large number of development actors (workers, communities and enterprises).²⁴ These methods need to be complemented with research work to contextualize the environment and an analysis of the programme's contribution to these actors' behavioral change.
88. In alignment with the ITC programmatic approach, (which encompasses a comprehensive results framework aligned to corporate goals, an enhanced ToC for each programme, effective monitoring and reporting systems) the role of evaluation is to tell the storyline of the complexity of the change and to provide evidence on how outcome challenges have been addressed, paving the way toward achievement of impact. This implies focusing on the analysis of the relevance of the programme through in-depth research on the operational context and through a review of the strategy adjustment in the ever-evolving country context. Programme relevance and effectiveness forms the basis of telling the story of how the programme has influenced partners' actions, and how the programme activities have paved the way towards achieving the impact.
89. In the coming years, the effective implementation of this strategy will enable: independent evaluations to increasingly focus on strategic themes and policies at the corporate level, including country evaluations and ITC programmes; self-evaluation will gradually cover all large projects, and, all projects to be subject to a PCR. With the increased quantitative data coming from ITC's outcome-related corporate indicators and enterprise competitiveness, the three-tier evaluation framework (independent evaluation, self-evaluation, and PCR) will be able to make use of a broader foundation of evidence for development results and impact. To support these developments, the Evaluation Unit will deploy a training programme for staff members on monitoring and evaluation which will be aligned with this programmatic approach.

²⁴ For example, this will be the case with the NTF II impact evaluation in Uganda where beneficiary coffee farmer associations and individual coffee farmer households are being sampled and their current status will be compared with baseline data and with similar non-beneficiary associations and households.

Annex: Implementation status of JIU recommendations

Table 3: Implementation Status of the JIU Recommendations Issued to the Executive Head of ITC (2012 to 2015)

Title of JIU report	Recommendations	Implementation status a/			
		Not relevant	Not started	In progress	Implemented
Staff–Management Relations in the United Nations Specialized Agencies and Common System (2012)	6				6
Review of the Management of Implementing Partners in the United Nations (2013)	9	1		4	4
Use of Retirees and Staff Retained Beyond the Mandatory Age of Separation at United Nations Organizations (2014)	4		1		3
Post-Rio6+20 Review of Environmental Governance Within the United Nations System (2014)	3	2			1
Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System (2014)	5				5
Use of Non-Staff Personnel and Related Contractual Modalities in the United Nations System Organizations (2014)	2				2
Contract Management and Administration in the United Nations System (2014)	9		9		
Evaluation of Mainstreaming of Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work by the United Nations System Organizations (2015)	1			1	
TOTAL:	39	3	10	5	21

a/ These are JIU implementation status categories.

1. Recommendations issued in the report on **Staff-Management Relations in the UN** (JIU/REP/2012/10) included guaranteed access of staff representative bodies to all necessary means of communication with staff at large, the formal guarantee of the protection of staff representatives, the establishment of joint bodies dedicated to issues relating to staff-management relations, the allotment of resources to the organizations' respective human resources services to promote training modules on staff management relations and regular staff surveys with the full participation of both sides at all stages. All of the recommendations have been implemented.
2. **Management of Implementing Partners in the UN** (JIU/REP/2013/4) recommended that the selection of management of implementing partners should be based on in-depth assessments of implementing partner (IP) capacities, sound legal agreements to safeguard UN interests, risk-based monitoring and reporting, robust auditing and evaluation, and improved fraud awareness and prevention. One of the recommendations was not relevant as it referred to field offices. Of the

remaining eight recommendations, four have been implemented, and four are still in progress. These remaining recommendations include revised reporting mechanisms to include purpose-defined expenditures and evaluation of IP capacities, establishment of a rigorous IP assessment and selection process, review of capabilities of existing automation systems such as ERPs and other database tracking systems with the aim of supporting the management of IP and consolidating related data, and training in fraud awareness and prevention (with emphasis on fraud related to third parties) for staff engaged with IP. The first three listed are reliant on the implementation of Umoja, while the last one regarding training is reliant on training provided by UN headquarters.

3. **Use of Retirees and Staff Retained Beyond the Mandatory Age of Separation at UN Organizations** (JIU/NOTE/2014/1) issued recommendations addressing the need to set up effective mechanisms to capitalize on the knowledge and experience of staff due to retire, to set up a coherent regulatory framework for the approval of exceptions to retaining of staff beyond the mandatory age of separation, to take action to limit exceptions, to ensure that employment in senior executive and general service positions is restricted to instances where needs cannot be met by current staff, and to develop effective succession planning. By the end of 2015, ITC had implemented three of the recommendations, while the one related to the establishment of an effective mechanism to capitalize on the knowledge and experience of staff due to retire and of retirees who are rehired via the coaching and mentoring programme, is set to be considered for part of ITC success planning system for review in quarter four of 2016.
4. **Post-Rio+20 Review of Environmental Governance within the UN System** (JIU/REP/2014/4) issued three recommendations to ITC for action. These three recommendations included two which were addressed to the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chair of the CEB, which were considered not relevant due to ITC governance structure.²⁵ The third recommendation, related to organizations involved in country activities in the UNDAF, has been implemented.
5. **Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the UN System** (JIU/REP/2014/6) contained recommendations which addressed the need for organizations to deal with systemic constraints given how the function was under-sourced and overstretched, resulting in a lack of being prepared to respond to emerging demands, the need to be more strategic in balancing priorities between accountability and the development of the learning organization; and the need for organizations to apply more integrative and system-based approaches to enhance the coherence, impact and sustainability of the function. The five recommendations issued to the Executive Director have been implemented.²⁶
6. **Use of Non-Staff Personnel and Related Contractual Modalities in the UN System** (JIU/REP/2014/8) assessed the use of non-staff personnel and analysed the policies, regulations, contractual practices and associated managerial processes that UN organizations use. Two

²⁵ One recommendation was to establish a common policy and related guidelines to prevent conflicts of interest of any members and experts participating in technical and scientific panels and committees in the field of environment. The other was that the SG submits proposals for a system-wide framework for measuring resources required for environmental protection to the UNEA of UNEP and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, for approval.

²⁶ It is also worth mentioning that the recommendation for legislative bodies to develop a comprehensive budget framework and resource allocation plan for their respective evaluation functions was applied in support of ITC request that the Evaluation Unit be allocated regular budget funds for its operations in its proposed budget for 2016-2017. Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventieth Session, Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 (Sect. 13)/Add.1.

recommendations were issued to the ITC for action: one was to strengthen internal monitoring, control and oversight of the use of non-staff personnel through internal control mechanisms, data collection, analysis and audits; and the second was to ensure periodic analytical reporting on the use of non-staff personnel, both internally (i.e. to senior management) and externally (i.e. to governing bodies). ITC has implemented both of the recommendations through in-house HR systems (including the e-Recruitment of Consultants system, and Umoja) and reporting in the Annual Report.

7. **Contract Management and Administration in the UN System** (JIU/REP/2014/9) analysed the way in which UN organizations manage contracts in order to identify good practices and share lessons learned. The recommendations aimed to establish proper management systems and to professionalize practices in contract management. There were nine recommendations issued to ITC for action.
8. **Mainstreaming of Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work by the UN System Organizations** (JIU/REP/2015/1) assessed how UN organizations have responded to ECOSOC resolutions to mainstream decent work principles into their own strategic planning at various levels, with a view to apply the lessons learned in the finalization of the post-2015 agenda. One recommendation was issued to ITC for action, calling for a re-examination of its work to identify areas where the decent work agenda can be linked to its activities and to make existing linkages more explicit. This recommendation is reported as in progress, and ITC is in the process of developing a Code of Conduct, which is scheduled to be completed in the second quarter of 2016.



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