

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Independent project evaluation:

***“Integrating Landlocked Commodity Dependent  
Developing Countries into Regional and Global Value  
Chains”***

**(2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub Fund  
of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust  
Fund project PDF-SDG-2017-04)\***

Independent Evaluation Unit  
September 2022

\*This report was commissioned by UNCTAD. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the external evaluator and do not represent the views of the UNCTAD secretariat or of the organizations or institutions with which the evaluator may be connected, or organizations or institutions that commissioned this evaluation. This evaluation report has been reproduced without formal editing by the UNCTAD secretariat.



This evaluation report was prepared by Ms. Leny van Oijen, Enterpride Consulting, hereafter the evaluator.

Independent Project Evaluations are usually conducted by external evaluators. The role of the Evaluation Unit of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in relation to independent project evaluations that it manages is one of quality assurance and support throughout the evaluation process, including provision of normative tools, guidelines and templates to be used in the evaluation process, and clearance of the final report. This role is based on the responsibility of the Evaluation Unit to respond to the commitment of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in professionalizing the evaluation function and promoting a culture of evaluation within UNCTAD for the purposes of accountability and continuous learning and improvement. The principles underpinning the evaluation function are enshrined in the UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation.

In order to support a transparent and learning environment, UNCTAD's evaluation framework is currently defined by its Evaluation Policy as approved in December 2011.

The Evaluation Unit can be contacted at:  
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
Palais des Nations, 8-14,  
Av. de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland  
Telephone: +41 22 917 1234  
Email: [evaluation@unctad.org](mailto:evaluation@unctad.org)

Website: <https://unctad.org/about/accountability>

Disclaimer:

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

This publication has not been formally edited.

UNCTAD/OSG/INF/2022/3

## Table of Contents

	Page
List of acronyms and abbreviations	3
Executive summary	4
1. Introduction	9
2. Project context	10
3. The project	13
4. Evaluation purpose, scope and questions	16
5. Methodology of the evaluation	17
6. Findings	20
6.1 Project design	20
6.2 Project implementation	24
6.2.1 Relevance	24
6.2.2 Effectiveness and likely impact	26
6.2.3 Efficiency of implementation	32
6.2.4 Sustainability	35
6.2.5 Cross-cutting issues	36
6.2.6 Responses to COVID-19	36
7. Conclusions	38
8. Lessons learned/good practices	39
9. Recommendations on the way forward	39
 <b>Annexes</b>	
Annex 1 : Terms of Reference	42
Annex 2 : Project results framework	51
Annex 3 : Stakeholder mapping/analysis	53
Annex 4 : Evaluation Matrix	55
Annex 5 : References to secondary information sources	64

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CDPMO	Capacity Development Programme Management Office (of UNDESA)
EA	Expected Accomplishment
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FP	Focal Point
GVC	Global Value Chains
ITC	International Trade Centre
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LLDC	Landlocked Developing Countries
OBOR	One Belt and One Road (Initiative) – see also BRI
RVC	Regional Value Chains
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UN-OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UNPDF	United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
WB	World Bank

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This independent final project evaluation covers UNCTAD project “*Integrating Landlocked Commodity Dependent Developing Countries into Regional and Global Value Chains*” (project code PDF-SDG-2017-04). The project is funded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF), with support of the Government of the People’s Republic of China. The project is aimed at strengthening the capacity of selected landlocked countries (Ethiopia, Laos, Mongolia and Uzbekistan) to foster (i) integration into regional and global value chains (RVCs and GVCs) and (ii) market linkages at the national, interregional and intercontinental levels. For each country a target commodity/(sub-) sector was selected, namely:

- *Ethiopia : coffee (in particular roasted coffee)*
- *Lao PDR : maize*
- *Mongolia : meat*
- *Uzbekistan: food processing (in particular dried fruit).*

The project had an initial duration of 2 years (from March 2018 – March 2020), with an approved budget of US\$ 466,000 (excluding support costs). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project was granted two no-cost extensions, the first one up to March 2021 and the second one up to December 2021.

The purpose of this end-of-project evaluation is to assess in a systematic and objective manner project design and implementation, the latter covering the achievements against the intended outcomes and results as set out in the project’s logical framework. This assessment is expected to result in practical recommendations, good practices and lessons learned from the project for the different project stakeholders listed above in order to (i) feed into decision making as regards the way forward beyond the closure of the current project in the focus countries and (ii) enhance the design and implementation of related interventions elsewhere.

The assessment has been structured in accordance with the standard evaluation criteria, examining (i) the relevance of the project (including the degree of country ownership); (ii) its results (effectiveness); (iii) achievements towards the planned outcomes and impact; (iv) the adequacy of the use of inputs, of monitoring and reporting and the degree of coordination with related initiatives (efficiency); and (v) the likely sustainability of the project results. Moreover, the assessment covers cross-cutting themes, in particular the dimensions of gender equality and human rights. Finally, it addresses to what extent the project made adjustments as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A mixed method was used, including document review and interviews with project stakeholders. The evaluation findings are primarily based on qualitative data gathering and analysis.<sup>1</sup> Due to the Covid-19 context, the assignment was entirely home-based and has been conducted over the period mid-November 2021 – mid-January 2022. All interviews were conducted via skype/WhatsApp/zoom and in a few cases responses were obtained via email due to communication challenges.

---

<sup>1</sup> As quantitative data resulting from self-evaluation forms were incomplete, these were not sufficient for meaningful quantitative analysis.

## **Key findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations**

In general, as the project was spread over four countries and covered four different commodities, its design was very ambitious, considering the available resources. By approving the project before getting country endorsement, it took time in the first year of implementation to get country buy-in. This situation, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic, resulted in an extension of the project duration from its initial completion date (March 2020) to December 2021.

The surveys/value chain analyses resulted in country studies that were discussed in the form of country workshops that brought together the country stakeholders along the selected commodity value chains and also involved several other development partners. Overall, country stakeholders referred to the country studies as being relevant deliverables that also created expectations as regards the next steps, i.e., tangible actions seeking to overcome the challenges faced in RVC/GVC integration. To this end detailed action plans need to be prepared and validated by the country stakeholders (a process started in two of the four countries, i.e., Lao PDR and Mongolia and to be fostered in Ethiopia and Uzbekistan),

Considering the resources and also the Covid-19 context, the project did what could be reasonably done. Ultimately, the project's sustainability and impact primarily depend on the degree to which the country stakeholders will take the lead in extracting and validating these actions plans and, most importantly, engage in their implementation, mobilizing external support where needed.

The following *evidence trail matrix* constitutes a *synthesis* of the *main* findings, conclusions and recommendations with a view to facilitating discussion and supporting decision making on the next steps to be taken by the different main stakeholders (UNCTAD; participating countries and the Sub-Fund). For more details thereon, reference is made to the respective sections.

<b>Findings</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b><i>Project identification and design</i></b>			
Context well explained, with however 4 target countries and commodities pre-selected without official country endorsement prior to approval	Delays incurred in the first year of implementation, as time needed to get country buy-in	Need for country requests/endorsement prior to approval	Focus of recommendations on the “way forward” of project achievements (see below)
Over-ambitious project objectives/targets	Resources inadequate to go beyond country studies	Need for alignment between available resources and planned results	
Some ambiguities in the project logic and budget allocations	Adaptation of the project activities/budget based on what was achievable	Need for as precise as possible budget estimates to facilitate project implementation	
<b><i>Project implementation</i></b>			
<b><i>Relevance</i></b>			
Relevance of analytical work for the respective countries, with varying degree of country (counter part) involvement; alignment to UNCTAD mandate	Country studies appreciated by country stakeholders, with high expectations as regards the next steps (action plans and their implementation)	Involvement of national expertise (surveys/studies) can contribute to increasing national capacity building; use of national experts is not the same as national capacity building	
<b><i>Effectiveness and likely impact</i></b>			
Commendable achievements, including surveys/ value chain analyses culminating into country studies; short training in some countries and virtual participation in trade fairs	In two of the four countries so far evidence of a start towards integrating recommendations of the studies into national policies/action plans.		UNCTAD to complete the project conclusively, covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access of counterparts to all project deliverables</li> <li>• advice to countries as regards the next steps (action plans) – see also below</li> <li>• sharing all project deliverables with the development partners that took part in the project events (seeking interest in follow-on support)</li> </ul>
Synthesis report replaced by two research papers	Research papers not yet shared with the countries at time of evaluation	Including the preparation of academic papers as deliverable in technical assistance (TA) projects creates some ambiguity as regards the project purpose	See above: the research papers are integral part of project deliverables to be shared with the countries
<b><i>Efficiency in implementation</i></b>			
Delays in start-up phase exacerbated by Covid context	Need for project extensions and adjustments in budget line allocations to reflect country specific realities (including translation/	Full-fledged project-cum-budget revision is appropriate in case of need to adapt to changes in the context	Sub-Fund to allow full-fledged project-cum-budget revisions if required to adapt an initial project document/strategy to changes in the project context during implementation (including scope for allowing more flexibility as regards re-allocations among budget lines within a given budget)

	interpretation needs) and pandemic situation	Importance of translation into local language to foster use of project deliverables	
Creative adaptation to Covid context	Organization of workshops in hybrid/virtual mode and virtual trade fair participation		
Reporting in line with requirements of Sub-Fund	Periodic progress reports to Sub-Fund yet gaps in reporting on events		
Involvement of other development partners in events	Opportunities provided to share expertise and experiences among related interventions; no indication that this led to joint/parallel interventions		Sub-Fund to foster where feasible linkages among related policy support to (i) landlocked countries and (ii) Belt and Road Initiative
<b>Sustainability</b>			
Too early to assess the effective use of the project results by all four countries	Commitment and drive of country stakeholders will determine the next steps (to result in validated action plans and their implementation)		Participating countries to take the lead in planning and organizing follow-up action upon project completion (see detail by country, Section 9), with emphasis on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extracting action plans based on studies, covering priorities and their sequencing and defining roles, responsibilities and targets;</li> <li>involving development partners active in the countries/sectors with a view to mobilizing external support towards implementation of the action plans</li> </ul>
Intention of UNCTAD to engage in one-year sustainability plan (as per project document)	No sign of such plan and questioning how UNCTAD will be able to continue advice to country stakeholders without fresh funding	Reference to a “one year sustainability plan” and post-closure support of UNCTAD in project documents is to be avoided when UNCTAD cannot respect such engagement in the absence of resources dedicated to the same	
<b>Cross-cutting issues</b>			
Gender issues were not explicitly reflected in the project strategy (project design)	It is however recognized during project implementation that women have an important role in all of the selected value chains;	Project design is expected to reflect how gender issues will be addressed in implementation	



	a sizeable proportion of the participants in events were women (115 women; 298 men)		
While the issue of human rights was not a primary concern, a wide range of different stakeholders was included in the project activities (farmers through their cooperatives)	The project results were ultimately to help all stakeholders along the value chain, including the aim for i.a. farmers to earn more income from better integration in RVC/GVC	Project design is expected to reflect how human rights issues will be addressed in implementation	
<b>Response to Covid-19</b>			
The pandemic partially explains delays incurred and there is a relatively large budget balance (related to travel budget line).	The implementation approach was ably adapted (see above); a full-fledged project-cum-budget revision could have reallocated the travel budget to e.g. more local training activities		see recommendation to Sub-Fund pertaining to project/budget revisions (under efficiency)

# 1. Introduction

## *Background*

This independent final project evaluation covers UNCTAD project “*Integrating Landlocked Commodity Dependent Developing Countries into Regional and Global Value Chains*” (PDF-SDG-2017-04). The project is funded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF), with support of the Government of the People’s Republic of China.

The project’s overall aim is to support integrated value chain development in four landlocked commodity dependent developing economies: Ethiopia, Laos, Mongolia and Uzbekistan. Focus is on enhancing their capacities in developing policies and strategies to

- promote better integration into regional and global value chains (RVCs and GVCs) and
- create development linkages at the national, interregional and intercontinental levels.

The project has two specific development objectives, namely: (1) to improve statistical and analytical capacity of beneficiary countries in effective policy formulation to promote RVCs and GVCs integration and enhance development linkages, and (2) to improve the capacity of the private sector in the beneficiary countries to assess market prospects, identify market opportunities and overcome market barriers to better integrate into RVCs and GVCs.

## *Purpose of the evaluation*

The main purpose of this end-of-project evaluation is to assess in a systematic and objective manner the design and implementation of the project. It is structured in accordance with the evaluation criteria presented in the Evaluation Framework of the 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund<sup>2</sup>, examining:

- the relevance of the project (including the degree of country ownership): were the interventions doing the right things?
- its effectiveness and likely impact: did the interventions achieve their objectives and what difference do they make in terms of having generated significant higher-level effects?
- its efficiency: how well were the resources used and to what extent were there internal and external synergies?
- its likely sustainability: will the results last?

Moreover, the assessment covers cross-cutting issues, in particular the dimensions of *gender equality* and *human rights*. Finally, it will address if and how the project made adjustments as a direct *consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic* at the level of the four beneficiary countries.

The evaluation covers the entire duration of the project, i.e., from March 2018 to December 2021.<sup>3</sup> The evaluation was conducted over the period mid-November 2021 - mid-January 2022.

## *Expected use of the evaluation results*

The evaluation is carried out as a regular accountability procedure, having as intended users: project stakeholders in the beneficiary countries, UNCTAD management, the Management

---

<sup>2</sup> UN Peace and Development Fund - 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund, Evaluation Framework

<sup>3</sup> Even if a few activities are expected to carry over to early 2022 (with the approval of the Sub-Fund), there is no extension of the project duration.

Team of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund (Capacity Development Programme Management Office/CDPMO) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Donor (China) as well as UNCTAD's member States at large.

This assessment is expected to result in practical recommendations, good practices and lessons learned from the project for the different project stakeholders listed above (i) to feed into decision making as regards the way forward after the closure of the project in the focus countries, (ii) to enhance the design and implementation of related interventions elsewhere and (iii) to contribute to optimizing operational and administrative aspects of future Sub-Fund projects.

## **2. Project context**

Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) tend to be dependent on exports of primary commodities, but face obstacles to compete and thus integrate into RVCs and GVCs. This affects their socio-economic performance and constitutes an impediment to their growth. There are in total 32 developing countries that are land-locked, of which 17 are classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs). There are differences in terms of the availability of natural resources in LLDCs (some being resource-rich, others resource-scarce). Also, the situation in one's neighbouring country/countries affects trade performance, in particular factors such as the quality of the transport infrastructure, the existence of market opportunities and the degree of political stability of its neighbour(s).<sup>4</sup>

While the specific export related challenges vary among LLDCs, the main obstacles faced by these countries to increase their exports, foster export product and market diversification and thus their overall growth and poverty reduction relate to their remoteness as this affects transport/other costs to access seaports. According to UNCTAD, in the case of LLDCs transport and insurance costs are almost double compared to non-LLDCs and even three times more than in developed countries. Therefore, as export costs per container are well above the global average, it is difficult for LLDCs to compete. Faced by price competition, they tend to be locked into low/lower value addition activities as regards the commodities on which their economies depend. Accordingly, the share of manufactures' exports in their total merchandise exports remains well below global average.

Market driven upgrading of their priority value chains (often agriculture/food related) is expected to accelerate the structural transformation of LLDCs and contribute to their sustainable development in economic, social and environmental terms. The deepening of linkages with RVCs and GVCs would drive the strengthening of the countries' infrastructure and of their support institutions (including quality related services) as well as the improvement of skills and use of modern technologies. This is needed to be able to seize value addition and trade opportunities and thus to be able to move up in their priority value chains. This supposes also an enabling policy environment, sector strategies/actions plans and investment incentives.

It is in the context of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)<sup>5</sup> - aimed at fostering regional and global integration - that China contributed resources to the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund. The project under review was funded from this source, targeting selected LLDCs engaged in the BRI and is aligned to the (later) commitment made at the 2016 Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit to support BRI-related regional/interregional economic integration.

---

<sup>4</sup> Paul Collier qualified "being landlocked with bad neighbours" as one of the traps affecting the development and growth of low-income countries (P. Collier, *The bottom billion*, Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> At the time of the design of the project, this was referred to as One Belt and One Road (OBOR) Initiative.

Four beneficiary countries and target commodities/sectors were selected in different regions, namely (in alphabetical order):

- *Ethiopia* (East Africa) with focus on *coffee* (in particular roasted coffee)
- *Lao PDR* (Southeast Asia) with focus on *maize*
- *Mongolia* (East Asia) with focus on *meat*
- *Uzbekistan* (Central Asia), with focus on *food processing* (in particular dried fruit).

Zooming in on the selected countries, the situation is as follows:

<p><b>Ethiopia</b> <b>Coffee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of coffee sector: world's fifth largest producer; production involving some 1.2 million farmers and about 15 million households</li> <li>• Trend showing increase in production and exports</li> <li>• Favourable physical conditions (altitude; rainfall; temperature; soil)</li> <li>• Strong domestic demand for roasted coffee (providing learning opportunity for engaging in roasted coffee exports)</li> </ul> <p><i>but</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stagnating share in world coffee markets (below 2%)</li> <li>• Low productivity</li> <li>• Weak product traceability system</li> <li>• Difficulty to move up the coffee value chain and seize an important share of value addition in coffee business, as Ethiopia mostly exports green coffee beans</li> </ul> <p>Baseline: National Coffee Development and Quality Improvement Strategy (2016-2022) with targets pertaining to production, productivity and traceability.</p>
<p><b>Lao PDR</b> <b>Maize</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favourable physical conditions for agriculture/food production (climate; soil)</li> <li>• Move from subsistence to commercial farming, including rapid expansion of hybrid maize production, resulting in higher income of farmers and poverty reduction (rise in maize production from 117 000 T in 2000 to 1 552 360 T in 2016)</li> <li>• Enabling policies and investment in infrastructure pulled by growing markets in China and Vietnam</li> </ul> <p><i>but</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low agricultural productivity due to limited mechanization/use of fertilizers, hindering moving up the maize RVC/GVC (productivity in 2016 at 60hg/ha versus 109.6 hg/ha in USA and 81.6 hg/ha in France) (hg=hectogram; 1hg=0.0001metric ton)</li> <li>• Difficulty to meet increasingly high quality (including food safety) standards of importers</li> <li>• Competition with imports from neighbouring countries</li> <li>• Weak agricultural information systems</li> </ul> <p>Baseline: Food sector is priority in 8<sup>th</sup> National Social-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020</p>
<p><b>Mongolia</b> <b>Meat</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of livestock sector, with per capita livestock ratio of 19 heads per person; average area of 0.5 km<sup>2</sup> per person, employing one third of the labour force and constituting about 14% of GDP</li> <li>• Increase in meat production and latter in excess of local demand</li> <li>• Growing demand for meat by China</li> <li>• Red meat trade recognized to provide opportunities for the rural poor (with some 150,000 herder households).</li> </ul>

	<p><i>but</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slowdown in exports (from value of US\$ 414 million in 2004 to some US\$ 330 million in 2016 (reflecting only 7% of total exports in 2016 despite the export potential - considering the boom in meat demand from China</li> <li>• Outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and other animal diseases resulting in import bans on Mongolian meat products that persist (as FMD/other diseases continue to spread); for now no FMD free status obtained from the Organisation for Animal Health</li> <li>• Need for countrywide FMD vaccination programme/quarantine and other veterinary procedures, which is costly (estimated at US\$ 30 million/yr); big gap with available funding (some US\$ 4 million/yr) for FMD vaccination</li> <li>• Lack of traceability system</li> <li>• Need for downstream investments (animal health; upgrading of slaughtering capacity, as only some 3-7% of the country's meat is processed through abattoirs as per the situation in 2018)</li> <li>• More recently, effect of Covid-19, resulting in the suspension of meat imports from Mongolia by China.</li> </ul> <p>Baseline: Meat sector is priority in Government's development strategy, and the government is planning to create enabling environment and increase investment in the sector</p>
<p><b>Uzbekistan</b> <b>Food processing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important export potential for food products, the country being self-sufficient in agricultural production; ability to increase production</li> <li>• Favourable physical conditions (climate allowing possibility of 2 crops/year - depending on the crop; vast area, with 20.5 million ha of arable land including 4.3 million ha of irrigated land</li> <li>• Growing demand from China</li> <li>• Agreement between China and Uzbekistan to support agri-food business, including processing</li> </ul> <p><i>but</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall in exports (US\$ 0.8 billion in 2016) compared to earlier surge in food exports (predominantly fruits and vegetables/84%) having reached US\$ 1.4 billion earlier on (2011)</li> <li>• Lack of processing, packaging and cold storage facilities imply that the vast majority (95%) of production is exported unprocessed and mainly to nearby markets; hence, missed opportunities for local value addition, with almost 75% of fruits and vegetables being exported fresh, 12;5% as dried and some 8% as beans.</li> </ul> <p>Baseline: Government adopted a programme (2015-2019) aimed upgrading the food export sector, with emphasis on the modernization of processing and packaging</p>

Source: Summary of country situation prepared based on information provided in the project document

Overall, the project is conceived in the context of

- (ii) the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, aimed at contributing to the implementation of SDGs related to inclusive and sustainable industrialization (9) employment and decent work (8) poverty reduction (1), inclusiveness (5 and 10) and environmental protection (13 and 15);
- (iii) priority areas/actions identified and agreed upon at global fora, in particular: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015) focused on the integration of industrial enterprises into regional/global value chains and markets; the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (2014-2024); the 2015 Paris Agreement through

improving access to modern low-carbon and low-waste technologies; the above-mentioned Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit (2016).

### 3. The project

#### *Project, coverage and timeframe*

As mentioned in the Introduction, the ultimate objective of the project is to contribute to value chain development in four landlocked commodity dependent developing economies (Ethiopia; Laos; Mongolia; Uzbekistan) through enhancing their capacities in developing policies and strategies to (i) promote better integration into regional and global value chains (RVCs and GVCs) and (ii) create development linkages at the national, interregional and intercontinental levels. Accordingly, the project covers two interrelated areas of intervention and corresponding activities are summarized below. For the precise and complete description thereof, reference is made to Annex 2 (Logical Framework). For the assessment of the logical framework, reference is made to Section 6.1.

#### Summary of project structure

<i>Expected Accomplishments (EA) or Outcomes</i>		<i>Main activities/steps as per the project document</i>
EA 1	Improved statistical and analytical capacity of the beneficiary countries in effective policy formulation to promote RVC and GVCs integration and enhanced development linkages	<p><b>*National surveys</b> to assess the potential for integration in RVCs and GVCs, including the identification of market opportunities, analysis of policies and identification of obstacles preventing integration</p> <p><b>*Country reports</b> based on the results of the survey</p> <p><b>*Two-day seminar in each of the four countries</b> to validate the studies and discuss the ensuing national action plans to promote integration</p> <p><b>*Development of training material and organisation of on-line training workshop</b> in each of the four countries on the formulation of evidence-based policies to promote RVCs and GVCs integration covering inter alia data collection approaches/techniques and assessment of socio-economic effects</p> <p><b>*Synthesis report</b> comparing the findings in the four countries, referring to best practices from other countries and including recommendations as regards the promotion of RVC and GVCs integration and development linkages</p> <p><b>*Final two-day workshop</b> to share the findings of the synthesis report, including lessons and identify follow-up activities</p>
EA 2	Improved capacity of the private sector in beneficiary countries to assess market prospects, identify market opportunities and overcome market barriers to better integrate into RVCs and GVCs	<p><b>*Organization of an interregional and intercontinental business forum</b> bringing together entrepreneurs from the four countries and from selected best practice countries to identify policy options for integrating into RVCs and GVCs</p> <p><b>*Development of training material and organisation of on-line training workshop</b> for private entrepreneurs in the four countries to assess the potential, market situation, business prospects and options for integration into RVCs and GVCs</p> <p><b>*Final two-day workshop</b> to share the findings of the synthesis report, including lessons and identify follow-up activities (see also EA 1)</p>

The project was implemented by UNCTAD's Commodity Policy Implementation and Outreach Section of the Commodities Branch in the Division of International Trade and Commodities and

had an initial duration of 2 years (from March 2018 to March 2020). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was granted a no cost extension up to, first, March 2021 and an additional (second) extension up to 31 December 2021.

### *Project partners*

At the country level, the following institutions acted as country level focal points:

1. Ethiopia: Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA)
2. Lao PDR: Ministry of Industry and Trade, Department of Trade Promotion
3. Mongolia: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture and Light Industry (MOFALI)
4. Uzbekistan: Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade.

The project document lists a number of other project partners, namely:

- United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNCR) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate project implementation on the ground;
- UN Country Team (UNCT) at large within the spirit of coordination of UN activities in the respective countries;
- United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), providing the overall analytical and political framework on the special needs of LLDCs;
- United Nations Economic Commissions for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), providing their expertise on inter alia intra-regional integration and supporting project implementation in, respectively, Uzbekistan (UNECE), Mongolia and Lao PDR (UNESCAP) and Ethiopia (UNECA);
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), bringing in its overall analytical work on the agro-industrial sector/food processing, including its experience in the field of promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development in the targeted countries.

### *Financial and human resources*

- Budget

The project had a total initial budget of US\$ 466,000 (excluding 4% support costs/UNCTAD and excluding 3% support costs for DESA/UN Central Account).

Project expenditures (including commitments) as at 17 February 2022 totalled US\$ 389,394 which corresponds to an overall implementation rate of 83.6%. The breakdown by budget item is presented below, covering both the planned budget allocation and actual expenditures/commitments. In terms of the planned budget breakdown by outcome, a total of 63.7% was allocated to Outcome 1, compared to 36.3% for Outcome 2. With respect to actual expenditures as at mid February 2022, no breakdown by outcome / by country is available.

## **Planned budget and actual expenditures/commitments by budget line 6**

---

<sup>6</sup> It is to be noted that these figures are preliminary; the final figures will be available at the moment of financial closure of the project (after this evaluation).

Budget code/ item	Total planned (US\$)		Expenditures and commitments as at 17 February 2022	
	initial budget as per project document and % share	allocation as per latest budget revision (Nov. 2021) and % share	total	% share of expenditures/ commitments
Staff and other personnel costs	249,000.00 (53.4 %)	249,000 (53.4%)	200,780.40	51.5
Travel on official business	201,000.00 (43.1 %)	134,800.00 (28.9%)	73,868.29	19.0
Contractual services	-	59,200.00 (12.7%)	43,914.28	11.3
General operating and other direct costs	12,928.57 (2.8%)	19,928.57 (4.3%)	47,961.457	12.3
Equipment, vehicles and furniture	3,071.43 (0.7%)	3,071.43 (0.7%)	22,869.53	5.9
Transfers and grants to Counterparts	--	--	--	--
<b>Total (w/o Programme Support Costs)</b>	<b>466,000.00 (100%)</b>	<b>466,000.00 (100%)</b>	<b>389,393.95</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
<b>Balance (US\$) as at 17 Feb 2022</b>			<b>76,606.05</b>	
<b>Implementation ratio (%)</b>			<b>83.6%.</b>	

- Day-to day management

The project is managed by a team in UNCTAD's Commodities Branch. The staff member who led the design and launching of the project is no longer working in UNCTAD (since August 2020). Moreover, out of the two officers who implemented the project, one joined months after the project had started. This explains that both the new project manager and one of the officers had to implement a project they did not design.

At country level the designated national Focal Point (FP) was planned to be supported by a national consultant (as per the project document). However, there was no budget allocation to fund a national coordinator. During implementation national expertise was mobilized (survey; country study; training activities), most of whom interacted with the national focal points to the extent possible.

### *Steering, reporting and evaluation*

In terms of steering, the project document does not refer to a Steering Group (including the main country Focal Points and project partners) to guide project implementation. However, the first

---

7 The major rise in expenditures under general operating costs and equipment that incurred *after* the Nov 21 budget revision is not clear to the evaluator (who received these figures in February 2022) and would merit explanation in the terminal project report.



Project Update makes reference to the establishment of an Advisory Committee that held its first meeting on 16 June 2018. This Steering Group mechanism was not continued during implementation.

Regarding reporting, there has been periodic (six months) reporting on project progress in line with the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund requirements. Annex 5 lists the consecutive progress reports (7 in total available at the time of the evaluation).

As regards project evaluation, the project document envisaged an internal participatory desk-based self-evaluation (PSE) at the end of the implementation period (to be conducted jointly by project staff and other project stakeholders). Instead of a PSE, it was decided by UNDESA (at the time of granting the first no-cost extension) that UNCTAD would carry out an independent external end-of-project evaluation (i.e., the current exercise).

#### **4. Evaluation purpose, scope, and questions**

As mentioned in the Introduction, the evaluation covers the assessment of the design and implementation of the project, encompassing its entire duration. The evaluation is structured around the evaluation criteria indicated in the Evaluation Framework of the 2030 Agenda Sub-Fund: relevance; effectiveness and likely impact; efficiency (including synergies); likely sustainability as well as cross-cutting dimensions, in particular gender equality and human rights. Also, the response to COVID-19 is examined.

Accordingly, the evaluation was guided by the following core questions (referring to the Evaluation Matrix - Annex 4 - for the detailed questions/sub-questions addressed):

##### **❖ Project identification and design**

*How was the project designed and to what extent was the design of the project logical, coherent, and focused?*

##### **❖ Project implementation**

###### **Relevance**

*To what extent was and does the project remain valid and do the countries consider themselves “(co-)owners” of the project?*

###### **Effectiveness and likely impact**

*What are the project’s key achievements in terms of progress towards the intended results (effectiveness) and what is the likelihood for the project to achieve the intended outcomes? (likely impact)*

###### **Efficiency**

*Has the project “done things right” in terms of resource utilization and internal and external synergies?*

###### **Sustainability**

*What is the likelihood that results/benefits will continue after the project ends?*

## Cross-cutting issues

*To what extent were cross-cutting issues incorporated in the project, with emphasis on gender mainstreaming and human rights issues)?*

## Response to COVID-19

*To what extent did the COVID-19 situation affect project activities in 2020/2021?*

## 5. Methodology of the evaluation

The evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the Evaluation Framework of the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund and also UNCTAD Evaluation Guidelines. It followed a mixed-method and utilization-focused approach, seeking to enhance the use of its findings. It was guided by the project results framework (Annex 2) and the core evaluation questions (Section 4 above). The evaluation matrix (attached as Annex 4) is structured according to the core questions and guided the interviews of the different stakeholders (adapted to the specific role of the different stakeholders in the project).

The evaluation followed a participatory approach, providing an opportunity for the different stakeholders to share their perception on the overall performance of the project including its implementation strategy.

It is in this context that interviews were held with all key project stakeholders, covering in particular:<sup>8 9</sup>

- UNCTAD project team
- UNCTAD Focal Point - Liaison with The Sub-Fund Administration (UNDESA)
- UNDESA Programme Management Officer, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund
- Chief counterparts (Focal Points) in each of the four targeted countries:
  - (i) Ethiopia: Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA);
  - (ii) Lao PDR: Ministry of Industry and Trade, Department of Trade Promotion;
  - (iii) Mongolia: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Agriculture and Light Industry (MOFALI);
  - (iv) Uzbekistan: Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade (official Focal Point);
  - (v) Representatives of private stakeholders at country level involved in the project activities, including of business associations in Ethiopia (Coffee Roasters Association) and in Mongolia (Meat Exporters Association);
- Delegates of the Permanent Missions/Geneva of the four countries (to the extent involved in project design/implementation);
- National and international experts involved in different stages of project implementation (country level surveys/studies; papers emanating from the surveys).

---

<sup>8</sup> While different development partners took part in the events organized by the project, it was discussed with and agreed by UNCTAD that their role/contribution to the project work was limited, making interviews with these partners in the context of the evaluation less key.

<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding multiple efforts, the evaluator did not manage to obtain responses from some of the counterparts (see limitations).

Due to travel restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, most interviews were conducted via zoom/skype/WhatsApp (depending on the mode preferred by the interviewees). However, actual presence of the evaluator as observer in the project's final workshop held in Geneva (24 and 25 November 2021) allowed for interviewing UNCTAD project staff and stakeholders that physically participated in the workshop. The discussion with the project managers and country participants/project consultants determined the list of persons to be contacted at country level (in particular counterparts; project consultants; selected enterprises/sector associations). The UNCTAD project managers formally introduced the evaluator to the main stakeholders at country level in the form of an introductory email (as was also done as regards the ones present at the final workshop).

A mixed method was used, including mainly qualitative data gathering and analysis,<sup>10</sup> to draw conclusions and recommendations based on the evaluation findings.<sup>11</sup> The evaluation process covered the following main steps:

- First round of document review as input for the inception report, with documents being revisited throughout the evaluation process;
- Finalization of the inception report based on comments from UNCTAD through the Chief of the UNCTAD's Evaluation Unit;
- Participation as observer in the project's final workshop held in Geneva (24 and 25 November 2021);
- Planning and conducting interviews (UNCTAD team; physically present participants) in the margin of the final workshop (24-26 Nov. 2021)
- Planning and conducting zoom/skype/WhatsApp-based interviews with the main project stakeholders and partners (other than those physically present in the final workshop) over the period end November - mid December 2021;
- Preparation of the draft evaluation report (submitted on 12 January 2022 as per UNCTAD's planning);
- Submission of the final draft evaluation report (18 February 2022) based on consecutive rounds of comments received from UNCTAD.

The structure of the report follows the structure provided by UNCTAD as per the ToR and also follows UNPDF/UNCTAD Guidelines. In line with these guidelines, a gender equality and human rights approach was followed in the evaluation process, seeking to extract gender mainstreaming related data from both document review and interviews and reflecting also human rights related dimensions. Finally, in conformity with the same Guidelines, there were no ethical concerns in this evaluation to the extent the evaluator acted in her own capacity as independent evaluator (not attached to any organization that could present a conflict of interest) and has not worked with the project in any capacity.

### *Limitations*

The logical framework includes several indicators the measurement of which is based on participants' feedback as regards project activities ("at least 80% of survey respondents"). Yet, other than feedback in the form of evaluation forms completed by the project stakeholders being partial, these forms contained open questions, meaning that quantitative analysis was not

---

<sup>10</sup> The quantitative data resulting from self-evaluation forms were incomplete and not sufficient for quantitative analysis.

<sup>11</sup> The idea of an eventual survey addressed to participants of the virtual trade fairs was discussed with the Project Team, but not considered very realistic and thus not pursued. It was mentioned that the experience of the Project Team with getting responses to surveys after events has not been encouraging (limited number of responses).

appropriate. Therefore, qualitative assessment was the most meaningful approach and the findings are thus mainly based on document review and interviews of stakeholders.

The approach to have virtual meetings with the different stakeholders was the only feasible one. Travel of the evaluator to each of the four countries would have been costly and, given the Covid-19 pandemic, was in any event not possible. The time earmarked for data collection in the context of this evaluation did not allow for a survey that risked a high non-response rate. It was agreed to rather focus on interviewing the main stakeholders.

The evaluator contacted all stakeholders to whom she was introduced via email by the project team (in addition to the 6 country stakeholders and 2 project consultants already met in Geneva in conjunction with the final workshop, see above). This covered 4 additional persons in Mongolia, 4 in Ethiopia, 1 in Lao PDR and 4 in Uzbekistan. All were contacted via email immediately after the project team's introductory email (*three times* in case not responding). In the reminders the possibility was offered to share the questions and obtain the reply via email (latter approach was followed by 2 persons). Notwithstanding the reminders sent, only a total of 7 of the 13 additional persons contacted responded. Whereas the response rate was adequate in the case of three of the four countries, none of the persons contacted in Mongolia replied (implying that in the end only the person from the Permanent Mission/Geneva could be interviewed). Already the project team had reported about the challenges they had faced themselves in communicating with the counterparts and even consultants during project implementation. The evaluator thus faced the same challenge.

Notwithstanding the above limitations, these are considered not to have affected in a major way the findings and the overall validity of the assessment.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1 Project design 12

The observations on the design of the project are the following:

#### *Context analysis*

The project is the first UNCTAD project that was approved in 2017 by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund, following the Call for Proposals by the Sub-Fund. The background section of the project document explains the positioning of the project as regards the Sub-Fund objectives. The latter make explicitly reference to support to

- land-locked developing countries;
- capacity strengthening of countries along the Belt and Road Initiative (including with respect to inclusive and sustainable industrialization, trade promotion, intra-and interregional connectivity).<sup>13</sup>

#### *Target countries and focus sectors/commodities*

---

<sup>12</sup> Project document - final and approved version dated February 2018

<sup>13</sup> Source : [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) – information on UN Peace and Development Trust Fund and its two sub-Funds: Peace and Security Sub-Fund and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund

The project document (January 2018) does not specify how and based on which specific criteria the four beneficiary countries were selected. The document refers instead to discussions with the Permanent Missions in Geneva of the selected countries and to awaited formal Government responses at that point in time (project document, p. 8). The lack of formal clearance/confirmation of interest by the targeted countries (including validation/approval of the specific products/sectors to be covered in each country) *prior to* project approval is regrettable, as it contributed to delays in the launching of project activities in 3 of the 4 countries (see also Section 6.2, assessment of implementation). 14

While the initial Sub-Fund guidelines were reported to have been incomplete when the Fund was launched, the ones developed later on (2018 onwards) however included the need for Government requests or at least approval as a pre-requisite for approval by the Fund.

On the side of UNCTAD, a few factors may explain the omission of confirming country clearance before project submission: the assumption that interest/approval by the Missions in Geneva translated immediately into approval and engagement by the authorities in the capitals of each country; limited time available to prepare and submit concepts to the Sub-Fund, uncertainty if concepts submitted to the Sub-Fund would be retained, and (related to this) the desire to avoid creating expectations of the targeted countries as long as funding was uncertain.

In general, by focusing on no less than 4 countries spread over different continents and 4 different sectors/commodities, the project design became extremely ambitious considering the time (initially two years as per the project document) and also the budget allocation (roughly less than US\$ 125,000 per country).

#### *Problem analysis, stakeholder analysis and capacity assessment*

The project document contains an overview of the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries to seize trade opportunities in regional and global markets, with particular reference to costs affecting their competitiveness and the ability for their main commodity sectors to move up and integrate in the regional and global value chains. The main opportunities and challenges in each of the four countries are summarized in Section 2 above (and thus not repeated here).

The country-specific problem analysis (Section 1.2 of the project document) is considered rather thin, assuming that the public and private stakeholders in the selected countries were not sufficiently aware of regional/global trade opportunities nor of efforts required to seize them. Moreover, in the same analysis far too many interventions were targeted, considering the size of the project. More precisely, the project would not be able to effectively implement what is listed under “realistic outcomes/target” in the document, such as: improving traceability (coffee/Ethiopia); improving the business environment and meeting export standards (maize/Lao PDR); supporting the improvement of upstream and downstream meat production/processing practices, including also support to countrywide Foot and Mouth Disease/FMD vaccination programmes (meat, Mongolia); improving the business environment and improving, inter alia, traceability and certification (fruits and vegetables, Uzbekistan). As shown in the ToC (below), there are multiple assumptions pertaining to what has to be in place for the intended goals (as formulated) to be reached.

---

14 Formal endorsements: Ethiopia (Oct. 2018); Lao PDR (Jan. 2019); Mongolia (Jan. 2018); Uzbekistan (Oct. 2018).

### *Implementation strategy*

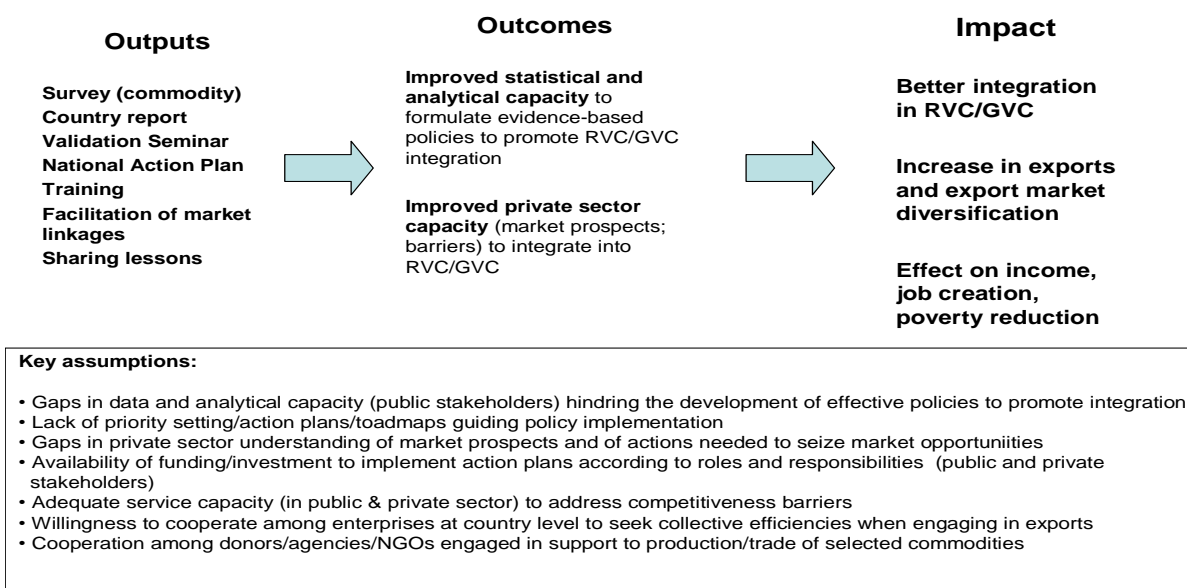
The core principles guiding the project logic and interventions that can be extracted from the project strategy (project document, p. 17) are the following:

- policy makers need to understand the sector/commodity value chain, strengthen data collection approaches/techniques as basis for developing evidence-based policies and for action plans and enhance market linkages;
- private actors along the selected sector/commodity value chains need to understand trade opportunities, be trained to assess market conditions/options for integration into RVC and GVS, facilitated by business-to-business meetings;
- lessons can be learned from “best practice countries” and from sharing among the experience in the four countries.

The logic is based on the assumption that capacity building of national stakeholders has major gaps, relies to a great extent on information (in this case survey data) and also on training of public and private stakeholders. The survey findings, once validated, were to contribute in turn to the formulation of policies/strategies/action plans.

The graph below seeks to reconstitute the underlying Theory of Change (ToC) that identifies the causal and transformational pathways from project outputs to expected impact and spells out the main assumptions/preconditions that could affect project performance. As mentioned above, the expected outputs and outcomes (as formulated in the project document) were important but insufficient to bring about the intended outcomes and wider effects. It is argued here that the aim to improve statistical and analytical capacity of policy makers and the capacity of private sector to assess market opportunities and overcome market barriers in the beneficiary countries would suggest focus on a series of targeted training cum advisory support activities for which the project did not have enough resources. While during implementation there have been a few training activities (particularly in Lao PDR and Uzbekistan, Section 6.2), these can be considered the *start* of such capacity strengthening.

## Schematic conceptual basis of project interventions - Theory of Change



### *Logical framework*

Overall, the structure of the logical framework reflects the high aspirations of the project: building statistical and analytical capacity in the public sector and private sector capacity to seize market opportunities. As mentioned, given limited project resources (budget and initially available time - two years), these aims were over-ambitious as regards what reasonably could be done in the four targeted countries at two levels: policy makers and private enterprises. Accordingly, the overall project purpose is considered very vast, as combining multiple targets under one single objective: capacity to develop policies and strategies, market linkages, inclusive and sustainable development, south-south learning and knowledge sharing among policy makers and private entrepreneurs.

As regards the outputs under EA1, emphasis was on data collection through surveys (output 1.1). This approach is in line with the objective to improve statistical and analytical capacity in each of the four countries. Given this objective, one would have expected National Statistics Offices to have had a prominent role in the project logic. Under its Output 1.2, the step from survey/country reports to national action plans was presented rather mechanically (“validate the reports and discuss the national action plans”, p. 18). According to this formulation, the effort required to prepare a robust action plan involving multiple stakeholders is underestimated (it being rather unlikely for a detailed action plan to be developed, presented and agreed on in a two-day seminar).

The training programme to which reference is made under Output 1.3 mixes many subjects, from data collection techniques, assessing the effects of integration into RCV/GVC, to approaches to the formulation of policies. This formulation is considered in fact fuzzy, leaving it unclear what the training programmes and related materials planned to be developed would cover in more precise terms.

Also, the idea of a synthesis report (Output 1.4) bringing together the findings of the four countries and complementing these with the experience of countries such as China, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, is unclear. By focusing on four different commodities, there were

expected to be few common issues, other than all four beneficiary countries being land-locked. Moreover, the good practices planned to be shared emanated from countries de facto not facing the particular obstacle of being landlocked. This raises the question if lessons from these countries would be applicable to the context of landlocked countries (including LDCs).

As regards the outputs under EA2, emphasis was on the organization of a business forum (Output 2.1) and a training programme (Output 2.2). The final workshop (Output 2.3) would constitute the wrap-up event, bringing together the different stakeholders to share lessons learned and identify follow-up activities. The underlying idea (Output 2.1) was to bring together enterprises from four different sectors in one trade event (such as the China Import Exhibition). As mentioned in Section 6.2, this could not be implemented due to Covid-19 and in the end enterprises were able to virtually participate in *specialized fairs*.

With respect to the indicators (EA1), their formulation and measurement is focused on different dimensions: response of beneficiaries to a questionnaire at the end of implementation, the development of national action plans and the development of national data sets. The most tangible one is considered the degree in which countries have developed (and validated) a commodity specific action plan/road map to promote RVC/GCV integration. Regarding indicators under EA2, the response of beneficiaries to a questionnaire at the end of implementation is the main indicator (with its usefulness depending on the ultimate response rate). The indicator referring to contracts signed/under discussion is considered overambitious for a project with very limited resources to foster market linkages, underestimating the investment required to generate sustainable results in this regard.

### *Cross-cutting issues*

In the project document there is no separate section in which cross-cutting issues among which gender equality and human rights are discussed. This could be explained by the format of project proposals at the start of the Sub-Fund operations. The role of women in agricultural production and agro-processing sector is however mentioned in the problem analysis. The logical framework does not mention the need for sex-disaggregated data.

### *Risks and mitigation actions*

The risks listed in the project document focused on *organizational* dimensions (among which difficulties to coordinate activities at country level, gaps in stakeholder interest, deficiencies regarding national consultants to timely deliver) as well as *political* dimensions (in particular political instability and gaps in government buy-in to follow up on the stakeholders' recommendations). Given the national capacity strengthening focus of the project, one could further detail 'stakeholder interest' by adding the need for their effective engagement/participation in the surveys, drafting of the country studies and ensuing action plans.

### *Sustainability*

The project document refers to sustainability being ensured through follow-up actions by UNCTAD as well as the buy-in of various stakeholders. Whereas this is appropriate in the case of the national stakeholders, the need for follow-up support by UNCTAD would, *stricto sensu*, not be a sign of sustainability. It is noted that UNCTAD aims to monitor (beyond completion of the project) the implementation of actions as recommended in the national action plans in what is labelled a one-year sustainability monitoring period (SMP). According to the project document,



UNCTAD commits support not only during the one-year SMP but also thereafter by planning to “help identify financial sources and capacity building activities required to implement the national action plans (project document, p.21). It is not clear how UNCTAD will be able to carry out this post-project support at country level without project resources.

### *Monitoring and evaluation*

The project document refers to internal (intra-UNCTAD) monitoring of project performance. As regards its evaluation, a self-assessment was foreseen in the project document at the end of the project. During implementation it was decided to conduct an external evaluation in line with UNDESA procedures and considering the duration of the project.

### *Management and coordination agreements*

No Steering Committee was envisaged in the project document, bringing together the different core stakeholders and partners. The project document however refers to close cooperation between UNCTAD and a number of partner organizations, with a view to forging collaboration, avoiding overlapping of interventions, and, ultimately, enhancing collective impact. This included coordination at country level with the UN Country Team and cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (as listed on the cover page of the project document).

## **6.2 Project implementation**

### **6.2.1 Relevance**

#### *For the participating countries*

Supporting landlocked developing countries in their efforts to foster RVC/GCV integration is, as such, an important endeavour. Accordingly, there is in principle no doubt about the relevance of a project aimed at capacity building for policy makers and private enterprises (actual/prospective exporters) in the targeted countries. By preselecting the commodities prior to obtaining country buy-in, the project however took a risk, as it was not confirmed *ex ante* if statistical and analytical capacity gaps were indeed a priority concern in the countries and among the core constraints faced by them as regards RVC/GCV integration.

The inception missions allowed for explaining the project purpose and all countries confirmed their interest. Still, country (co-)ownership during implementation varied. It was quite strong in *Lao PDR* (judged by the feedback from country stakeholders), with the project’s analytical work (also translated into Lao at their request) considered to be the beginning of efforts to develop the country’s maize value chain as integral part of its 9<sup>th</sup> Socio-economic Plan including the country’s poverty reduction goals. The country has the expectation that there will be a follow-up, the next step being the need for a detailed action plan/road map to be extracted from the findings of the study and for support to implement the road map. *Lao PDR* was the only one of the four countries to explicitly request the inclusion of (three) counterpart staff in the team conducting the survey within the spirit of capacity building (in line with its understanding of the project objective).

*Mongolia's* Permanent Mission in Geneva took the initiative in October 2019 to bring together Geneva-based agencies (UNCTAD, ITC, WTO, other) in a one-day inter-agency consultation meeting with a view to forging more comprehensive and streamlined cooperation among different support interventions as regards *Mongolia's* meat sector. This shows the importance attached by the country to external support to the sector. The analytical work conducted by the project culminated in a "meat road map" that was discussed during the country workshop (2021) and also thereafter among the country stakeholders, namely during an internal one-day seminar at the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industries (MOFALI) in April 2021.

In the case of *Uzbekistan*, it proved difficult to engage the main counterpart ministry during the project life. Still, it was the country's standards body (Uzstandard) that took effective interest in the project work, in line with its role and responsibilities as regards addressing quality related issues affecting the ability to foster exports of dried fruits. Its significant interest in the project's activities (national workshop, training event, ANUGA@home participation by exporters and also its active participation in the final workshop of the project national plans for action. This remains the responsibility of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade, which was almost completely non-responsive during project implementation.

As regards *Ethiopia*, UNCTAD's decision taken at the start of implementation to focus on roasted coffee (instead of coffee at large as per the project document) facilitated interest of the country. However, the analytical project work was reported to not having involved the project's counterpart organization. Accordingly, country ownership was affected as well as the project's alignment to the country's coffee sector strategy (including roasted coffee).

#### *For UNCTAD*

The alignment of the project to UNCTAD's mandate is evident, as it is the organization's role to support trade and development including south-south cooperation, in which it has longstanding experience and expertise. More precisely, support to addressing the trade, investment and development needs of landlocked developing countries has been reflected in specific organizational goals defined and adopted by UNCTAD 14 (Nairobi, 2016) that are in turn in accordance with priorities set in the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (2014-2024). Overall, the project focus corresponds to UNCTAD's Strategic Framework (at the time of design covering the period 2018-2019) that specified under Programme 10 (Trade and Development) support to capacity development of (i) commodity-dependent developing countries to address trade and development problems and to (ii) landlocked developing countries to promote their economic transformation.<sup>15</sup>

Country stakeholders recognize UNCTAD's analytical work, but also its challenges on the side of funding to support countries in carrying the findings of studies (conducted by consultants and UNCTAD staff). These country studies were discussed in the context of the country workshops and were complemented by two papers based on the survey findings (not yet shared with the countries at the time of the evaluation but planned to be done during Q1 or 2022).

#### *SDG alignment*

In all four countries, the national SDG 2030 vision contains features to which the project work is overall aligned:<sup>16</sup>

- In the case of Ethiopia, the SDGs are integrated in the Second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) 2015/16 – 2019/20 that refers to priorities including

---

<sup>15</sup> Project document, Section 1.3

<sup>16</sup> Voluntary National Reviews on SDGs (Ethiopia, 2017; Lao PDR, 2018; Mongolia, 2019)

agriculture being the mainstay of the country's economic development and putting also emphasis on competitiveness, efficiency, productivity and quality related priorities;

- In Lao PDR, SDG planning is integrated in its 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan, putting inter alia emphasis on the need for economic diversification to achieve more resilient, green, inclusive and sustainable growth;
- As regards Mongolia, its SDG 2030 vision includes among other priorities the development of intensive livestock farming based on market demand as well as the increase in meat production;
- In Uzbekistan, the SDG Vision is in coherence with the National Action Strategy for 2017-2020, with emphasis on inter alia economic development and liberalization and seeking to increase the share of industry as well as growth in exports.

### **6.2.2 Effectiveness and likely impact**

This chapter starts with (a) an overview of the achievements against the planned multifaceted objective and its underlying outputs/activities (in matrix format). This is followed by (b) the assessment of these achievements, its results and progress towards impact.

**(a) Overview of achievements against planned results and activities 17**

<p><b>Objective</b> <i>(as formulated in the project document)</i></p>	<p>To enhance the capacity of selected landlocked commodity dependent developing countries in developing policies and strategies to promote better integration into regional and global value chains (RVCs and GVCs) and create development linkages at the national, intraregional, inter-regional and intercontinental levels, thus ensuring inclusive and sustainable development towards 2030. The project will also promote south-south learning and enhance knowledge and experience exchange among policymakers and private entrepreneurs from landlocked commodity dependent developing countries.</p>	
<p><b>Expected accomplishment (EA)</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of planned activities</b> <i>(as per the project document)</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Achievements</b></p>
<p><b>EA1</b> <b>Improved statistical and analytical capacity</b> of the beneficiary countries in effective policy formulation to promote RVC and GVCs integration and enhance development linkages</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of survey respondents indicate increased knowledge regarding data collection/analysis</li> <li>• At least 3 of the 4 beneficiary countries have developed a national action plan to promote RVC/GVC integration, accelerate reforms and maximize development linkages</li> <li>• At least 3 of the 4 countries have developed national datasets to estimate the</li> </ul>	<p><b>*National surveys</b> <b>*Country reports</b> based on the results of the surveys <b>*Two-day seminar in each of the countries</b> to validate the studies and discuss the ensuing national action plans to promote integration <b>*Training material/ programme and organisation</b> of on-line <b>training workshop in each of the four countries</b> on data collection &amp; analysis methodologies and approaches to formulate evidence-based policies <b>*Synthesis report</b> comparing the country findings, sharing best practices from other countries and including policy recommendations <b>*Final two-day workshop</b> to share the findings of the synthesis report, including</p>	<p><b>Ethiopia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal project endorsement in October 2018</li> <li>• Inception mission, 10-14 December 2018</li> <li>• Value chain survey resulting in country study entitled Analyzing the roasted coffee export value chain in Ethiopia, 2020 (S. Mitiku Tebeka, consultant)</li> <li>• Report on roasted coffee exports from Ethiopia; November 2018 (G. Ferro, consultant) re-edited as Market analysis of key export markets for Ethiopian coffee roasters and exporters of roasted coffee, 2021</li> <li>• National (physical and online) workshop (including half day training), 11 March 2021 – programme and presentations (no separate workshop report)</li> </ul> <p><b>Lao PDR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNCTAD requesting endorsement by country (Note Verbale, Jan 2018 and Aug 2018) and formal project endorsement by Lao PDR, Jan 2019</li> <li>• Inception mission (Bangkok and Lao PDR, Oct 2018)</li> <li>• Survey in 2019 by team of national consultants in six districts (including participation of two staff of Ministry of Industry and Commerce in the survey field work)</li> <li>• Data analysis culminating in country study entitled Analyzing the maize value chain for export, September 2020 (Rodrigo Cárcamo, Project Manager and Officer for Lao PDR); study translated into Lao at request of country</li> <li>• National virtual workshop, 13 Oct 2020 (programme; presentations and detailed workshop report)</li> </ul> <p><b>Mongolia</b></p>

17 Based on in particular the project progress reports and complemented by the evaluator with information obtained during the interviews; the overview covers the *main* achievements and does not claim to be exhaustive in terms of covering *all* the project work carried out by the project.

<p><i>potential of RVC/GVC integration and its effects</i></p>	<p>lessons and identify follow-up activities (see also EA2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal project endorsement in January 2018</li> <li>• Inception mission, 4-8 June 2018</li> <li>• Survey on the domestic and export meat value chain in Mongolia, 2020 (Anuujiin Gantulga, consultant),</li> <li>• Market analysis of key destination markets for Mongolian Meat Exporters, 2020 (Munkhzul Boldbaatar, consultant)</li> <li>• National Virtual Workshop (including half day training), 28-29 Jan 2021 (programme, presentations; no workshop report)</li> <li>• Roadmap for the meat export value chain in Mongolia (draft, 2021) that was discussed during a “meat export seminar” organized by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry (29 April 2021)</li> </ul> <p><b>Uzbekistan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-inception mission to facilitate project validation, September 2018</li> <li>• Formal project endorsement in October 2018</li> <li>• Inception mission, 11-15 March 2019</li> <li>• Survey of the domestic dry fruits value chain, 2020 (Jasurbek Rustamov and Aktam Azizov, consultants), resulting in country study entitled Uzbek Dry fruits exports: prospects, problems and potential, May 2021 (Rodrigo Cárcamo, Julian Roche and Jasurbek Rustamov)</li> <li>• Short Guide on fostering exports of dried fruits from Uzbekistan, Julian Roche (March 2021)</li> <li>• National virtual workshop, 4 Feb 2021 (programme and presentations, no workshop report)</li> </ul> <p><b>Multi-country activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of two papers using survey data (in particular concerning Lao PDR; Uzbekistan; Mongolia) and disaggregated sectorial trade data, and their publication in the end of Q4, 2021, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostering food value chain development in landlocked commodity dependent developing countries, 2021 (Marcel Vaillant, consultant)</li> <li>• Primary producer sales prices and cooperatives: a cross-country multi-product analysis, 2021 (Rodrigo Cárcamo and Justin van de Ven, consultant)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Final project workshop (initially planned to be held in Bangkok but, due to the pandemic, held in hybrid form in Geneva (24 and 25 November 2021)</li> </ul>
--	---	--

<p><b>EA2</b> Improved capacity of the private sector in beneficiary countries to assess market prospects, identify market opportunities and overcome market barriers to better integrate into RVCs and GVCs</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 80% of surveys respondents (private sector) indicate increased knowledge of assessing market potential/opportunities for RVC/GVC integration</li> <li>• At least one enterprise from each country with direct benefits of project (contracts signed or being discussed)</li> </ul>	<p>*Interregional and intercontinental <b>business forum</b> bringing together entrepreneurs from the four countries and from selected best practice countries</p> <p>*<b>Training material</b> and organisation of <b>on-line training workshop</b> for private entrepreneurs to assess the potential, market situation, business prospects and options for integration into RVCs and GVCs</p> <p>*<b>Final two-day workshop</b> to share the findings of the synthesis report, including lessons and identify follow-up activities (see also EA 1)</p>	<p><b>Ethiopia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtual participation in CaféShow South Korea (10-13 Nov 21) allowing for multiple business connections (reference to some 86 interested customers having expressed their interests and various individual discussions between them and Ethiopian roasters reported to be ongoing)</li> </ul> <p><b>Lao PDR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially planned: participation in CAEXPO Fair, Nanning, China (not feasible due to Covid-19 and also taking into consideration the nature of the value chain engaging mainly smallholder farmers. Planned at the time of the evaluation: event in Vientiane Province – linking buyers (focusing on those in the animal feed business) and sellers (hybrid event implemented on 20-21 January 2022 in Vientiane Province))</li> </ul> <p><b>Mongolia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtual participation in Food and Hospitality China 2021, Shanghai, China, 9-11 Nov 2021 (with more than 200 potential buyers reported to have visited the booth), followed by two virtual discussions organized at end 2021, allowing a group of 6 Mongolian meat processors to establish direct business contacts with 37 Chinese buyers interested in their products. Business talks nevertheless hampered by the blockage of meat exports at the Chinese border from June 2021 to the end of the project (31/12/2021) given Covid related trade restrictions by China.</li> </ul> <p><b>Uzbekistan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-days training, 25-26 May 21 on international certification, standards and quality, dried fruit value chain (in Uzbek), with total of 88 participants (11% female) including 39 private sector stakeholders, 34 government officials, 3 participants from academia; 4 development partners based in Uzbekistan as well as 4 UNCTAD staff</li> <li>• Virtual participation in Anuga 2021 Trade Fair, 11-13 Oct 21; report by national facilitator</li> <li>• Unforeseen: University professor used presentations on drying methods/trends (accessed during Anuga Trade Fair) in curriculum for students</li> </ul> <p><b>Multi-country activity</b> see EA1</p>
---	--	---

		<p><b>Cumulative output data as per project reporting (October 2021):</b></p> <p><u>Events</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four knowledge sharing events</li> <li>• One study tour (Lao PDR) – as participation of 3 national staff in the survey has been counted in reporting as a study tour</li> <li>• Six training seminars</li> </ul> <p><u>Participants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Government</u>: n=109 of which 92 technical and 17 senior officials; 75 central government and 34 local government</li> <li>• <u>Private sector</u>: n= 96</li> </ul> <p><u>Other data on participants in project activities in wide sense:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 93 female; 148 male</li> <li>• 10 from CSO/NGO</li> <li>• 17 from academia</li> <li>• 26 from UN (Secretariat/other agencies)</li> <li>• 55 observers (non UN)</li> <li>• 4 others</li> </ul> <p>This reporting also refers to “drafting of national policy”. This supposedly covers ongoing work in Lao PDR and Mongolia in particular.</p>
--	--	---

## **(b) Assessment**

Overall, and notwithstanding challenges, the project has a number of commendable achievements. In this regard reference is made in particular to the country studies based on the surveys/value chain analyses focusing on agricultural commodities in the four countries that are crucial for fostering economic growth and rural poverty reduction. These studies constitute the analytical ground for building new or enhancing existing strategies aimed at developing, expanding and/or diversifying regional or inter-regional trade in the targeted sectors. As already mentioned, the project design was overambitious in terms of its coverage (4 countries; 4 commodities; capacity building of public and private sector stakeholders). Given its size, the project could at best conduct such preparatory analytical work towards more comprehensive support to “trading food for sustainable development” In this sense the project achieved what could be reasonably done with the available resources. The country stakeholders however have expectations as regards support in the next step, i.e., to move from the research phase to the implementation of the findings and recommendations of the studies.

More specific observations on the project results are the following:

1) With respect to the planned capacity building *objective*, it is difficult to assess to what extent the intended statistical/analytical capacity has been built as input for evidence-based policy making. The surveys were designed by UNCTAD and conducted in the field essentially by consultants and also the subsequent analysis involved major UNCTAD staff and consultants’ inputs. Accordingly, it is not very clear to what extent (and whose) specific capacity has been built in the countries. Providing the counterparts with the survey data and with the ensuing country reports is not considered the same as building the planned statistical/analytical capacity at country level. Only in the case of Lao PDR data collection involved three public officials in data collection at its explicit request.

2) Reporting on results has been more *activity/output* than *outcome* based, with emphasis on in particular (i) the country studies resulting from the surveys/value chain analysis conducted, (ii) the national workshops held in each of the countries to present and discuss the findings, (iii) the training events organized in three of the four countries and (iv) the two quantitative-based papers - that were presented in (v) the final workshop.

3) Regarding the *outcome* indicators, feedback received from (particularly private sector) participants after having attended activities organized by the project was overall positive. Still, the project team faced in some cases challenges to obtain completed evaluation forms from country stakeholders (particularly in the case of virtual events). Drawing conclusions from responses from a limited number of participants calls for caution, as affecting the relevance of the use of these evaluation forms as performance indicator in this evaluation.

4) The development of a national action plan (under EA1) was another outcome indicator listed in the project’s logical framework. This was expected to emanate from the discussion of the respective country reports during the national workshops. While the country studies prepared by consultants/UNCTAD staff include recommendations (with varying degree of detail), this is considered different from the country stakeholders having specified and agreed upon priority actions in the form of an action plan or road map (including the definition of respective roles and responsibilities) during or as the result of such dialogue. Only in the cases of Mongolia and Lao PDR there is evidence of the country stakeholders being engaged in discussing/refining a draft road map for the meat sector.

5) The project opted for extracting two papers based on econometric analysis using the available survey data. It is clear that, with four different commodity value chains in four countries, it would be challenging to compare the country findings and present best practices in the initially planned synthesis report. It is however not possible to assess to what extent and how these papers (that



will be shared with the countries during Q1 of 2022) will be used by the countries' policy makers. It is recognized that the themes emanating from the econometric analysis are indeed relevant (such as the role of cooperatives in price negotiation for smallholder farmers, the importance of quality issues and of landlocked countries to engage in trade discussions/agreements to improve access to markets).. From the perspective of UNCTAD, the two papers were a key contribution to the debate during the final workshop, by focusing on common issues affecting the countries (i.e., as was expected from the originally planned "synthesis report").

6) The common training programme for entrepreneurs (as originally envisaged in the project document) was not implemented. It was indeed not realistic to develop the same for four different commodities/countries, if such training was to be targeted and practical. Instead, in two countries a short training was organized. In Uzbekistan this covered awareness raising/training on quality related themes (in Uzbek), that stakeholders considered very relevant. The content of the half-day training event organized in Ethiopia seemed a logical continuation of the workshop on the same day.

7) The project is to be commended for (i) changing the planned business forum bringing together the four countries into focus on separate trade fairs, relevant for the respective commodities and (ii) the organization of virtual participation of businesses in trade fairs in the context of COVID-19. This approach - appreciated by the participating enterprises/their sector associations - allowed for virtual buyers-sellers connections and also facilitated linkages with specialized business support providers (e.g., those engaged in conformity testing). It is premature to assess the results of the virtual trade fair participations, also based on the understanding that it takes time and repeated participation in such fairs before resulting in business deals. Flexibility was shown by adapting the approach in the case of Lao PDR (where participation in international fair was not in coherence with the needs and opportunities of the target sector), thus opting instead for a national/provincial level buyers-sellers meeting (postponed to early 2022).

8) It was observed that the final two-day workshop (Geneva, November 2021) constituted an expert group type of meeting to discuss the multifaceted issues affecting RVC and GVC integration, including also presentations from the participating countries. It was not used to identify follow-up activities in the four countries.

### **6.2.3 Efficiency of implementation**

#### *Adequacy, timeliness and quality of inputs*

- Time was lost at the beginning of implementation to explain the purpose and coverage of project to the selected countries. In this regard the guidelines at the launching of the Sub-Fund were seemingly incomplete at the start (country requests/clearance not being among the prerequisites), albeit understood that this has been rectified later on (after the approval of the project under review).
- Given the above-mentioned delays incurred in the start-up phase and also the tight planning of the duration of the project (2 years), there was already in 2019 the need for a project extension request.
- The budget estimates as per the approved project document were found to be not well aligned to local costs, implying that some budget lines were overestimated whereas other budget lines were underestimated or missing. For example, interpretation and translation costs were not taken into account in the budget planning, not keeping in mind that the project had selected countries in which holding events in English should have been

known to be not evident from the design stage onwards. However, UNCTAD implemented local translation in events in Lao PDR, Mongolia and Uzbekistan using savings from other budget line allocations, while training events in Mongolia and Uzbekistan were conducted fully in the local language.

- The budget rules (requiring approvals in case of +10% changes compared to the approved budget line allocation) added to the project's administrative burden. It is not understood why (given the unforeseen challenges as a result of the pandemic) no major project cum budget revision was done to avoid the need for several ad hoc justifications as regards budget use. For this reason, the budget allocation for travel remained high (still one third of the total budget as at end November 2021), even though travel was limited due to Covid-19 restrictions. Part thereof could have been reallocated to cover justifiable local costs (e.g., translation of country studies into local language - only implemented in Lao PDR at the request of the country, albeit also offered to the project Focal Point in Uzbekistan; or other local activities to be defined with the project counterparts). Accordingly, the budget balance at the end of this (relative small size) project is considered rather high, namely US \$ 76,606.05 (based on figures as at mid February 2022).
- Planning and conducting the surveys took longer than planned, and, accordingly, the organization of the country workshop to discuss its findings (as shown in the spread of the dates of the consecutive activities included in the overview of achievements, Section 6.2.2). The planning already was pushed forward prior to Covid-19 (2019) but became more complicated with the start of the pandemic. The planned 2-day workshop became a one-day event which is understandable, as organizing a stakeholder dialogue in a virtual manner is not evident, as also mentioned by the country stakeholders.
- There was emphasis in the project strategy on conducting surveys for data collection and statistical analysis. This approach proved feasible in the case of Lao PDR, Mongolia and Uzbekistan. In the case of Ethiopia, the value chain included fewer actors, which would explain why the country study is a value chain analysis rather than a survey.
- Some data in the country studies merit some updating based on the observations of the country stakeholders. This is the case for Ethiopia, given gaps in data on roasted coffee exports whereas this data was available with the counterpart organization. Moreover, also noted was the omission of reference to the coffee sector road map which was already prepared with other development partners in 2018 including mention of value addition potential of roasted coffee. Whereas the Uzbek stakeholders referred to the need for updated information on number of farmers having engaged in Global Gap/other relevant certifications), it is understood that this is not possible, as the study is purely based on survey data.
- Given the budget allocation to allow for trade fair participation (EA2) and also the Covid-19 context, the decision to organize virtual rather than participation was judicious and creative. It also allowed for more enterprises to take part in such events.

#### *Adequacy of steering, management, reporting and monitoring*

- The Advisory Committee established at start (with one meeting held in June 2018) reportedly aimed at fostering inter-agency collaboration was discontinued. It is difficult to assess to what extent this affected project results. At best its continuation could have fostered effective linkages among complementary projects.

- As explained, there was staff turnover during project implementation, both at the level of UNCTAD and at the level of the country Focal Points. The latter affected at some point communication with the countries. The fact that no country mission could take place since the start of Covid-19 did not facilitate implementation.
- In some cases national consultants were reported to have worked in isolation, not involving systematically the national project Focal Points, thus affecting the likelihood of the planned local capacity building.
- Progress reporting to the Sub-Fund respected the reporting requirements and the Sub-Fund project manager exchanged systematically on the content of reporting with the project team.
- Reporting on the country workshops has been limited to the programme, presentations and the number of participants. Only in one case (Lao PDR) there is a detailed workshop report.
- Communication on project results was facilitated through a dedicated project website containing relevant information on the project as well as updates on progress through newsletters posted thereon.
- For a reason not understood, UNCTAD somewhat changed the project heading used in communication, by referring to the project as 'Trading Food for Sustainable Development' (a catchy title that however made the project purpose look even more ambitious).

*Adequacy of coordination among related initiatives including complementarities (internal/external)*

The following observations are made on the degree of internal and external synergies:

*Internal (regarding both UNCTAD and the Sub-Fund)*

The projects funded by the Peace and Development Trust Fund since 2016 include not only the UNCTAD project under review but also other projects addressing possibly converging or at least complementary themes in some targeted countries (some of the latter being the same, particularly Ethiopia, Lao PDR and Mongolia). In this regard reference is made to the UNDESA project focused on national policy capacity strengthening for jointly building the Belt and Road (approved in 2016), the OHRLLS project aimed at strengthening policy capacity of landlocked countries promoting transport connectivity (approved in 2018), the UNDP project focused on promoting sustainable investments along the Belt and Road including Ethiopia (approved in 2018), the global UNDESA project focused on enhancing development policy synergies and mutual learning (approved in 2019). Similarly, there are two other UNCTAD projects funded by the Sub-Fund, namely one on enhancing structural transformation in key partner countries of the Belt and Road Initiative (approved in 2018) and another one developing integrated programmes focused on fostering inter alia structural transformation (approved in 2020). Both projects include Ethiopia.

It is understood that convergence in terms of the source of funding, overarching themes and countries does not necessarily entail that there is scope for cooperation and synergies among such projects. To the extent the reporting format of the project under review does not include a section on "related assistance", review of the "other" projects would be required to assess to

which extent there have been missed opportunities for cooperation (which goes beyond the scope of this evaluation).

#### *External*

Contact was established by the project team with other development partners engaged in agricultural production and value addition in the selected countries during the inception missions; this included also contacts with regional institutions based in Bangkok in the margin of inception mission to Lao PDR.

During implementation this was pursued by involving other development partners (among which UNDP, ITC, UNIDO, FAO) in country workshops, with some sister agencies also giving presentations in these events. The main role of other development partners has focused on sharing expertise and advice; there is no indication that this cooperation efforts resulted in collaborative funding of parallel/joint activities by the international community in the selected commodity areas (particularly relevant in Ethiopia, Mongolia and Uzbekistan, as there were/are different agencies/donors that work in the same/complementary fields in these countries) .

As a non-resident agency, it was not possible for UNCTAD to take part in donor coordination efforts at country level (such as the case of Ethiopia: the Coffee Forum established at the initiative of the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority). This could have possibly facilitated the mobilization of donors as regards the follow-up of the roasted coffee value chain study.

### **6.2.4 Sustainability**

The likelihood that results are being used at the level of the four countries will first and foremost depend on the commitment and drive of country stakeholders to take the project forward. In this regard there are a few encouraging signs, such as in Lao PDR that is reported have the intention to incorporate the findings of UNCTAD's research in the revision of its Agricultural 5 Year Plan. In the case of Mongolia, the red meat road map, defining the key priorities for the meat export value chain was reported to be endorsed by the sector stakeholders and sent to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry.

Data sets emanating for the surveys were shared with the counterparts, with project reporting highlighting those countries need resources to be able update such data (both human and financial). The issue is what is more important in terms of the use of the project results beyond the project: the ability to repeat surveys or the development of detailed action plans emanating from the data and steps towards their subsequent implementation. It is argued here that the latter merits most priority, given the emphasis put by the counterparts on the action plans and their implementation, in search of tangible results. It is however recognized that, given the time span of the project and also the time needed at country level for the preparation and validation of action plans, it was difficult for this UNCTAD project to go beyond the analytical studies and selected training activities.

As per the design of the project, UNCTAD would engage upon completion of the project in a one-year sustainability plan and monitoring period and "continue to collaborate with the relevant stakeholders to help identify financial resources and capacity building activities required to implement the national action plans" (project document, p. 21). The "implementability" of this intention is however uncertain, to the extent it is not clear how this can be realized without obtaining fresh resources (in the form of a successor project).

## 6.2.5 Cross-cutting issues

### *Gender*

As mentioned in the assessment of project design, gender equality and women empowerment were not explicitly reflected in the project design. As such, it is difficult to judge the project results on this metric. Still, the final report includes cumulative data, indicating that 115 women took part in project activities (compared to 298 men), which is as such a sizeable proportion. Indeed, while not elaborated on in the project document, it is recognized that women tend to have an important role in most of the selected value chains (in particular crop growing, harvesting, drying or other pre-processing activities). Moreover, there were signs of possible inequality, such as the survey data regarding Uzbekistan showing that the proportion of female temporary workers was much larger than the ones having permanent jobs in the sector.<sup>18</sup>

Possible follow-up at country level as regards the action plans and their implementation is however expected to pay attention to gender-related issues, using studies (FAO; WB; others) on the role of women in the selected countries/sectors.

### *Human rights (with emphasis on economic rights)*

The human rights dimension is not mentioned as such in the project document nor in reporting. Accordingly, the issue of human rights and the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination were not a primary concern in the project activities. This does not take away that, ultimately, the project results were to help all stakeholders along the value chain, including farmers

To the extent the main deliverables are country studies, it is in the next step (the action plans and their implementation) that the interventions are expected to generate results that correspond to the needs of and are felt by all stakeholders along the value chains, including the poorest segments. It is noted that data collection through the surveys reached out to farmers (including herders), (pre-) processors and traders of different sizes. The range of different stakeholders was also represented in the workshops (the farmers through their cooperatives). This approach is expected to be pursued when defining/validating the commodity specific action plans.

## 6.2.6 Response to COVID-19

The pandemic affected the project's ability to implement the activities as per the initial planning and explains the delays in implementation, as well as the greater than expected budget balance at the end of the project (as discussed under the Section on efficiency). Unfortunately, this balance cannot be carried over to finance an eventual phasing-out or next phase.

The project team and country stakeholders are commended for their flexibility and creativity when dealing with the Covid-19 context, with particular reference to holding the country workshops in a virtual/hybrid manner. While not an easy format for dialogue among stakeholders, this online mode was the only available option to complete this planned activity. It explains why there was more emphasis on presentations than on discussion around the findings of the country studies.

---

<sup>18</sup> The evaluation is however not in the position to assess to what extent women working in the sector perceive temporary work as an obstacle.

Similarly, the organization of virtual participation in trade fairs for several businesses (instead of either cancelling this activity or allowing for just very few participants) constitutes a creative and innovative way to promote business linkages.

## 7. Conclusion

The project was ambitious, consisting de facto of four different sub-projects, spread over four countries and two continents and covering four different commodities. It started “on the wrong foot”, as the endorsement of the countries as regards their participation and the selected commodities had to be obtained post-approval rather than ex ante. While this approach generated delays at the start, this was more or less caught up, albeit later again resulting in unforeseeable delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Work started latest in Lao PDR where it took longest to get confirmation of the country as regards the selected commodity (given some doubts on the export potential of pre-selected commodity). Yet it was also the country in which the project activities went fastest, when taking the organization of the country workshop as reference activity (2020). The same was organized in the other three countries in the course of 2021.

Judged by the use of the surveys/value chain analyses at country level, it is too early to assess the project’s likely sustainability and impact. It primarily depends on the degree in which the country stakeholders carry on the work, taking the lead in extracting and validating actions plans and, most importantly, engaging in their implementation, mobilizing external support where needed.

Several stakeholders referred to the country study as a relevant research product or “the beginning”, desiring to move on to the next step: putting recommendations into action. In this respect the project has created major expectations. Along this line, some referred to the overall project aim being good, but its budget being too small to go beyond research. Aware of gaps to be addressed, the key issue for them is how to overcome the challenges faced in RVC/GVC integration and to generate more tangible results.

Covid-2019 certainly affected implementation and pressed the project to find practical solutions in the form of organizing virtual workshops and virtual participation in specialized trade fairs. The latter also pushed traders to try to “go digital” (including the preparation of communication materials for online presentation/promotion of their products). In brief, the pandemic implied time and effort to pursue in this new context the implementation of activities that, in principle, would have required travel to the country. It was noted that, giving emerging sanitary priorities, project stakeholders were possibly more focused on these priorities than on project implementation.

Wrapping up, the project shows that value chain research is important and has to be the basis for actions defining who is expected to do what (policy makers; producers-processors-exporters; service providers). In this respect the project work constitutes indeed the analytical start of efforts towards the integration into RVC/GVC. Considering the resources and also the Covid-19 context, it did what could be reasonably done.

With hindsight, a project cum budget revision in 2020 could have oriented all project work primarily towards activities at country level, in particular: more local training; more local dialogue around the survey findings and country studies, seeking to develop and validate action plans/road maps to move from general recommendations to decision making on actions.

## 8. Lessons learned/good practice

The main lessons/good practice points emanating from the design and implementation of the project are the following:

- There has to be evidence of country requests/endorsement when appraising/approving project proposals.
- The formulation of objectives and planned results has to be commensurate with what can be reasonably achieved with the available resources (budget and time frame).
- The involvement of national expertise (surveys) does not automatically mean national capacity building.
- To foster the use of project deliverables, the translation of at least core documents into local language is called for, in countries in which (in this case) English proficiency is not necessarily widespread implying the need for budget allocations to this end.
- Refined budget estimates at the stage of design facilitate the management of project implementation.
- Whenever the formulation of a project cum budget proves to have gaps/flaws, doing a full-fledged project/budget revision (justifying changes) is better than trying to “live with” a project document and budget that only allow marginal adjustments.
- With hindsight, the studies (and the discussion thereon in the workshops) could have included a section regarding challenges by and opportunities for women in each of the targeted value chains (as input for the action plans)
- Reference to a “one year sustainability plan” and post-closure support of UNCTAD in project documents is to be avoided when UNCTAD cannot respect such engagement in the absence of resources dedicated to the same.

## 9. Recommendations on the way forward

Based on the evaluation findings, the following core - and sub recommendations are made for consideration by the different project stakeholders. The main purpose of these recommendations is to facilitate discussion and support decision making on the next steps to be taken at their respective ends.

### ***UNCTAD***

**1. UNCTAD should explore the development of, and be supported in funding for, a follow-up project that will support countries in the implementation of recommended actions. Alternatively, UNCTAD should ensure that the project is completed conclusively in each of the four beneficiary countries.**

This is suggested to cover in particular:

- (i) ensuring that the main project counterparts have access to the final versions of all project deliverables, including its terminal report;
- (ii) sharing the final versions of all project deliverables also with the representatives of the main development partners in the countries that took part in the country level workshop, with a view to seeking their possible interest in building on the work done (if UNCTAD itself is not in the position to mobilize funding for follow-on support );
- (iii) encouraging countries to take the lead in planning and organizing follow-up action upon project completion, suggesting more specifically the following dimensions, country by country (see Box below):

**Ethiopia**

- (i) presentation of the project findings (roasted coffee value chain analysis; market analysis) at the occasion of a meeting of the National Coffee Platform established by ECTA in 2020 that brings together the development partners engaged in coffee sector development (from up to down stream), where feasible involving the two UNCTAD consultants - one national; one international - having conducted the studies;*
- (ii) discussion and decision (Platform) how the research undertaken by the UNCTAD project can support the actions planned as regards local value addition and roasted coffee exports as per its 2018 coffee sector strategy, and preparation of a detailed action plan that reflects priorities and their sequencing and also defines roles, responsibilities and targets;*
- (iii) mobilization of external support (if required) for the implementation of the action plan, once validated, using the Coffee Platform as a vehicle for funds mobilization;*
- (iv) mobilization, when requested by the concerned roasted coffee exporters, of national export promotion services/incentives in the process of follow-up of the virtual trade fair participation organized by the project;*

**Lao PDR**

- (i) use (if not already done) of the findings of the country study on the maize value chain in the revision of the agricultural sector development plan;*
- (ii) preparation, discussion and validation of a detailed action plan (maize value chain) that reflects priorities and their sequencing and also defines roles, responsibilities and targets;*
- (iii) presentation of the action plan, once validated, to country level representatives of development partners active in support to the country's agricultural sector/rural development, with a view to mobilizing funding for its implementation;*
- (iv) follow-up on the results of the virtual buyers-sellers event (Jan 2022), mobilizing where appropriate national trade promotion support services.*

**Mongolia**



- (i) completion (if not already done) of the process of discussion and validation of the red meat action plan reflecting priorities and their sequencing and also defining roles, responsibilities and targets;*
- (ii) presentation of the action plan, once validated, to country level representatives of development partners active in support to the country's meat sector development, with a view to mobilizing funding for its implementation;*
- (iii) mobilization, when requested by the concerned meat exporters, of national export promotion services/incentives in the follow-up of the virtual trade fair participation organized by the project.*

### **Uzbekistan**

- (i) discussion based on the country study on dried fruits exports as basis for preparation and validation of detailed action plan that reflects priorities and their sequencing and also defines roles, responsibilities and targets;*
- (ii) presentation of the the action plan, once validated, to country level representatives of development partners active in support to the country's dried fruit sector development (including strengthening of the country's quality infrastructure) with a view to mobilizing funding for its implementation;*
- (iii) organization of follow-on local training on quality issues based on the awareness raising/training event (in Uzbek) organized by the project;*
- (iv) mobilization, when requested by the concerned dry fruits exporters, of national export promotion services/incentives in the follow-up of the virtual trade fair participation organized by the project.*

## **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund**

### **2. Foster synergies with related policy efforts covering support to (i) the selected landlocked developing countries and (ii) the Belt and Road initiative.**

This is suggested to cover in particular:

- (i) exploring to what extent ongoing Sub-Fund projects with possibly converging targets can play a role in providing follow-on support to the project (at least those covering the same countries and having complementary focus);**
- (ii) facilitating the mobilization of additional funding through bilateral or multilateral channels under the Belt and Road Initiative as (a) the four countries are formal partners in this initiative and (b) the project under review constituted the beginning of support that needs follow-up in order to generate tangible impact.**

**3. Encourage implementing agencies to propose full-fledged project-cum-budget revisions if required to adapt an initial project document/strategy to major changes that incurred in the project/its context during implementation.**

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Terms of Reference

### External Evaluation of Project “Integrating Landlocked Commodity Dependent Developing Countries into Regional and Global Value Chains”

#### I. Introduction and Purpose

- (i)** This document outlines the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the independent final project evaluation for the project titled “Integrating Landlocked Commodity Dependent Developing Countries into Regional and Global Value Chains” funded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund. This sub-fund is part of the United Nations’ Peace and Development Trust Fund which was established in 2016 following the pledge by the Government of the People’s Republic of China to contribute to the United Nations and the achievement of the goals of its Charter through the implementation of innovative, forward-looking and pro-active projects and activities financed by the Trust Fund.
- (ii)** The evaluation will provide accountability to UNCTAD management, the Management Team of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund / Capacity Development Programme Management Office (CDPMO) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), project stakeholders, as well as UNCTAD's member States with whom the final evaluation report will be shared.
- (iii)** The evaluation will provide assessments that are credible and useful, and include practical and constructive recommendations. In particular, the evaluation will systematically and objectively assess project design, project management, implementation, the extent of gender and human rights mainstreaming and overall project performance. Based on these assessments, the evaluation will formulate recommendations to project stakeholders, in particular to UNCTAD and/or the CDPMO of DESA with a view towards optimizing results of future projects, including on operational and administrative aspects.

#### II. Context of the evaluation

- (iv)** Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) face high transit transport costs and are often dependent on primary commodities for their exports-rendering it difficult to improve their competitiveness and the overall socio-economic conditions. An impressive decade of real GDP growth and trade performance during the 2000s in these countries did not translate into higher employment, export diversification and poverty reduction outcomes. Therefore, they continue to be affected by widespread poverty and underdevelopment and face continued marginalization in the global

economy.

- (v)** The Group of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) is composed of 32 countries, which are hampered by their lack of access to the sea, their remoteness and isolation from world markets. Besides, their sea borne trade unavoidably depends on transit through other countries, inducing additional border crossings and increasing their transport costs.
- (vi)** As a result, landlocked CDDCs are generally among the poorest of the developing countries<sup>19</sup> and face major difficulties in diversifying their economies. According to UNCTAD, on average, landlocked developing countries spend almost twice more on transport and insurance services than developing countries and three times more than developed economies.
- (vii)** Among this group, the selected four countries (Ethiopia, Laos, Mongolia and Uzbekistan) belong to four different sub-regions<sup>20</sup>, with relatively high level of commodity dependence, and differentiated levels of development and economic profiles. As landlocked commodity dependent developing countries, they suffer from high transport costs when exporting goods to foreign markets. Their costs to export are higher than global average export costs (see table 1), ranging from 1950 to 5090 USD per container in 2014, versus 1560 USD per container on average globally. This difficulty to export is also reflected in their limited degree of economic specialization: the share of their manufactures exports in the total of their merchandise exports did not exceed 31.8% in 2016, while the global average reached 65.1% this year.
- (viii)** Against this background, developing the food and agricultural sector can be particularly promising given its potentially high return in all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social development. In addition, in most developing countries, women are predominantly engaged in the food and agricultural sector. Within the agricultural sector, an increasing number of women are employed in the non-traditional agricultural export sector, such as fruits, vegetables and flowers. Such an employment often provides many women with opportunities for earning incomes and improving their lives.
- (ix)** By capturing opportunities along the RVCs and GVCs, the four selected countries can utilize their natural comparative advantages to upgrade their food and agricultural sector, create value addition, strengthen development linkages with other sectors of the economy, and help expedite industrialization and structural transformation process.
- (x)** Nevertheless, the food and agricultural sector face its own challenges to be upgraded and integrated into the RVCs and GVCs. For example, besides an enabling policy environment, a successful upgrade and integration requires comprehensive changes in agricultural and food value chains, including fostering access to modern practices and technologies, increasing investments to promote competitive food processing and packaging services, and others. It also relies on the implementation of stringent sanitary and phytosanitary standards, as well as on the quality of the network of

---

19 Of 32 landlocked developing countries 17 are classified as least developed

20 Ethiopia belongs to Africa, Mongolia to Northern Asia, and Lao to Southern Asia and Uzbekistan to Central Asia

certification agencies.

- (xi)** Therefore, the development of value-added food and agricultural sector requires comprehensive and systemic sectorial policy frameworks in the four selected countries to transform their food and agriculture sector from a subsistence activity to a modern sector that is well integrated into the RVCs and GVCs. This in turn requires access to up-to-date and fact-based information and diagnostics on each of the agriculture sectors targeted, in order to inform and backstop policy recommendations to the authorities, for integration in their national policy frameworks. To ensure women benefit from a more dynamic and integrated food and agricultural sector, right incentives also need to be put in place to engage women into more productive forms of agricultural production and promote a more active role for women farmers.
- (xii)** China's One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative is a development strategy and framework that focuses on connectivity and cooperation, involving more than 60 countries, which represent three continents, a third of the world's total economy and more than half of the global population. China's initiative could bring much needed opportunities to the landlocked developing countries along the OBOR, which have been heavily penalized by distance from the main economic centers.
- (xiii)** In particular, this project aims at overcoming the challenges described by focusing on specific commodities that have great potential to be upgraded and integrated to RVCs and GVCs. Based on UNCTAD's experience and expertise in technical cooperation, it will deploy a range of activities supporting a specific and differentiated approach for landlocked CDDCs to move up regional and global value chains.

### **III. Subject of the evaluation**

- (xiv)** The project's overall objective is to support integrated value chain development in four landlocked commodity dependent developing economies (Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Uzbekistan) through enhancing their capacities in development policies and strategies to promote better integration into Regional and Global Value Chains (RVCs and GVCs), and create development linkages at the national, interregional and intercontinental levels.
- (xv)** Its specific objectives are to:
- Expected Accomplishment 1: Improved statistical and analytical capacity of beneficiary countries in effective policy formulation to promote RVCs and GVCs integration and enhance development linkages;
  - Expected Accomplishment 2: Improved capacity of the private sector in beneficiary countries to assess market prospects, identify market opportunities and overcome market barriers to better integrate into RVCs and GVCs.
- (xvi)** Project activities include conducting country-level surveys, preparing analytical reports, organizing regional and national capacity-building seminars and business forum, developing training programmes and supporting countries in designing evidence-based policies to support integrated value chain development.
- (xvii)** The project aims to contribute to the post-2015 development agenda by making direct and concrete contributions to the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Improved integration into regional and global value chains and accelerated structural transformations will drive countries to reach, integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development and play a central role in achieving SDG 9 on promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization. Developing high value-added manufacturing integration in RVCs and GVCs contributes to generating employment and decent work for all (SDG 8). Decent and well-paid jobs in turn boost living standards, raise productivity, and foster social cohesion. Decent and well-paid jobs are also the principal way out of poverty for people in developing countries (SDG 1). Diversification of the employment structure enables inclusive employment practices which encourage the full and equal participation of women and men, including persons with disabilities, in the workforce, thus contributing to tackling inequalities within and between societies and empowering women (SDG 5 and 10). Shift of the focus from extractive to manufacturing industries will contribute to the reduction of CO2 emissions, thus contributing to attainment of SDGs 13 and 15.

- (xviii)** The Project will also contribute to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that identifies enhanced participation and integration of industrial enterprises into global value chains and markets and completing missing links, which should connect landlocked developing countries within regional networks as one of its priority action areas.
- (xix)** The key stakeholders of the project include government officials from relevant ministries, private sector entities including commodity producers, traders and processors, and farmers and farmer associations.
- (xx)** This project has been implemented by UNCTAD, in collaboration with the offices of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in beneficiary countries, as well as with the support of different development partners in different countries. These include regional Commissions like UNESCAP and UNECA, and UN specialized agencies and programmes like FAO, UNIDO, and the World Bank.
- (xxi)** The project started on 15 March 2018 with an approved budget of USD\$ 484,640 and was scheduled for completion in March 2020. The project was later granted two extensions at no cost, the first until March 2021, and the final one until 31 December 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **IV. Evaluation scope, objectives and questions**

- (xxii)** This final evaluation of the project has the following specific objectives:  
Assess the degree to which the desired project results have been realized, including the extent of gender and human rights mainstreaming; and  
Identify good practices and lessons learned from the project that could feed into and enhance the implementation of related interventions.

**(xxiii)** The evaluation will cover the duration of the project from March 2018 to December 2021.

**(xxiv)** The evaluation is expected to address the following questions under the following criteria (to be further developed in the inception report, as appropriate):

##### **a) Relevance**

- To what extent the project design, choice of activities and deliverables properly reflect and address the development needs and priorities of participating countries, taking into account UNCTAD's mandates?
- What adjustments are needed to make the project more relevant to the participating countries in supporting their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, including responding to emerging challenges?
- What is UNCTAD's comparative advantage in this area of work and to what extent did this project optimize it?

#### **b) Effectiveness**

- Have the activities achieved, or are likely to achieve, planned objectives as enunciated in the project document and outcomes (intended or unintended), in particular against relevant SDG targets (For example, and SDGs 1, 8 and 9)?
- To what extent have the project participants utilized the knowledge and skills gained through the project's activities in contributing to the efforts of their organizations/governments to plan and implement the 2030 Agenda?
- To what extent have the targeted audiences of research and knowledge products utilized the information provided in supporting their organizations/governments/efforts to plan and implement the 2030 Agenda?
- To what extent has the project advanced partnerships amongst project participants with national and regional counterparts, international development partners, the civil society and/or the private sector in support of results, and sustainability of results?

#### **c) Efficiency**

- How efficient was the project in utilizing project resources and has the project management been adequate to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner, conditional on existing conditions in beneficiary countries?
- To what extent has the work of the project been complementary to that of existing global programmes, regional/interregional initiatives, UN Country Teams, UNDAF as well as other UN and non-UN actors in supporting participating countries in achieving sustainable development, including avoiding redundancy? Has the project enabled effective and efficient sharing of resources through building partnerships with other UN and non-UN organizations and practitioners supporting sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

#### **d) Sustainability**

- Is there evidence that beneficiary countries will continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project and/or have there been catalytic effects from the project?
- To what extent sustainability was integrated in the project design and based on the stakeholders' analysis and the national institutional structures and mechanisms?

#### e) **Gender and human rights**

- To what extent a human rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention, and can results be identified in this regard?

### V. **Methodology**

**(xxv)** The evaluation will adopt a utilization-focused approach<sup>21</sup>. It will be guided by the project-results framework and ensure a gender and human rights responsive evaluation. The evaluator is required to use a mixed-method approach, including quantitative as well as qualitative data gathering and analysis as the basis for a triangulation exercise of all available data to draw conclusions and findings. In particular, quantitative assessments against the performance indicators in the project's results framework is required.

**(xxvi)** In view of the current global pandemic situation, innovative methods for data collection are required. Hence, methods for data gathering for this evaluation include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Desk review of project documents and relevant materials;
- Collect and analyze relevant web and social media metrics related to the outputs of the project;
- Observe a sample of virtual meetings, webinars and other activities to be implemented by the project, as appropriate;
- Telephone/skype interviews with relevant UNCTAD staff;
- Online surveys of beneficiaries of the project, and other stakeholders, as may be required; conduct follow-up interviews as may be necessary;
- Telephone/skype interviews with a balanced sample of project participants, project partners and other relevant stakeholders.

**(xxvii)** Contribution analysis could be undertaken in particular to assess project results.

**(xxviii)** As part of the desk review, which will lead to an Inception Report, the evaluator will use the project document as well as additional documents such as mission reports; progress reports, financial reports, publications, studies - both produced under the project as well as received from national and regional counterparts. A list of project beneficiaries as well as other partners and counterparts involved in the project will be provided to the evaluator.

**(xxix)** The evaluator will further elaborate on the evaluation methodology in the Inception Report, determining thereby the exact focus and approach for the exercise, including developing tailor-made questions that target different stakeholders (based on a stakeholder analysis), and developing the sampling strategy and identifying the sources and methods for data collection.

**(xxx)** The evaluator is required to submit a separate final list of those interviewed in the Annex of the evaluation report. The evaluator is to ensure a wide representation of

---

<sup>21</sup> Utilization-focused evaluation is a framework that evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance

([https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization\\_focused\\_evaluation](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation)).



stakeholders, bearing in mind the need to include those in a disadvantaged or minority position as appropriate.

## **VI. Organization of the evaluation**

### Deliverables and Expected Outputs

**(xxxix)** The evaluation, on the basis of its findings and assessments made on the above criteria, should draw conclusions, make recommendations and identify lessons learned from the implementation of the project.

**(xxxix)** More specifically, the evaluation should:

- Highlight what has been successful and can be replicated elsewhere;
- Highlight, as appropriate, any specific achievements that provide additional value for money and/or relevant multiplier effects;
- Indicate shortcomings and constraints in the implementation of the project while, at the same time, identifying the remaining challenges, gaps and needs for future courses of action;
- Make pragmatic recommendations to suggest how UNCTAD's work in this area can be further strengthened in order to address beneficiaries' needs and create synergies through collaboration with other UNCTAD divisions, international organizations and development partners, and other international forums;
- Draw lessons of wider application for the replication of the experience gained in this project in other projects/countries;

**(xxxix)** Three deliverables are expected out of this evaluation (following EMU templates):

- i. An inception report<sup>22</sup>;
- ii. A draft evaluation report; and
- iii. The final evaluation report<sup>23</sup>

**(xxxix)** The inception report should summarize the desk review and specify the evaluation methodology, determining thereby the exact focus and scope of the exercise, including the evaluation matrix, the sampling strategy, stakeholder mapping analysis and the data collection instruments.

**(xxxix)** The final report of the evaluation must be composed of the following key elements:

---

<sup>22</sup> The quality of the inception report should meet those standards set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports:

[http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc\\_id=608](http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=608)

<sup>23</sup> The quality of the evaluation report should meet those standards set out in UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/607>

- i. Executive summary;
- ii. Introduction of the evaluation, a brief description of the projects, the scope of the evaluation and a clear description of the methodology used;
- iii. Findings and assessments according to the criteria listed in Section IV of this ToR, with a comparison table of planned and implemented project activities and outputs; and
- iv. Conclusions and recommendations drawn from the assessments.

**(xxxvi)** All the evaluation assessments must be supported by facts and findings, direct or indirect evidence, and well-substantiated logic. It follows that proposed recommendations must be supported by the findings and be relevant, specific, practical, actionable, and time-bound recommendations.

## Description of Duties

**(xxxvii)** The UNCTAD Evaluation Unit, in close collaboration with the Division on International Trade and Commodities (DITC), will facilitate the evaluation as undertaken by an independent evaluator.

**(xxxviii)** The evaluator reports to the Chief of the Evaluation Unit. S/he will undertake the evaluation exercise under the guidance of the Evaluation Unit and in coordination with the project manager. The evaluator is responsible for the evaluation design, data collection, analysis and reporting as provided in this TOR. The evaluator will submit a copy-edited final report to UNCTAD.

**(xxxix)** The evaluator shall act independently, in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and in her/his private capacities and not as a representative of any government or organization that may present a conflict of interest. S/he will have no previous experience of working with the project or of working in any capacity linked with it.

**(xl)** The evaluator should observe the UNEG guidelines, standards<sup>24</sup>, and norms<sup>25</sup> for evaluations in the UN system, as well as UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy<sup>26</sup>, in the conduct of this assignment. The evaluator needs to integrate human rights and gender equality in evaluations to the extent possible.<sup>27</sup> The evaluator needs to ensure a

---

24 "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System" by UNEG, UNEG/FN/Standards (2005); [http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc\\_id=22](http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22);

25 "Norms for Evaluation in the UN System" by UNEG, UNEG/FN/Norms (2005); [http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc\\_id=21](http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=21);

26 "Evaluation Policy" of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), December 2011. December 2011, [http://unctad.org/Sections/edm\\_dir/docs/osg\\_EvaluationPolicy2011\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/Sections/edm_dir/docs/osg_EvaluationPolicy2011_en.pdf).

27 "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2014): <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>. The UNEG Handbook on "Integrating

complete, fair, engaging, unreserved, and unbiased assessment. In case of difficulties, uncertainties or concerns in the conduct of the evaluation, the evaluator needs to report immediately to the Chief of Evaluation Unit to seek guidance or clarification.

**(xli)** The project team will support the evaluation, by providing desk review documents (following Evaluation Unit desk review documents guidelines), contact details of project stakeholders as well as any additional documents that the evaluator requests. It is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure senior management engagement throughout the evaluation and timely feedback in the quality assurance and factual clarification process coordinated by the Evaluation Unit. The project team will review and provide comments on the inception, draft and final reports with a view on quality assurance and factual accuracies.

**(xlii)** The Evaluation Unit acts as clearing entity during the main steps of this evaluation. It endorses the TOR and approves the selection of the proposed evaluator. The Evaluation Unit reviews the evaluation methodology, clears the draft report, performs quality assurance of the final report and participates in disseminating the final report to stakeholders within and outside of UNCTAD. The Evaluation Unit engages the project manager throughout the evaluation process in supporting the evaluation and validating the reports.

### **Timetable**

**(xliii)** The total duration of the evaluation will take place over the period 1 November 2021 to 14 February 2022.

### **Monitoring and Progress Control**

**(xliv)** The evaluator must keep the Evaluation Unit informed of the progress made in the evaluation on a regular basis.

**(xlv)** The evaluator will submit the first draft of inception report by 10 November 2021. The Report should include draft data collection instruments for review.

**(xlvi)** The first draft of the report should be presented to the Evaluation Unit by 12 January 2022 for quality assurance purposes (approximately 1 week). The revised draft report will then be shared with the project manager for factual clarification and comments (approximately two weeks).

**(xlvii)** The deadline for submission of the final report will be 14 February 2022.

**(xlviii)** The contract concludes, and payment issued, upon satisfactory receipt of the final report.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

---

human rights and gender equality in evaluations: Towards UNEG Guidance" by UNEG, UNEG Guidance Document (2011): <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>.

- **Education:** Advanced university degree in economics, trade, development, public administration, rural development, or related field.
- **Experience:** At least 10 years of experience in conducting evaluations, preferably on interventions in the areas of trade-related technical assistance and capacity building. Solid understanding of the UN context and the Sustainable Development Goals. Experience conducting public policy and/or development programme evaluations; Solid understanding of evaluation design, data collection and analysis methods; Ability to develop clear, realistic, feasible recommendations; Demonstrated knowledge of and experience with economic policies of landlocked developing countries is desirable. Experience in gender mainstreaming is desirable.
- **Language:** Fluency in oral and written English.

### **Conditions of Service**

**(xlix)** The evaluator will serve under a consultancy contract as detailed in the applicable United Nations rules and regulations. The evaluator will not be considered as staff member or official of the United Nations but shall abide by the relevant standards of conduct. The United Nations is entitled to all intellectual property and other proprietary rights deriving from this exercise.

Logic Intervention	Indicators	Means of verification
<b>Objective:</b> To enhance the capacity of selected landlocked CDDCs in developing policies and strategies to promote better integration into RVCs and GVCs and create development linkages at the national, intra-regional, inter-regional and intercontinental levels, thus ensuring inclusive and sustainable development towards 2030. The project will also promote south-south learning and enhance knowledge and experience exchange among policymakers and private entrepreneurs from landlocked CDDCs.		
<b>Expected accomplishment - EA1</b> Improved statistical and analytical capacity of beneficiary countries in effective policy formulation to promote RVCs and GVCs integration and enhance development linkages	IA1.1 At least 80% of survey respondents among the representatives of ministries, statistical agencies and policy institutions participating in the Project activities increase their knowledge of collecting data, and assessing potential value creation, development linkages and effects of integration into RVCs and GVCs on jobs, wellbeing of people (including women, youth, vulnerable groups) and environmental sustainability	Based on a questionnaire addressed to participants at the end of the implementation of A1.3.
	IA1.2 At least 3 of the 4 beneficiary countries have developed national action plans aiming to promote RVCs and GVCs integration, accelerate structural reforms, and maximize development linkages and the positive effects for jobs and people's welfare	Based on a review of the national action plans adopted in relation to the project. To be verified at the end of the implementation of A1.4.
	IA1.3 At least 3 of the 4 beneficiary countries have developed national datasets to estimate the potential of integration of their project commodity in RVCs and GVCs, and a thorough analysis of associated effects in terms of poverty eradication, job creation and income generation.	Based on the review of the datasets and impact analysis produced by the four project countries. To be verified at the end of the implementation of A1.4.
A1.1 Conduct national surveys in the 4 beneficiary countries to assess the potential for integration in RVCs and GVCs in various sectors, and its economic effects (on output, GVA, and jobs), identify potential market opportunities, analyse current policies and identify obstacles preventing effective integration in RVCs and GVCs.		
A1.2 Prepare country reports based on the results of the survey, organize a two-day seminar in each of the countries in order to: i) validate the reports; ii) discuss the national action plans to promote integration in RVCs and GVCs and harness development linkages throughout the economies.		
A1.3 Develop a training programme (including preparing training material and organizing an on-line training workshop) for ministries, statistical agencies and policy institutions in the four beneficiary countries, on (i) modern approaches and techniques for data collection to assess the potential value creation and development linkages at national, regional and international levels (ii) methodologies to assess the effects of integration into RVCs and GVCs on employment, poverty reduction, income inequality, welfare of women, people with disabilities; and environmental sustainability; (iii) approaches to formulate evidence-based policies to promote RVCs and GVCs integration and development linkages throughout economies, regions and continents.		
A1.4 Prepare a synthesis report which i) compares and analyses the key findings in 4 country surveys; ii) shares best practices from the countries which have successfully promoted integration into RVCs		

<p>and GVCs (e.g. China, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand); iii) provides strategies and policy recommendations on promoting RVCs and GVCs integration and development linkages throughout economies, regions and continents within the 4 targeted countries and beyond. This report will be shared with beneficiary countries during the final workshop (activity A2.3).</p>		
<p><b>EA 2</b> Improved capacity of the private sector in beneficiary countries to assess market prospects, identify market opportunities and overcome market barriers to better integrate into RVCs and GVCs.</p>	<p>IA2.1 At least 80% of survey respondents among private sector representatives participating in the Project activities increase their knowledge of assessing market prospects and opportunities for effective integration into RVCs and GVCs using modern methods and techniques</p>	<p>Based on a questionnaire addressed to participants at the end of the implementation of A2.2.</p>
	<p>IA2.2 At least 1 enterprise from each beneficiary country benefits directly from the Project and manages to integrate into RVCs and GVCs (contracts signed or being discussed)</p>	<p>Based on a review of the business impacts of the project. To be verified at the end of the implementation of A2.3.</p>
<p>A2.1 Organize an interregional and intercontinental business forum to bring together the entrepreneurs from the 4 beneficiary countries and from the best practice countries (e.g. China, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore) to identify policy options for tapping into RVCs and GVCs to maintain effective intra-regional, interregional and intercontinental cooperation</p>		
<p>A2.2 Develop a training programme (including preparing training material and organizing an on-line training workshop) for private entrepreneurs to assess the potential value, market situation, business prospects and effective options for integration into RVCs and GVCs</p>		
<p>A2.3 Organize a two-day final workshop (governments of beneficiary countries, representatives of best practice countries, UN, regional organizations, representatives of other OBOR countries) to share lessons learnt from this Project and identify follow-up activities in promoting integration into RVCs and GVCs.</p>		

### Annex 3: Stakeholder mapping/analysis

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Stake in the project and the topic that the project addresses</b>	<b>Level of influence over topic and project/ways in which affected by topic and project</b>	<b>Expected use of the evaluation results</b>	<b>Way(s) to involve this stakeholder in the evaluation process</b>
UNCTAD HQ *Project team: Project Manager; Project Officers; support staff  *EMU	Overall responsible for project design and management	In project steering and management position	Lessons for future projects on same topic and beyond (if there are generalized recommendations )	At core of evaluation process: source of information, sharing self-perception on performance of project, review of draft evaluation report and drawing attention to factual errors in draft report if any); overall management of evaluation and final clearance of report by UNCTAD's EMU
Capacity Development Programme Management Office of Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Management of the source of project funding (UN Peace and Development Trust Fund)	Initial project appraisal and approval; review and approval of periodic progress reports including the final project report; review and acceptance of project/budget amendments; requestor of independent end-of-project evaluation	Dissemination of evaluation findings with emphasis on lessons/good practices emanating from the evaluation that may be relevant for other UNPDF projects/similar projects funded from other UN funding sources managed by UNDESA	Review of final evaluation report

Chief counterparts (in the 4 target countries) and other public sector stakeholders at country level	Country stakeholder(s) having requested to be included in this project or having accepted UNCTAD's proposal to be included in the project; partners in the design/implementation of specific activities or among the target beneficiaries thereof	Involved in country level project planning (Focal Points) and implementation (Focal Points/other public organizations at country level) and expected to be involved in its follow-up, also after project closure	At the core of the use of project work and achievements of the project, including of the evaluation findings (after project closure)	Source of information, sharing perception on performance of project and on priorities as regards the way forward
Private sector stakeholders at country level	Among the beneficiaries of project activities (representatives of relevant sector association and individual enterprises/cooperatives/women groups that took part in project activities)	Involved in country level project activities and expected to be involved in its follow-up, also after project closure	Expected to benefit from project work and achievements, including of the evaluation findings (after project closure)	Source of information, sharing perception on performance of project and on priorities as regards the way forward
Project staff (national and international experts)	Direct role in different stages of project design/implementation (participation in inception missions, country level surveys pertaining to the selected product/value chain, international market analyses, country studies; workshop facilitation; other)	Working based on ToR/specific assignments and under guidance of the UNCTAD Project Manager/Project Officers	Depending on the extent in which involved in follow-up work at country level or, as regards international experts, in related follow-up work elsewhere	Source of information, sharing self-perception on performance of project activities in which the experts were involved
Project partners (project wide; country specific; activity related)	Cooperation agencies as envisaged in project document (UN Economic Commissions; UN-OHRLLS; UNDP; UNIDO) and additional partners identified during implementation	Source of expertise/advice and facilitating the implementation of selected project activities at country level (role varying per partner)	Possible role in follow-up work at country level; eventual use of evaluation results in follow-up	Source of information, sharing perception on performance of project as project partners



## Annex 4 : Evaluation Matrix

Core evaluation questions and sub-questions	Information sources	Data collection/ analysis methods
<b><i>Project identification and design</i></b>		
<b>How was the project designed and to what extent was the design of the project logical, coherent, and focused?</b>		
<p><b>How was the project designed (and by whom)?</b> Sub-questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were the four countries selected (criteria; process including existence of formal country request)?</li> <li>• How were in each of the four countries the focus sectors/products selected (criteria; process)?</li> <li>• To what extent was the project design based on a needs assessment (analysis of situation/problems/opportunities and of stakeholder capacities)?</li> </ul>	<p>UNCTAD Project Manager (PM) and Project Officers Country Focal Points Delegates from the Permanent Missions (PM) in Geneva (to the extent involved in project design) Project document Reports of the inception missions to the countries Minutes of Advisory Committee meetings (if put in place in the design stage)</p>	<p>Interviews Content Analysis</p>
<p><b>To what extent was the design of the project logical, coherent, and focused?</b> Sub-questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the project's design have a clear development objective and clear immediate objectives?</li> <li>• Were the project outcomes clear, realistic, relevant, addressing the problems/opportunities identified and providing a clear description of the benefits or improvements that are expected to be achieved at the time of project completion?</li> <li>• Is the results hierarchy in the logical framework -from activities to outputs, outcome(s) to overall objective - logical and consistent?</li> <li>• Were the targets realistic, measurable, and adapted to the respective countries' context and their priorities?</li> <li>• Can the attainment of the overall development objective, outcome(s) and outputs be determined by a set of SMART verifiable indicators as defined in the logical framework?</li> <li>• Were baselines established to measure progress?</li> </ul>	<p>Project document incl. its logical framework</p> <p>Reconstruction of Theory of Change (not part of project document)</p> <p>Document describing the organization and functioning of the Advisory Committee (if</p>	<p>Content Analysis</p> <p>Content Analysis</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the assumptions/preconditions adequate and were important external factors and risks that could affect project performance identified (as well as mitigation measures described)? Was the risk assessment adequate?</li> <li>• Were the project steering, management, monitoring and reporting mechanisms clearly described?</li> <li>• Were the roles and responsibilities of the different project partners clearly described?</li> <li>• To what extent and how were cross-cutting issues reflected in the design of the project?</li> <li>• To what extent and how was the search of internal and external synergies built into the project design?</li> </ul>		put in place in the design stage)	
<b>Project implementation</b>			
<b>Core evaluation questions</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Information sources</b>	<b>Methods and tools for (i) data collection and (ii) data analysis</b>
<p><b>Relevance</b>  <b>To what extent was and does the project remain valid and do the countries consider themselves “(co-)owners of the project?”</b></p> <p><i>Sub-questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To what extent and how did the project design, choice of sectors/activities and its implementation reflect and address the development needs and strategies of the selected countries?</i></li> <li>• <i>To what extent were the country level stakeholders involved in project design and implementation (ownership)?</i></li> <li>• <i>Were adjustments needed to make the project more relevant in terms of supporting the 2030 Agenda, including responding to emerging challenges?</i></li> <li>• <i>To what extent was the project aligned to UNCTAD’s mandate and how did it reflect the organization’s comparative advantage in the areas of work covered?</i></li> </ul>			
How relevant is the project (i) to the needs/priorities and strategies in the four selected focus countries, incl. to their 2030 Agenda targets and challenges and (ii) to UNCTAD?	<u>Countries</u> *To what extent did the project take into account and was relevant for/aligned to existing national policies, strategies and action plans/ road maps (agriculture/ industry /trade /sector and commodity-specific priorities) in each of the four selected countries?	UNCTAD PM and Project Officers Country Focal Points Other country stakeholders (public/private) Delegates from the PM in Geneva (to the extent involved in	Interviews Content Analysis

	<p>*Were the activities and achievements thereof addressing the needs/opportunities of the target countries? Were they aligned to the selected countries' SDG priorities?</p> <p>*Were changes introduced in the project strategy since the start of the project implementation to make the project more relevant to the selected countries in terms of supporting the implementation of their development efforts and/or addressing emerging challenges? If so, which ones and why?</p> <p>*If there were/are prior/ongoing related efforts in the selected fields in the countries (roasted coffee/maize/meat/dried fruits), to what extent and how was the project different and complementary thereto?</p> <p>*To what extents and how were the country focal points and other national stakeholders involved in design and implementation (policy making, technical, administrative, financial, other)? Were their roles clear during implementation?</p> <p>*To what extent did they support/were they involved in project steering and implementation?</p> <p><u>UNCTAD</u></p> <p>*How is the project anchored to UNCTAD's mandate and experience?</p> <p>*What is UNCTAD's comparative advantage in this area of work and to what extent did this project use/optimize it</p> <p>*To what extent are the results sought part of the country specific UN Cooperation Framework?</p>	<p>project design/implementation) Project experts (field) Project partners involved in implementation</p> <p>Project document Progress reports Minutes of meetings of Advisory Committee UNCTAD strategic documents</p> <p>Review of relevant national policies, strategies and action plans/ road maps (agriculture/ industry /trade /sector and commodity-specific priorities</p> <p>Review of Voluntary National Reviews (SDG) by the countries</p>	
--	---	--	--

**Effectiveness**

**What are the project’s key achievements in terms of progress towards the intended results and what is the likelihood for the project to achieve the intended outcomes?**

*Sub-questions:*

- *Have the activities achieved, or are they likely to achieve, planned objectives as enunciated in the project document and outcomes, incl. against relevant SDG targets?*
- *To what extent have the project participants utilized the knowledge and skills gained through the project’s activities in contributing to the efforts of their organizations/governments to plan and implement the 2030 Agenda? To what extent did they use the project’s research and knowledge produced in supporting their efforts to plan and implement the 2030 Agenda?*
- *To what extent has the project advanced partnerships amongst project participants with national and regional counterparts, international development partners, the civil society and/or the private sector in support of results and the sustainability thereof?*

<p>Which results have been/are likely to be achieved and how are they used?</p>	<p>*To what extent have the intended results in the project’s results framework been produced in each of the four countries (evidence of positive/negative, direct/indirect, intended/unintended results)? Are there any catalytic effects of the project at both the national and regional levels?</p> <p>*Are achievements/progress towards the intended /results measured against baselines?</p> <p>*How do the counterparts, UNCTAD and the partners (i) perceive the quality of the results and (ii) use these results? If not (yet) used, what have been the constraining factors?</p> <p>*Has the implementation strategy been appropriate in order to achieve the results?</p> <p>*Are there external factors which have affected the effectiveness of the project (including the use of the achievements)?</p>	<p>UNCTAD PM and Project Officers Country Focal Points Other country stakeholders (public/private) Delegates from the PM in Geneva (to the extent involved in project implementation) Project experts (field) Project partners involved in implementation Progress reports Survey reports Consolidated country value chain/product specific studies and related regional/global market analyses Mission reports Workshop reports including summary of</p>	<p>Interviews Content Analysis</p>
---	---	---	--

		participants' evaluations Minutes of meetings of Advisory Committee	
<p><b>Efficiency</b>  <b>Has the project “done things right” in terms of resource utilization and internal and external synergies?</b></p> <p><i>Sub-questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How efficient was the project in utilizing project resources and has the project management been adequate to ensure the achievement of the expected outcomes in a timely manner, conditional on existing conditions in beneficiary countries?</i></li> <li>• <i>To what extent has the work of the project been complementary to that of existing global programmes, regional/interregional initiatives, UN Country Teams, UNDAF as well as other UN and non-UN actors in supporting participating countries in achieving sustainable development, including avoiding redundancy? Has the project enabled effective and efficient sharing of resources through building partnerships with other UN and non-UN organizations and practitioners supporting sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?</i></li> </ul>			
<p>Adequacy, timeliness and quality of inputs:  were all inputs and services provided in an efficient manner?</p>	<p>To what extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have resources (funds; human resources, time) been allocated strategically and appropriately to achieve the intended results?</li> <li>• have UNCTAD and - to the extent applicable - counterpart inputs been provided as planned and were these adequate to meet requirements and provided in a timely manner?</li> <li>• was the quality of UNCTAD inputs and services (expertise, training, methodologies, etc.) as planned and did it lead to the production of outputs?</li> <li>• to what extent and how did staff changes over time affect project implementation?</li> </ul>	<p>UNCTAD PM and Project Officers  Country Focal Points  Other country stakeholders (public/private)  Delegates from the PM in Geneva (to the extent involved in project implementation)  Project experts (field)  Project partners involved in implementation  Progress reports  Workshop reports including summary of participants' evaluations</p>	<p>Interviews  Content Analysis</p>

		Minutes of meetings of Advisory Committee	
<p>Adequacy of steering, management and monitoring:</p> <p>to what extent is a project steering, management and monitoring system in place at project level?</p>	<p>*How is the project being steered and managed?</p> <p>*To what extent has M&amp;E function been developed and managed (M&amp;E design and implementation) at project level?</p> <p>*Are the available monitoring data adequate? Are these data disaggregated (gender/age)?</p>	<p>UNCTAD PM and Project Officers Country Focal Points Other country stakeholders (public/private) Delegates from the PM in Geneva (to the extent involved in project implementation) Progress reports Minutes of meetings of Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Interviews Content Analysis</p>
<p>Adequacy of coordination among related initiatives including complementarities (internal/external):</p> <p>To what extent were linkages (synergies and partnerships) with programmes/initiatives of other actors (national; regional; global; UN/non-UN) developed to ensure complementarities and avoid overlaps? How did these partnerships (national; regional; global; UN/non-UN) enable or enhance the project results and the likely sustainability thereof?</p>	<p>*Were there synergy benefits in relation to other UNCTAD activities at country, regional, global level (internal synergies)?</p> <p>*Were there synergies/benefits in relation to related past/ongoing/planned activities of others at country, regional, global level or are there opportunities to establish/ strengthen such linkages (external synergies)?</p> <p>*In case of cooperation, what was in concrete terms the nature thereof (by partner)? To what extent have these partnerships (with national and regional counterparts, international development partners, the civil society and/or the private sector) enhanced the likely sustainability of the project results?</p> <p>*Were there missed opportunities for intra-UNCTAD and external synergies?</p>	<p>UNCTAD PM and Project Officers Country Focal Points Other country stakeholders (public/private) Delegates from the PM in Geneva (to the extent involved in project implementation) Project experts (field) Project partners involved in implementation Progress reports Minutes of meetings of Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Interviews Content Analysis</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b> <b>What is the likelihood that results/benefits will continue after the project ends?</b></p>			

*Sub-questions:*

- *Is there evidence that beneficiary countries are committed to continue working towards the project objectives beyond the end of the project?*
- *To what extent sustainability was integrated in the project design and based on the stakeholders' analysis and the national institutional structures and mechanisms (see also Design)*

<p>Likelihood of project benefits to continue beyond the intervention:</p> <p>How sustainable are the results achieved?</p>	<p>To what extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are the developmental changes that are likely to occur (probably beyond the life of the project) as a result of the interventions sustainable?</li> <li>• is there evidence of commitment in participating countries (such as, e.g., Governments committing / leveraging additional budgets/funding to support actions towards achievement of the project objectives; initiatives taken to develop/update relevant national strategy and policy frameworks)?</li> <li>• was sustainability correctly factored into the project strategy? Were risks analysed and assumptions identified at design stage adequately monitored? Has an exit strategy/approach towards the search for sustainability been formulated and was it appropriately monitored during implementation?</li> <li>• is there prospect for technical, organizational &amp; financial sustainability of the support provided by the project?</li> <li>• are the partnerships established likely to be sustainable (see also Efficiency)?</li> </ul>	<p>UNCTAD PM and Project Officers Country Focal Points Other country stakeholders (public/private) Delegates from the PM in Geneva (to the extent involved in project implementation) Project experts (field) Project partners involved in implementation Progress reports Minutes of meetings of Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Interviews Content Analysis</p>
<p><b><i>Cross-cutting issues (Gender and human rights)</i></b></p>			

<p><i>Sub-questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To what extent were a gender mainstreaming strategy and a human rights-based approach incorporated in the design and implementation of the project</i></li> <li>• <i>Can results be identified in this regard?</i></li> </ul>			
<p>Gender mainstreaming:</p> <p>To what extent were gender equality issues addressed in the project (design and implementation)?</p>	<p>To what extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have gender issues been mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the project?</li> <li>• have gender related data collection and analyses been included in baseline studies, monitoring and reporting?</li> <li>• have women benefited from the project or to what extent can they be expected to benefit?</li> </ul>	<p>UNCTAD PM and Project Officers Country Focal Points Other country stakeholders (public/ private) Project experts (field) Progress reports Minutes of meetings of Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Interviews Content Analysis</p>
<p>Human rights approach:</p> <p>To what extent were human rights issues addressed in the project (design and implementation)?</p>	<p>*Did the activities address the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination?</p> <p>*Do the intervention results respond to the needs of all stakeholders?</p> <p>*Were the intervention resources used in an efficient way to address human rights in the implementation (e.g., participation of targeted stakeholders, collection of disaggregated data, according to criteria such as gender, age, ethnicity, location, income etc. (to the extent applicable)?</p>		
<p><b>Response to COVID-19</b> <b>To what extent did the COVID-19 situation affect project activities in 2020/2021?</b></p>			



<p><i>Sub-questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What adjustments were made in response to the new priorities in relation to COVID-19?</i></li> <li>• <i>To what extent and how did these adjustments affect the project work and planned achievements?</i></li> </ul>				
Did COVID-2019 affect the project and how?	Which adjustments were made in response to the new priorities early 2020?	What was the effect of these adjustments on the project work and planned achievements?	UNCTAD PM and Project Officers Country Focal Points Other country stakeholders (public/private) Project experts (field) Progress reports Minutes of meetings of Advisory Committee	Interviews Content Analysis

## Annex 5: References to main secondary information sources

List of documents by type of document	Year
<b>General project information</b>	
Project document, PDF-SDG-2017-04	29 January 2018
Progress Report 1 (15 March – 31 Oct 2018)	Nov. 2018
Progress Report 2 (1 Nov 2018 – 31 March 2018)	April 2018
Progress Report 3 (1 April – 30 Sept 2019)	Oct 2019
Progress Report 4 (1 Oct 2019 – 31 March 2020)	April 2020
Progress Report 5 (1 April - 30 Sept 2020)	Dec. 2020
Progress Report 6 (1 Oct 2020 – 31 March 2021)	April 2021
Progress Report 7 (1 April – 30 Sept 2021)	Oct. 2021
Budget status as at mid-Nov 2021	mid-Nov 2021
Project one-pager and Newsletters 1, 2 and 3	not dated
<b>Documents/reports on focus countries</b>	
<b>*Project work in Ethiopia</b>	
Letter from PM /Geneva of Ethiopia confirming participation in project and designating Focal Point institution (ECTA)	8 Oct 2018
Inception mission Ethiopia, 10-14 Dec. 2018, Mission Report	Dec. 2018
G. Ferro, Roasted coffee exports from Ethiopia (UNCTAD publication)	Nov. 2019
G. Ferro, Market analysis of key export markets for Ethiopian coffee roasters and exporters of roasted coffee (UNCTAD publication)	2021
S. Mitiku Tebeka, Analyzing the roasted coffee export value chain in Ethiopia (UNCTAD publication)	2020
Agenda of National Virtual Workshop on fostering integration of the Ethiopian roasted coffee value chain into regional value chains, 11 March 2021 and presentations	March 2021
<b>*Project work in Lao PDR</b>	
Summary of project activities and timeline in Lao PDR	not dated
Inception mission Lao PDR (including Bangkok/ESCAP), 4-12 Oct. 2018, Mission Report	Oct. 2018
Letter from Lao PDR to UNCTAD – confirmation/project participation	28 Jan 2019
R. Cárcamo-Díaz, Analysing the maize value chain for export in Lao PDR (UNCTAD publication)	2020
Guidelines for conducting the survey of the maize value chain in Lao PDR	not dated
Agenda of National Virtual Workshop on fostering integration of the Lao PDR's downstream value chain of maize into regional value chains, 13 October 2020 and presentations	Oct. 2020
PDR Lao, Activities Report, March 2021	March 2021
<b>*Project work in Mongolia</b>	
Inception mission Mongolia, 4-8 June 2018, Mission Report	June 2018
Agenda on National Virtual Workshop – Fostering integration of the Mongolia downstream value chain of meat into regional value chains, 28-29 Jan. 2021	Jan. 2021
A. Gantulga, Survey on the domestic and export meat value chain in Mongolia (UNCTAD publication)	2021

M. Boldbaatar, Market analysis of key destination markets for Mongolian Meat Exporters (UNCTAD publication)	2021
Memorandum on virtual participation of Mongolian meat exporters and processors in Food and Hospitality China 2021 (Shanghai), Nov. 2021	23 Sept. 2021
<b>*Project work in Uzbekistan</b>	
Summary of project activities and timeline in Uzbekistan	not dated
Inception mission Uzbekistan, 11-15 March 2019, Mission Report	March 2019
R. Cárcamo-Díaz, J. Roche and J. Rustamov, Uzbek dry fruit exports: prospects, problems and potential (UNCTAD publication)	2021
J. Rustamov, Survey plan on dried fruits and nuts value chain analysis	2019
List of horticulture related projects in Uzbekistan	not dated
Agenda of National Virtual Workshop on fostering integration of the dried fruits value chain of Uzbekistan into regional and global value chains, 4 February 2021 and presentations	2021
J. Roche, A short guide on fostering exports of dried fruits from Uzbekistan	March 2021
Report on virtual participation of Uzbek producers/exporters of (including dried fruit) in ANUGA International Trade Fair	not dated
<b>Other documents</b>	
M. Vaillant, Food Value Chain Development in Landlocked Commodity Dependent Developing Countries (draft report)	final version, end 2021
J. van de Ven, Primary producer sales prices and cooperatives – cross country multi-product analysis (draft report)	final version, end 2021