

Independent evaluation of Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Project

“Facilitation of transit transport and trade in West Africa for better value chain participation”

Management Response¹
June 2024

UNCTAD/OSG/INF/2025/3

¹ **Note:** This document considers each recommendation that is addressed to UNCTAD, discussing them in the order they are presented in the evaluation report. This is done in the format of the management response matrix and includes:

- a. The recommendation number and text copied from the evaluation report;
- b. Indication of whether the recommendation is accepted fully, partially, or rejected;
- c. Description of actions to be taken, with comments as required on the conditions to be met during implementation, or on reasons leading to a partial acceptance or rejection of a recommendation;
- d. The responsible party for implementing the action/s;
- e. The timeframe or schedule for implementation, if required;
- f. Indication if and what resources are required for implementing the recommendation.

Management Response Matrix

Recommendation 1

Evaluation Recommendation (a)		In response to the call from participating countries, it is recommended that UNCTAD continue to provide technical assistance in 2024–2025 to implement the Declaration’s roadmap. Given the technical and political mobilisation that has been demonstrated, but also the slowdown in the next steps due to the coups in Niger and Burkina Faso and their withdrawal from ECOWAS, it is necessary for UNCTAD to continue to stimulate bilateral discussions in order to move from a quadrilateral declaration to a quadrilateral transport agreement, a transitional quadrilateral transit guarantee agreement, and to implement the various steps set out in the roadmap.
Management response (b) Accepted , partially accepted or rejected		Accepted
Management Plan	Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	UNCTAD fully shares the concerns expressed regarding the impact of the recent coups in Niger and Burkina Faso, as well as their withdrawal from ECOWAS, on the progress of the project's planned steps. UNCTAD has continued bilateral and quadrilateral discussions, as well as efforts to achieve a quadrilateral agreement on transport and to establish a transitional transit guarantee agreement. These actions are essential for the effective implementation of the roadmap in 2024-2025. UNCTAD remains open to close collaboration with stakeholders in order to continue efforts based on the achievements and positive impacts of this project in the region.
	Responsible unit(s) (d)	ALDC
	Timeframe (e)	Ongoing
	Resources required (Y or N) (f)	Y

Recommendation 2

Evaluation Recommendation (a)	In future cooperation projects with the CIR, UNCTAD's thematic expertise It would be desirable to exercise flexibility in project implementation procedures in order to ensure coherent and realistic designs and useful monitoring frameworks for learning and accountability. The formulation of theories of change and their revision at certain key stages in the life of a project can contribute to this objective (e.g. finalisation of a work plan, adoption of amendments, mid-term evaluation, etc.) while recognising that these new activities should not impede project implementation and cause delays that will impact the project and its deliverables. If these reviews reveal differences between the initial design of a project and its actual trajectory, these differences should be discussed openly with the donor and other stakeholders and, if necessary, result in new logical frameworks and monitoring models.
Management response (b) Accepted, partially accepted or rejected	Rejected
Management Plan	Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c) ALDC recognizes the importance of flexibility in project implementation procedures, as well as the added value of change theories. The logframe utilized during the implementation phase of the project has been the modified logframe attached to the Letter of Agreement dated May 27, 2021, as requested in the approval letter from EIF management in July 2020. Therefore, there have not been any significant deviations from this logframe, contrary to the claims made in the Draft Evaluation Report. The logframe revision was requested by the EIF in its approval letter and has been developed through a series of extensive meetings with the World Bank, ECOWAS, UEMOA, EU delegations from each beneficiary country, and the regional ECOWAS office based in Abuja, Nigeria, as well as the National Implementation Units (NIUs) of the beneficiary countries. This collaborative effort resulted in a more focused logframe, specifically targeting the Lome-Ouagadougou and Cotonou-Niamey corridors. Moreover, periodic reports to the EIF have been based on this logframe, and no objections have ever been raised. Indeed, the project has been affected by revisions to the logframe, budget, and timelines as requested by the EIF. Therefore, we believe that any recommendations regarding these matters should be directed at the EIF, as they are the

		source of subsequent changes and delays. However, ALDC is committed to improving its implementation procedures moving forward.
	Responsible unit(s) (d)	ALDC
	Timeframe (e)	n/a
	Resources required (Y or N) (f)	n/a

Recommendation 3

Evaluation Recommendation (a)		In order to make optimal use of the expertise scattered across different UNCTAD departments and divisions, it is recommended that particular attention be paid to internal coherence when designing projects and that opportunities for collaboration between divisions be reflected in work plans and budgets.
Management response (b) Accepted, partially accepted or rejected		Partially accepted
Management Plan	Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Internal collaboration was sought, but it was not fully realized/reflected in the outcome document. Strengthening internal coherence within UNCTAD is currently underway to promote increased intra-divisional collaboration, create better synergies, and maximize the organization's impact. UNCTAD's management is actively exploring mechanisms to further enhance coherence and synergy among the divisions.
	Responsible unit(s) (d)	ALDC
	Timeframe (e)	Ongoing
	Resources required (Y or N) (f)	N

Recommendation 4

Evaluation Recommendation (a)		In technical cooperation projects such as this one, where inclusion and sustainability aspects are not central to the proposal, awareness-raising and training activities on the links between the thematic area and cross-cutting objectives such as gender equality and environmental sustainability could be introduced. These activities may encourage more ambitious ideas for action in future projects. As with other aspects of UNCTAD's internal coherence, the integration of awareness-raising and training on the links between trade and gender equality can be achieved by incorporating the relevant programme at an early stage of the project cycle, when the broad outlines of the project planning and budget are defined.
Management response (b) Accepted , partially accepted or rejected		Partially accepted
Management Plan	Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Given its existing already extensive scope, the project focuses solely on facilitating transit, transport, and trade in West Africa. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as a comprehensive trade policy, which typically encompasses the entire spectrum of trade, including means, partners, infrastructure, rules and regulations, tariff policies, and non-tariff measures, as well as institutions. The project has limited potential to integrate a gender dimension, given the budgetary and time constraints, as defined in Annex 2 of the attached document under "Categorization of Technical Cooperation Projects from a Gender Perspective." The project affects both men and women indiscriminately, but it is expected to have a positive impact on small cross-border traders, who are primarily women. Notably, this was confirmed by Questionnaire 14 on page 56, where the statement "the United Nations' cross-cutting objectives do not apply to a project like this" received an average response of 2.5 out of 5, where 1 means "strongly agree" and 5 means "strongly disagree." This response should be considered by evaluators in the section addressing gender equality.
	Responsible unit(s) (d)	ALDC
	Timeframe (e)	Ongoing

	Resources required (Y or N) (f)	Y
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Recommendation 5

Evaluation Recommendation (a)		In view of the training courses on transport costs and Incoterms, the satisfaction of their participants and UNCTAD's assessment of their importance for transport efficiency and future modernisation, UNCTAD and the ITC should assess the relevance of such action with a structural approach and provide it with a strategy consistent with the objective of strengthening private sector capacity. Within UNCTAD, the reflection could involve not only ALDC, but also EMPRETEC.
Management response (b) Accepted , partially accepted or rejected		Partially accepted
Management Plan	Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	The training on calculating the costs of transport services was an activity outlined in the project document, aimed at helping transporters establish profitable pricing for their services. This program is specific and very technical, which is why we will assess the relevance of creating synergies with UNCTAD's other technical cooperation programmes, such as EMPRETEC.
	Responsible unit(s) (d)	ALDC
	Timeframe (e)	Ongoing
	Resources required (Y or N) (f)	Y