



FINAL EVALUATION

State of Palestine

**Sectoral area of Intervention
Inclusive Economic Growth for Poverty Eradication**

Programme Title:

Creating one-stop-shop for sustainable businesses

The analysis and recommendations of this evaluation are those of the evaluator and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Joint Programme or SDG-F Secretariat.

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Glossary of Acronyms

B2B	Business-to-Business
BDSH	Business Services Development Hub
BoP	Bank of Palestine
BPC	Birzeit Pharmaceuticals Company
BWF	Businesswomen Forum
CSNGS	Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DoP	Declaration of Principles
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ESDC	Economic and Social Development Centre
EWED	Enhancing Women's SME Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Gender Equality
HR	Human Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITC	International Trade Centre
JP	Joint Programme
LoA	Letter of Agreement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoNE	Ministry of National Economy
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NCWE	National Committee for Women's Employment
NDP	National Development Plan
NES	National Export Strategy
NFC	New Farm Company
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	National Policy Agenda
NSC	National Steering Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's
OSS	One-Stop-Shop
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
PM	Programme Manager
PMC	Programme Management Committee
PMT	Programme Management Team

ProDoc	Programme Document/Programme Proposal
PS	Programme Secretariat
PSC	Palestinian Shippers Council
RC	Resident Coordinator
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SDG-F	Sustainable Development Goals- Fund
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

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Amer S. Madi

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Executive Summary

The joint programme entitled One-Stop-Shop for Sustainable Business Joint Programme (the JP) sought to contribute to economic growth and social justice by improving the livelihood of Palestinian women. It planned to do so through supporting improved access to markets for women-owned and women-run micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and cooperative associations specializing in the production of cultural and agricultural products, and strengthening the institutional (policy) and business enabling environment for women workers, producers and entrepreneurs. The programme' had two outcomes, namely:

- Outcome 1: Support public and private sectors to enhance policies for inclusive socio-economic development of women owners of MSMEs and cooperatives; and
- Outcome 2: Increased access [to markets for] and competitiveness of women run MSMEs and cooperatives' products in local, regional and international markets.

Theory of Change: The JP's change model assumed that supporting women MSMEs and cooperatives to increase their sales turnover would create a more equitable and improved livelihood opportunities for them, including increased employment opportunities for women. Achieving this, it further assumed, requires: (i) both government and private businesses to adopt and implement policies that positively discriminate in favour of women's economic empowerment; (ii) developing the capacity of the providers of business development services to cater for the specific business development needs of women and their enterprises; and (iii) creating sustainable market linkages for women enterprises. The program focused on meeting these requirements through the following substantive interventions:

- Capacitating public institutions to develop and apply more equitable policies and technical services to women in the private sector. This was to be done through provision of training and technical assistance to public servants to mainstream gender issues in the public services and programs on the one hand, and formulating and adopting two policies aimed at improving the enabling environment for the development and growth of women MSMEs and cooperatives.
- Promoting a more inclusive and gender sensitive working environment in the private sector. This was to be done through engaging with and supporting two large private companies to undertake and implement the recommendations of a gender audit. The expectation was that the success of the gender audit would encourage others to replicate it, thereby creating some sort of a positive systemic change in the enabling environment for women's economic participation.
- Establishing a one-stop-shop to deliver sustainable and market-oriented business development services to MSMEs and cooperatives, and supporting access of the targeted women-run and women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives to the one-stop-shop's services.
- Providing matching grants to women-run and women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives to build their production and marketing capacity to respond to the market pull.
- Facilitating business and market linkages for women-run and women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives through providing market information, supporting participation in exhibitions, incentivizing trade linkages between marketing companies and to women-run and women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives, and facilitating business-to-business meetings.

The JP was approved in December 2014 and scheduled to run from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016, with a total budget of US\$ 3 million, half of which was from matching funds

provided by the JP's three implementing UN agencies: UN Women (as the lead agency), FAO and ITC. A four month extension was given by the SDG-F Secretariat to offset a late transfer of the first tranche under the JP, with total implementation running up until 30 April 2017.

The programme targeted both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. SDG-F resources were used exclusively to cover programme activities in the West Bank, while matching funds (mainly from UN Women portfolio) also covered the cost of programme activities in Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, the programme directly targeted 30 women-owned MSMEs in 5 governorates and 23 cooperatives in 10 governorates. With matching funds, it targeted 15 MSMEs in 2 of 5 governorates in the Gaza Strip.

The objective of this final evaluation was to provide an independent, in-depth assessment of the achievements of programme results and outcomes against the planned results and the implementation modality of the JP. It set out to be a systematic exercise, through the analysis of six evaluation questions, underpinned by the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance and programme design; efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability), as well as the cross-cutting issues of gender and human rights. It was based on a mixed-method approach including exploratory data analysis, formative assessment and a utilization focused approach. The tools used to triangulate data included secondary data, first hand observations, bilateral interviews, and focus group discussions.

Conclusions and Key Findings

Relevance and Design

The JP was (and continues to be) relevant in view of national and international commitments and strategic priorities of the Government of the State of Palestine, and the United Nations strategic priorities as identified in the UNDAF for the State of Palestine. It is also very well aligned with UN Women's, FAO's, and ITC's corporate and country-level priorities, as well as with the SDGs (particularly SDG1, 5, 8, 10, and 17) and the SDG-F policy goal of inclusive economic growth for poverty eradication and gender mainstreaming.

The Palestinian Authority's commitment to mainstream gender and the principles of equality, equal opportunity, and active participation of all to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and for the empowerment of Palestinian women was reflected in the CSNGS 2014-2016. The strategy acknowledged that sustainable development requires a focus on the participation and empowerment of women in all economic, social, political, and cultural sectors; and that this requires the integration of gender issues in all national policies and programs. By focusing on enhancing economic and market access opportunities for women MSMEs and cooperatives, and by working towards building capacity within key government institutions and private sector to mainstream gender in their policies, the JP was well in-line with the CSNGS 2014-2016.

The JP was well aligned with the NES vision of "export-led prosperity, made in Palestine," as well as with three of its four strategic objectives, namely: build the capacities of the exporting sector to diversify and penetrate international markets; maximize the contribution of exports to socioeconomic development through enhanced export competitiveness, including promoting involvement of women and marginalized groups in export value chains; and build and promote the image of the State of Palestine as a supplier of value-added quality products and services. The JP strategy of establishing a one-stop-shop for providing business development and marketing services to MSMEs and cooperatives was also (and continues to be) very relevant to address the functional deficiencies in the business environment in Palestine, as identified in the NES and corroborated by key informants consulted by the evaluation.

The overall consensus of women beneficiaries met by the evaluation was that the one-stop business development services hub was (and remains) very much relevant to their collective

needs, particularly given the fact that most of them lacked the time, knowledge, and financial resources needed to undertake the service functions that were to be offered by the one-stop-shop on their own. Target cooperatives confirmed that access to markets and sustainable market linkages are the key bottlenecks they face, hence indicated that the JP's focus on building their production capacity and enhancing their market linkages was very much relevant to their organizational development needs, as well as to the needs of their member producers.

Staff of Gender Units within the targeted ministries described the capacity building interventions planned under the JP as being "perfectly aligned" with their needs, and in-tune with their analysis of the capacity building needs for mainstreaming gender within the respective ministries. One informant interviewed by the evaluation made reference to the capacity building on integrating gender in planning and operations that was planned under the programme, describing it as "the best kind of support Gender Units could be provided to be able to discharge their functions more easily, and mobilise the support they need for this purpose." Trainees in the various ministries that have received training on gender reported that there was a clear need for the type of training and capacity building support that was planned within the framework of the JP, particularly the training on integrating and mainstreaming gender in national policies, plans, and programs.

The two private sector companies reported that the support they received within the framework of the JP to undertake a gender audit was relevant to their overall strategy of creating an equitable and inclusive working environment for their employees.

The JP was deliberately shaped to simultaneously address constraints to inclusive growth and women empowerment at different levels, with and through multiple stakeholders, and from different angles. The joint programme was appropriate for this broad approach, given the needs of the target group and the types of change the programme set out to achieve. The relatively small number of participating UN agencies in the JP also lent itself for enhanced synergies and collaboration. This said, the roles of the UN agencies in the programme could have been revised to reflect their best comparative advantages. Particularly, ITC, as a technical trade organisation, could have played a greater role in leading the enterprise and competitiveness development activities of the JP.

The design of JP was in line with SDG-F ToR and guidance, with joint design being a particular strength of the programme. The design process was participatory and consultative, thereby facilitating proper identification of needs. The JP's proposed response to these needs was ambitious, with objectives and indicators that did not seem to be commensurate with the 24 months given by the lifespan of the SDG-F programmes and the context in which the JP was to operate. The JP's design process itself was a bit rushed, which gave little room for: (i) the participation of some groups of right bearers in the design, and (ii) in-depth analysis of strategies and potential risks. It also seems to have had negative effects on the quality of the results framework, which had a few deficiencies. Overall, however, and despite these limitations, the JP's design met basic requirements design requirements.

Effectiveness

The project achieved, albeit to varying degrees, all of its envisaged outputs:

- *Output 1.1, Palestinian public institutions are better able to develop and apply more equitable policies and technical services to support and protect increased economic activity in the private sector*, was delivered largely, but not yet entirely, as planned. This was done through, both, building the capacity of partner public sector entities in gender and gender mainstreaming approaches, as well as supporting them –on a relatively limited scale, however- to develop policies that promote inclusive economic development. At the time of the evaluation the policy paper that was supposed to

provide protection from unfair competition for women's products as well as provide incentives for the growth of women cooperatives was in the final stages of development, but not yet endorsed.

- Output 1.2, *targeted private companies have increased engagement and social responsibility towards inclusion of women in the economic sector based on values of gender equity and promotion of women's rights*, was fully achieved.
- Output 2.1, *women-owned/run MSMEs and cooperatives strengthen their capacity to improve their competitiveness in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way*, was largely achieved for MSMEs, but not so for cooperatives. MSMEs targeted achieved increased sales much as planned, but cooperatives –overall- did not.
- Output 2.2, *women-owned/run MSMEs and cooperatives increase their participation in trade*, was delivered as planned, as measured by the number of business deals women enterprises made, as well as by the business linkages facilitated by the JP.
- Output 2.3, *promotion of Palestinian products produced by women owned MSME's and cooperatives in local, regional and international markets is increased*, was only partially delivered as linkages with embassies, consulates and chambers of commerce fell short of what was planned.

The JP made significant progress towards its two planned outcomes, partially achieving both. Particularly strong contributions were noted in relation to enhanced competitiveness of women-owned MSMEs, and, understandably given the JP's relative short lifetime, to a somewhat lesser extent, their access to markets. Women beneficiaries had the opportunity to learn about the concept of perceived value and how important it is when dealing with markets, which has had a positive impact on their businesses. Several of them have made leaps and bounds in the product development phase and have been able to increase their business both locally and internationally. And, they had a valuable opportunity to learn how long the sampling and development process takes when doing custom work, which has helped them develop a future mind-set in doing business.

In the absence of credible baseline data, the evaluation with the help of BWF asked targeted MSMEs to compare between their sales in 2016 (towards the end of the JP) and in 2014 (before the JP started). Of the 43 finally targeted MSMEs, 35 (81.2%) reported realising sales turnover increases since 2015, with the remaining MSMEs (8 or 18.2%) having witnessed a drop in their sales over the same period. On average, targeted MSMEs realised a **42.8% increase in their sales turnover since the beginning of the programme**, well above the JP's target of 20%. Among those MSMEs that witnessed increases in sales, the average increase was 59.7%, with more 12 MSMEs having witnessed three digit growth figures in their sales.

While both companies (Thimar and Al-Rozana) with which the JP connected its targeted cooperatives witnessed impressive increases in their sales turnover in 2016 compared to 2014 (40% and 68.1%, respectively), the benefits of these increases had not yet trickled down to the cooperatives in tangible manner at the time of the evaluation. Similarly, While NFC, an export intermediary used by the JP to support cooperatives- reported sourcing 34% (US\$ 60,294) of its total supplies from 13 cooperatives targeted by the JP, this –according to purchasing data received by the evaluators from the company- did not represent a significant increase from previous years. It is thus concluded that support to competitiveness of and access to markets for women-owned/run cooperatives has materialised in enhanced potential, which the test of time will only prove the extent to which it will be actualised.

Contributions to enhancing the capacities of relevant duty bearers to enhance policies for inclusive socio-economic development were considerable, but varied in their reach, depth and likely sustainability within the respective partner organizations. A greater level of achievement in such a way that reflects itself positively on employment creation in MSMEs and cooperatives as envisaged in the JP's results framework was unrealistic given the current political and socio-economic realities in Palestine and what was planned by the JP. For policies to induce inclusive growth and employment creation in the MSME and cooperative sectors, three key things were needed: i) a more in-depth assessment of the systemic policy constraints preventing the growth of women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives; ii) focused lobbying and advocacy to affect changes in policies identified under (i); and iii) longer term capacity building and enforcement support. The JP delivered partially on (i) and (ii), but delivering on (iii) was not entirely possible given the 24 months given by the lifespan of the SDG-F programmes.

What capacity was built through training and awareness workshops within partner Ministries and the NCWE is an achievement that the JP should seek to build upon to enable both the public and private sector to adopt inclusive development policies and programmes. Discussions with partner Ministries clearly indicated a need for more hands-on capacity building in policy analysis and programme planning from a gender perspective, include a strong appetite for capacity building support in gender auditing which was seen as an important entry point for developing more inclusive policies.

Efficiency

It is most likely that the JP will achieve full financial implementation by its end date. However, the rate of expenditure was sluggish due to delays in the programme start-up, which had consequences on the timeliness and quality of delivery of some programme outputs (and results).

“Joint-programming” was a particular strength, but “joint-implementation” in terms of delivering-as-one, mutual ownership of results, and collaborative implementation and learning has not fully materialized. Joint-programming contributed to the harmonization of UN support in the sense that UN input was well coordinated. The clear separation of tasks at the design stage prevented overlaps, but also did not encourage joint activities. While inputs converged at the beneficiary level, agencies still worked rather in parallel than jointly.

Programme governance and management did not materialise as planned, leading to some inefficiencies in coordination at the strategic level. The NSC met only once during the entire programme cycle to discuss the JP, while the PMC was never formed. Strategic coordination and coherence suffered as a result, with consequences for the operational “jointness” of the programme. The PMT, which met regularly throughout much of the programme implementation, not only had little remit to fill the gap left by the absence of the PSC and PMC, but itself also needed a higher level management structure for guidance and strategic decision making.

Moreover, due to changes in the programme management that resulted from turnover in the SDG-F Programme Manager that took place during the implementation of the JP (the JP had two different Managers during its lifetime, while the already stretched UN Women's team had to take over during the gap in recruitment) and a certain disregard by the Program Managers for the M&E function, the PS did not function as planned, with particular consequence for the JP's M&E performance. Despite various efforts made to ensure streamlining monitoring mechanisms and systems, the M&E function was not sufficiently empowered to effectively design and deliver a truly jointed M&E system as envisaged in the SDG-F guidance. Joint monitoring of the programme beyond the PMT meetings, where monitoring-related issues had little space to begin with, was not evident to the evaluation. Beyond the monitoring of their individual activities and

outputs according to the JP's M&E matrix, partner agencies saw little role for themselves in the overall monitoring of the programme given the PS' responsibility in this regard. The evaluation believes that a greater sense of ownership of the programme's overall results, a more empowered M&E function, and a more elevated sense of joint responsibility for M&E may have resulted in improved M&E performance overall.

The JP monitoring came together only at the level of reporting where the information had to be aligned with the required SDG-F format. The M&E system envisaged in the SDG-F guidance to enable holistic monitoring, evaluation and learning beyond the JP's monitoring matrix, however, was only partially developed. The basic elements needed for JP monitoring were developed, but were neither fully adhered nor revised (as needed) during implementation. The monitoring framework needed to be further developed and revised during implementation to ensure better alignment with the between certain JP activities implemented by specific partner agencies and the framework outcomes, as well as with partner agencies M&E systems.

A good quality advocacy and communication strategy was developed, but its implementation fell short as its scope was reduced to providing visibility to main programme activities and individual success stories. In doing so, the JP did not live-up to its promise of bolstering advocacy on broader issues related to women's rights, equality and economic empowerment through communication. This was missed opportunity where the JP, the evaluation believes, could have left a considerable mark.

Generally, with some exceptions, outputs delivered were of good quality, judged by their fitness for use. Beneficiaries were mostly satisfied with the content of equipment they received through the matching funds, the hands-on product development advice provided, and branding and marketing advice. These were the outputs with most utility for the beneficiaries.

Impact

The JP had made important contributions in view of both influencing the enabling environments for gender equality and inclusive economic growth. Considerable progress was also made as regards to improving business services and market linkages for MSMEs and cooperatives, and enhancing their capacity to effectively use these services. The matching funds provided by the partner agencies played a central role in the progress made by the JP towards its results (outputs and outcomes).

The JP has, without doubt, made important contributions to all the SDGs with which it was aligned, i.e. SDG1, 5, 8, 10, and 17. It also made significant contributions to enhancing the economic empowerment and agency of the beneficiary women-owners of MSEMs. This said, more time and efforts are needed before the impact of the JP on women-owners of cooperatives can be tangibly realised.

The JP left a considerable mark on the capacity of the implementing partner organizations, particularly the BWF Consortium (BWF, Agility and PSC). As a result of the programme, these organisations organically developed a cooperation model that leverages their unique technical expertise in providing a package of business development services to MSMEs. Without the JP, such a model –most likely- would not have developed.

The evaluation could not identify any negative impacts of the JP. An assessment of pay and working conditions within targeted MSMEs and cooperatives is probably warranted in the future, however, to ensure no-harm.

Sustainability

While the evaluation found that it was too early to judge sustainability of the JP, it also found the JP made appropriate and largely successful efforts to create or strengthen existing conditions likely to foster the continuation and dynamic adaptation of results under Outcome 1,

including (i) contributing to strengthening the overall enabling environment for addressing women's economic rights in the context of the local market for agricultural and cultural products as regards the existing legal and policy frameworks; (ii) supporting national ownership of results; and (iii) demonstrating how, through simple technical support and capacity building, private business could analyse their business performance and operations from a gender perspective, which is likely to be taken up in the future.

Sustainability threats exist nonetheless. These include the continued lack of buy-in and support from high-level decision makers in relevant government agencies, including for the policy paper; and the challenging overall socio-economic situation and political instability affecting Palestine. The latter contributes to the existing, (and likely worsening) situation as regards the availability resources for government institutions (and NGOs), many of which are dependent on external donor funding when it comes to gender equality related initiatives.

Sustainability of Outcome 2 results, and particularly vis-à-vis MSMEs, is likely due to the high levels of interest and commitment to continuous improvement. Most but not all MSMEs and cooperatives expressed that they would continue participating in trade fairs, using the know-how they have obtained in the course of the programme. In some cooperatives and MSMEs, there is little evidence that capacities built will be maintained without further external support. The sustainability of market linkages established/facilitated by the JP is uncertain, but would be likely if additional follow-up is provided.

The OSS/BDSH that was created by the JP is currently an integral part of the BWF's structure. However, while BWF is actively seeking funds to maintain the services the OSS had provided under the JP, it is not yet financially sustainable, and the business model that it could use for this purpose is yet to be developed. Hence, sustainability of the services provided within the framework of the JP through the OSS/BDSH is likely so long BWF, Agility, and PSC are able to fundraise for it, and, over the medium term, develop a joint business model to sustain it.

Lessons Learned

The key lessons emerging from this evaluation were:

- The success of JPs in promoting multilateralism and true joint programming starts with joint planning and analysis at the conceptualisation and design stages, with the active participation of national stakeholders, both duty bearers and right holders.
- Internal risks to the effective implementation of JPs are plentiful, and can sometimes have more serious implications than external risks if not well identified and mitigated during both the design and implementation of JPs.
- Linked to the previous points, JPs need to be realistic about their objectives and targets. This requires analysis of the baseline situation, understanding of the operating context, and changes processes.
- Clearly articulated, visually represented, and stakeholder-validated theories of change are helpful for testing the realism of objectives and targets.
- JPs can have a steep learning curve, which can have consequences on planned results. Flexibility is a key success factor in flattening the learning.
- Capacity and policy development requires time and high-level expertise to be effective. Efforts aiming to support the process of capacity and policy development need to be tailored to the respective stakeholders needs and expectations, and employ a variety of complementary strategies, including communication and advocacy.

- Building the capacity of MSMEs and cooperatives to effectively engage in and benefit from markets is a long-term process that requires both supply- and demand-side interventions.
- Formalisation of MSMEs, though procedurally simple and does not constitute a barrier in certain contexts such as Palestine, is often not pursued due to misperceptions about requirements, implications, and benefits.
- Quality, consistency in quality, and ability to meet requirements are required capacities for sustainable business relations, irrespective of the market.
- Sustainable supply contracts require investment in time and money on behalf of both buyers and sellers. Selling to a higher priced international market is a long game, it requires perseverance and patience as well as a willingness to accept the demands buyers place on producers.
- A market-led product development strategy is most effective and most sustainable. The experience from this JP showed that it is critical to link product development with the sales process and to have a retail market and sales strategy from the beginning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this final evaluation, the following recommendations are suggested for the JP, future JPs, and for the overall SDG-F initiative.

R1. Disseminate the achievements, lessons learnt and technical knowledge developed by the JP, at several levels. Ensure that lessons learned and best practices highlighted in this report are taken into consideration in the upcoming process of designing future JPs.

R2. Ensure that training is provided to cooperatives on how to operate the equipment they have received through FAO matching funds is provided as planned.

R3. Ensure sufficient time and resources are allocated to the process of design of future JPs, with meaningful participation of the partner agencies, government counterparts, as well as right holders and beneficiaries to maximise responsiveness to needs and alignment with beneficiaries' priorities in line with aid effectiveness principles.

R.4. Strengthen Programme formulation, M&E guidelines and their implementation, and ensure that change objectives and their indicators are realistic given the lifespan of JPs. At the same ensure that planned resources are fully applied during implementation. Ensure that the JP has adequate and empowered M&E resources for effective monitoring, accountability, and learning.

R.5. Ensure that Programme Governance and Management Structures are in place at the time of design, and take an active part in the design process. Moreover, ensure that Programme Management Teams responsible for the day-to-day implementation of JPs have the space not only to meet regularly, but also to plan for and implement activities together, including M&E activities.

R6. Using good practices already introduced, shift focus from supporting the development of individual enterprises and cooperatives to supporting development of more inclusive, pro-poor market systems.

1. Introduction

1. This is the report of the final evaluation of the One-Stop-Shop for Sustainable Business Joint Programme (JP or, concurrently, programme), which was funded by the Sustainable Development Goals Fund's (SDG-F) with resources from the Government of Spain. The JP was implemented by UN Women (as the lead agency); Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the International Trade Center (ITC). The evaluation is part of the SDG-F results oriented monitoring and evaluation strategy, developed to track and measure the overall impact of the Fund on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and multilateralism as reflected in joint programming by UN agencies.

1.1. Evaluation Purpose

2. The main purpose of the final evaluation is to provide an independent, in-depth assessment of the achievements of programme results and outcomes against the planned results and the implementation modality of the JP. The final evaluation has set out to be a systematic exercise, through the analysis of six evaluation questions, underpinned by the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance and programme design; efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability), as well as the cross-cutting issues of gender and human rights as stipulated in the Terms of Reference (ToR) (see Annex 1). The specific objectives of the evaluation were the following:

- Measure to what extent the JP has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase;
- To measure the degree of implementation, efficiency and quality delivered on outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised;
- Measure to what extent the JP has attained the results originally foreseen in their project document, M&E frameworks, etc.;
- To measure the impact of the implementation of the joint programme on the achievement of the SDGs;
- Assess the alignment of the JP with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Determine the impact of the JP in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Analyse how the human rights based approach was integrated in the design and implementation of the JP; and
- To identify and document substantive lessons learnt and good practices on the specific topics of the thematic areas and crosscutting issues: gender, sustainability and public private partnerships.

1.2. Country Context

3. Palestine is classified by the World Bank as a lower middle-income country, with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$ 1,744¹. Three territories make up the State of

¹ PCBS (2016). National Accounts at Current and Constant Prices, 2015. Ramallah – Palestine.

Palestine, namely: the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. These territories are separated from each other by the state of Israel, which has been occupying them since 1967². In 1994, following the signature of a Declaration of Principles (DOP), known as the Oslo Accords, between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established by the PLO. In the West Bank, the PA has full control over slightly less than 38% of the land, whereas Israel retains control over the rest^{3,4}.

4. In January 2006, elections were held for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), with Hamas – a movement that opposes the Oslo Accords and does not recognise Israel – winning the majority of votes. In response to the Hamas victory, some donors cut off their financial support for the PA. Israel began to withhold the tax revenue it collects on behalf of the PA, which further weakened the Palestinian economy, and the PA's ability to provide services, including social services⁵.

5. In June 2007, Hamas carried out a coup in Gaza, establishing sole control over the territory. Governance of the West Bank and Gaza has been divided between the Fatah and Hamas political parties since then. The Israeli cabinet responded by declaring the Gaza Strip "hostile territory," and putting it under sanctions, which have included putting the region under blockade by limiting the supply of fuel and electricity from Israel to Gaza, the transfer of goods through the crossings, the movement of people to and from the Strip, and increased monitoring of funds. In November 2012, there were eight days of military hostilities in Gaza. These were detrimental to an already fragile humanitarian situation there. In August 2014, Gaza marked the end of the third period of military action since 2008. More than 2,100 people were killed, over 60,000 houses were partially or completely destroyed, and public services, including water and electricity, were devastated, creating scarcity of water, energy, food, and shelter⁶.

6. The estimated population in 2016 in State of Palestine was 4.88 million⁷, with an annual growth rate of 2.8% between 2010 and 2016, and a median age of 20 years⁸. The population of the West Bank was approximately 2.97 million at the end of 2016, and in Gaza it was approximately 1.91 million⁹. The crude birth rate in Palestine reached 30.9 births per 1,000 population in 2016¹⁰. Meanwhile, the crude death rate reached 3.5 deaths per 1,000

² Global Exchange (2015). *Palestine and Israel: a primer*. <http://www.globalexchange.org/country/palestine/primer> [accessed 16 July 2015]

³ World Bank (2013). *West Bank and Gaza. Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy*. Washington, DC: World Bank Report no. AUS2922.

⁴ The Oslo Accords included the division (planned to last five years at most) of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C. In Area A, the smallest, the PA has full civil and security control. In Area B, the PA has full civil control and there is joint Israeli-Palestinian security control. In Area C, which is over 60% of the West Bank, Israel has full civil and security control. 70% of Area C is off limits to Palestinian construction, including of agricultural infrastructure and home improvements; 29% is heavily restricted. Area C includes almost all the West Bank land that is suitable for agricultural production and large-scale urban and economic development, but Palestinian access to this land is either prohibited or severely restricted. See: World Bank (2013). *West Bank and Gaza. Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy*. Washington, DC: World Bank Report no. AUS2922..

⁵ World Bank (2011). *West Bank and Gaza Coping with Conflict? Poverty and Inclusion in the West Bank and Gaza*. Washington, DC: World Bank Report no. 61293 - GZ.

⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2014). *Gaza Emergency Situation Report* (as of 4 September 2014).

⁷ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2014). *Palestinians population status in the Palestine, 2014* [Arabic].

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

population¹¹; and life expectancy was 73.7 years: 72.3 years for men and 75.2 years for women¹². The average household size decreased to 5.2 persons in 2016 compared to 6.1 persons in 2000¹³.

7. The most recent official poverty statistics in Palestine were published in 2011. These show that, in 2011, 25.8% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were living below the poverty line¹⁴, while 12.9% were living in deep poverty¹⁵. Poverty in Gaza peaked at close to 50% in 2007 following a severe economic downturn that followed the Israeli blockade on Gaza. Poverty rates have since declined, attributable to an increase in social assistance and returns to public sector employment, but did not return to their 2004 levels and continued to be higher than in the West Bank. In 2011, poverty rates in Gaza (38.8%) were more than twice those in the West Bank (17.8%); over one-fifth in deep poverty (compared to 7.8% in the West Bank) and with grim prospects for recovery as structural factors in the economy remain unaddressed and as the consumption of the bottom two quintiles of the population continued to decline¹⁶.

8. Economic performance in Palestine has been sluggish, with growth mainly driven by donor funding and concentrated in non-tradeable sectors. The shares of agriculture and manufacturing in total output have followed a declining trend between 1994 and 2015. The share of agriculture dipped from 13% to about 4% during this period, while the share of manufacturing in overall output went from 20% to around 9%. Services constitute the largest share of economic activity. Compared with manufacturing and agriculture, private sector services trading mostly within the West Bank and Gaza have fared better.

9. The Palestinian economy is characterized by an entrepreneurial private sector that has continuously, and to a remarkable degree, adapted well to the wide-ranging political and economic constraints affecting the state. Small and medium-sized enterprises constitute the majority of businesses in the Palestinian economy. Almost 97% of those enterprises employ less than nine workers, and 99% of them employ less than 20 workers.

10. However, the operating business environment is proving not to be conducive to future growth, particularly for export sectors. In 2014 the State of Palestine's business environment was ranked 138 out of 189 economies in the World Bank Doing Business report, notably lower than the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) average of 107. Despite a slight improvement of 7 ranks over 2013, this result still reflects a number of structural weaknesses that are pertinent for the efficient functioning of the private sector. These include¹⁷: Low value addition and differentiation; a weak quality management and regulatory framework at enterprise and national levels; lack of conformance with internationally recognized standards; cumbersome clearance processes at border crossings; limited access to finance; the absence of a single window system to provide market and/or business development services to enterprises; *f* limited trade promotion activities in local and international markets; *f* a paucity of information on logistics, trade procedure and trade information; and insufficient integration of Palestinian consulates and trade offices into the trade information network; and limited gender mainstreaming in the formal sector.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ PCBS, 2014. *On the Eve of the International Population Day*.

¹⁵ PCBS, 2012, *Living Standards in the Palestinian Territory. Expenditure, Consumption, Poverty, 2011*. Ramallah - Palestine.

¹⁶ World Bank, 2011, *West Bank and Gaza Coping with Conflict: Poverty and Inclusion in the West Bank and Gaza*. Washington, D.C.

¹⁷ PA (2014), *The State of Palestine National Export Strategy 2014-2018*. Ramallah, 2013.

11. Consistent with cultural norms in the MENA region, Palestinian women face certain constraints on working outside their homes. These include “social restrictions on working outside their home; a societal preference for women confining themselves to an often dwindling public sector; constrained mobility in both looking for jobs and commuting to work; and a perception among employers that women are less productive”¹⁸. Safety and mobility concerns have added to the lack of participation of women in the formal economy. The need to incentivize the entry of women into the formal sector and leadership positions has been long recognized, and identified as a priority in several national and sectoral strategies.

12. While women comprise approximately 49% of the Palestinian population, their representation in the total labour force is only slightly higher than 16% due to the low participation of women in the labour force. Labour force participation for women has remained below 16% on average, much less than the MENA average of 26%, which itself is one of the lowest regional rates in the developing world. Women are the primary gender active in the informal sector (mainly in agriculture and services) but are significantly less active in the formal sector, especially in decision-making roles. There are limited opportunities for women to apply for loans, and cultural expectations prevent women from assuming management positions. Instead, women are typecast in certain roles including teachers, nurses, secretaries, etc.

1.3. Project Description

13. The JP set out to contribute to economic growth and social justice by improving the livelihood of Palestinian women. It planned to do so through supporting improved access to markets for women-owned and women-run micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and cooperative associations specializing in the production of cultural and agricultural products, and strengthening the institutional (policy) and business enabling environment for women workers, producers and entrepreneurs.

14. The programme’s theory of change was predicated on the assumption that supporting women MSMEs and cooperatives to increase their sales turnover would create a more equitable and improved livelihood opportunities for them, including increased employment opportunities for women. Achieving this, the program assumed, requires(i) both government and private businesses to adopt and implement policies that positively discriminate in favour of women’s economic empowerment; (ii) developing the capacity of the providers of business development services to cater for the specific business development needs of women and their enterprises; and (iii) creating sustainable market linkages for women enterprises. The program thus focused on meeting these requirements through the following substantive interventions:

- Capacitating public institutions to develop and apply more equitable policies and technical services to women in the private sector. This was to be done through provision of training and technical assistance to public servants to mainstream gender issues in the public services and programs on the one hand, and formulating and adopting two policies aimed at improving the enabling environment for the development and growth of women MSMEs and cooperatives.
- Promoting a more inclusive and gender sensitive working environment in the private sector. This was to be done through engaging with and supporting two large private companies to undertake and implement the recommendations of a gender audit. The

¹⁸ World Bank (2013). *West Bank and Gaza. Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy*. Washington, DC: World Bank Report no. AUS2922.

expectation was that the success of the gender audit would encourage others to replicate it, thereby creating some sort of a positive systemic change in the enabling environment for women's economic participation.

- Establishing a one-stop-shop to deliver sustainable and market-oriented business development services to MSMEs and cooperatives, and supporting access of the targeted women-run and women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives to the one-stop-shop's services.
- Providing matching grants to women-run and women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives to build their production and marketing capacity to respond to the market pull.
- Facilitating business and market linkages for women-run and women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives through providing market information, supporting participation in exhibitions, incentivizing trade linkages between marketing companies and to women-run and women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives, and facilitating business-to-business meetings.

15. The expected programme results consisted two outcomes and five outputs as depicted in Table 1 below, along with the intended changes and strategies followed to achieve them. Annex 5 presents the programme logical framework.

Table 1: Overview of programme results

Outcome	Intended Change	Strategies	Outputs
Outcome 1: Support public and private sectors to enhance policies for inclusive socio-economic development of women owners of MSMEs and cooperatives.	Measured by number of targeted women-owned SMEs and cooperatives who have an increase in employment by the end of the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy development with national government for a more equitable business enabling environment. - Capacity building for public institutions to enhance their ability to develop and apply more equitable policies and technical services. - Enhancing gender equity in the workplace by supporting private sector to adopt gender sensitive policies and practices that enable to obtain the Gender Equity Seal. 	<p>1.1. Palestinian public institutions are better able to develop and apply more equitable policies and technical services to support and protect increased economic activity in the private sector.</p> <p>1.2. Targeted private companies have increased engagement and social responsibility towards inclusion of women in the economic sector based on values of gender equity and promotion of women's rights.</p>
Outcome 2: Increased access [to markets for] and competitiveness of women run MSMEs and cooperatives' products in local, regional and international markets	Measured by the increase in sales of 20% by 2016 of targeted MSMEs and cooperatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of a one-stop-shop for business services for MSMEs and cooperatives. - Support to establish/strengthen business shops for assembling, testing, packaging and marketing women-owned MSMEs' and Cooperative products. -Certification and process upgrading. 	<p>2.1. Women-owned/run MSMEs and cooperatives strengthen their capacity to improve their competitiveness in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.</p> <p>2.2. Women-owned/run MSMEs and cooperatives increase their participation in trade.</p> <p>2.3. Promotion of Palestinian products produced by women owned MSME's and cooperatives in local, regional and</p>

Outcome	Intended Change	Strategies	Outputs
		- Facilitation of trade linkages.	international markets is increased.

16. Responsibility for implementation of activities for each programme output were assigned to each of the implementing partners at the time of the design, and annually thereafter as part of the Annual Planning and Budgeting exercise. Based on this, UN Women had full and sole responsibility for all outputs under Outcome 1; while all three participating agencies had joint responsibility for achieving under Outcome 2, with each agency working either with a distinct target group or activities for this purpose. UN women, through an NGO implementing partner, targeted women-owned MSMEs and worked towards enhancing their competitiveness and access to markets through a one-stop-shop business development services model. FAO –also through an NGO partner- worked towards the same objective but with women-owned/run food processing cooperatives. ITC –as a technical trade organisation- provided direct technical support to the targeted MSMEs and cooperatives to enhance their competitiveness, promote their products, and establish market links in regional and international markets, thereby enhancing their participation in trade.

17. The JP was approved in December 2014 and scheduled to run from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016, with a total budget of US\$ 3 million, half of which was from matching funds provided by the three implementing UN agencies. The Programme’s budget distribution is shown in Table 2 below. A four month extension was given by the SDG-F Secretariat to offset a late transfer of the first tranche under the JP, with total implementation running up until 30 April 2017.

Table 2: Programme Budget Distribution (US\$)

Summary	Programme Secretariat	UN Women	ITC	FAO	Total
Matching Funds		700,000	350,000	450,000	1,500,000
Receiving from SDG-F	225,000	501,600	346,700	426,700	1,500,000
Budget Total	225,000	1,201,600	696,700	876,700	3,000,000
Support Cost 7%	-	50,862	24,269	29,869	105,000.00

18. The programme targeted both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. SDG-F resources, however, were used exclusively to cover programme activities in the West Bank, while matching funds (mainly from the SWF Programme jointly funded by the EU and UN Women) also covered the cost of programme activities in Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, the programme directly targeted 30 MSMEs in 5 governorates and 23 cooperatives in 10 governorates. With matching funds, it targeted 15 MSMEs in 2 of 5 governorates in the Gaza Strip. It is worth noting here that the JP, as originally designed, intended to have a focus on MSMEs and cooperatives in Area C of the West Bank, where vulnerability and marginalization is known to be very high. Criteria used in the selection of both MSMEs and cooperatives, nevertheless, focused on the willingness of the businesses to engage with the programme and its potential viability, irrespective of location. Policy interventions were implemented at a national level, with most of the work taking place in Ramallah.

19. The Resident Coordinator (RC) spearheaded the JP. As noted earlier- three UN agencies participated in the programme, namely: UN Women, FAO, and ITC, with UN Women as lead agency for the programme. The governance of the programme was done through a two-tier hierarchy, instead of the three-tiers envisaged in the programme proposal, as follows:

- A National Steering Committee (NSC) was formed during programme formulation to oversee and provide strategic leadership for the programme at the national level, including steering implementation. The NSC included the RC, a senior PA representative from the Ministry of Finance (previously Ministry of Planning and Development), and a senior representative of the Spanish Cooperation as the head of the NSC on behalf of the donor.
- A Programme Management Team (PMT) was formed of the managers/focal points for the JP, and was responsible for the day-to-day management and coordination of programme implementation on behalf of the partner agencies. The Programme Manager (PM), based at UN Women, acted as the secretary for the PMT. A representative of the office of RC was part of the PMT.

20. In addition to the above, and in line with SDG-F guideline, a Programme Team comprising a Programme Secretariat (PS) and a team of technical staff from the three agencies was formed. The PS was tasked with ensuring the operationalisation of the JP in accordance with the SDG-F guidelines, including planning, monitoring and evaluation, learning and technical and logistical coordination between the partners. The UN Women, as the lead agency, assumed most of the responsibility for management and backstopping support during implementation. Table 3 below shows the composition of the programme secretariat, including the level of effort allocated to each position therein.

Table 3: Programme Team

Position	Contract Issuer	Time Allocated	Post Funding
SDG-F Programme Manager	UN Women	100%	SDG-F
SDG-F Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	UN Women	50%	SDG-F
ESR Unit-Programme Coordinator	UN Women	100%	UN Women
SDG-F Programme Associate	UN Women	100%	SDG-F
SDG-F Admin Clerk	UN Women	100% (Year 1 only)	SDG-F
SDG-F FAO/Programme Officer	FAO	70%	SDG-F
SDG-F ITC/Programme Officer	ITC	70%	SDG-F
SDG-F Programme Support Assistant	FAO	50%	FAO
Enterprise Competitiveness Expert	ITC	50%	ITC
National Programme Coordinator	UN Women	10%	UN Women
Operations Manager	UN Women	20%	UN Women
Finance Associate	UN Women	20%	UN Women
HR Assistant	UN Women	20%	UN Women
Logistics Assistant	UN Women	20%	UN Women
Driver	UN Women	50%	UN Women

21. National partners included, at the policy level, the National Committee for Women's Employment (NCWE) and the Ministries of Labour (MoL), National Economy (MoNE), Women's Affairs (MoWA), and Agriculture (MoA). Implementing partners were non-governmental organizations (NGOs): The Economic and Social Development Center (ESDC), which FAO's implementing partner directly contracted through Letters of Agreement that specified activities for which it was responsible; and the Business Women Forum (BWF), in consortium with Agility Consulting and the Palestinian Shippers Council (PSC) (the BWF consortium), which was UN Women's implementing partner, contracted through a competitive process to deliver a pre-determined competitiveness and market linkage programme for the benefit of 45 MSEMs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip).

1.3. Evaluation Approach, Methodology, and Process

22. The evaluation used a utilization-focused approach, which stresses that an evaluation should be judged by its utility for the readers. This was done together with the use of contribution analysis, which recognizes that attributing development results to interventions is generally complex and sometimes unfeasible, as it takes time before an impact could realistically be achieved. The evaluation thus focused on providing plausible evidence of the ‘difference’ a programme is making by using a combination of different methods and with the participation of programme stakeholders, including duty bearers and right holders.

23. In accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines that it followed, the evaluation committed to human rights (HR) and gender equality (GE) sensitive processes in its conduct. This had two aspects: firstly, the substantive aspects related to HR/GE issues within the JP; and secondly, the application of a HR/GE-sensitive approach to the evaluation as per the principles of the UNEG guidance. These include: framing the evaluation questions to ensure the recognition of HR and GE issues; the use of disaggregated data where feasible; ensuring stakeholder participation to the maximum extent possible; and ensuring that evaluation methods, analytical tools and reporting incorporate HR/GE issues.

24. The evaluation was also conducted in full coherence with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct. Key features of the ethical code that were applied were: respecting gender and human rights principles throughout the evaluation process, including; the protection of confidentiality and ensuring informed consent; maximizing the degree of participation of stakeholders in the evaluation itself wherever feasible and a commitment to using participatory approaches in data collection and analysis; ensuring that the evaluation matrix integrates the relevant human rights commitments; and ensuring that outputs use human-rights and gender-sensitive language.

25. The evaluation focused on the joint programme as the unit of analysis and not on each agency individually. This is understood as the set of components, outcomes, outputs and activities and inputs as reflected in the project proposal (ProDoc), the corresponding changes made during implementation, and the direct beneficiaries of the programme.

26. In line with the evaluation’s utilization focus, the recommendations be the SDG-F; the RC; UN Women, FAO, ITC and their implementing partners; MoNE, MoA, MoWA, MoL; and NCWE. The evaluation was also designed and implemented to serve other stakeholders: beneficiary women and their cooperatives and businesses, donors, and NGOs focusing on issues of gender equality and women empowerment.

27. Due to time limitations the evaluation reference group (ERG) was responsible for selecting the sample population as well as the locations for the field visit. The evaluation sought to ensure a balanced representation of the different types of implementing partners and beneficiaries, as well as gender balance. In practice this means that the evaluation used non-probability samples, where sampling units (programme beneficiaries) were selected to reflect particular features within the context of the programme, rather than seeking to be statistically representative.

28. The sampled population included key stakeholders, mainly the focal points and staff engaged in programme implementation in the three partner UN agencies, all Government counterparts (as both institutional partners and beneficiaries), partner NGOs implementing the programme (ESDC and BWF, and its consortium members Agility Consulting and PSC), beneficiaries of the programme. The latter included women owners of targeted MSMEs, cooperative leaders, trainees from the public sector, and staff of the two companies that received training under Output 1.2. The list of stakeholders interviewed is included in Annex 2 of this report.

29. The Final Evaluation consisted of three different phases: inception and desk review; field study and primary data collection; and synthesis and reporting. Methodologically, each of these phases served as a building block in generating the composite evidence base. The desk review, for example, was informed by the data gathered from initial document screening and interviews during the Inception phase. The Field study built on the evidence created during detailed desk review. The Synthesis stage drew the composite body of evidence together for full analysis. The purpose and conduct of the evaluation's three phases is presented in more detail below:

- Phase one, inception and desk review: The evaluation began with an initial literature review, which identified key contextual parameters within which the JP had been operating and which may have influenced the achievement of results. It allowed for initial findings to be developed against the Evaluation Questions, which were further explored/ triangulated/validated during the subsequent stages. An inception report - including the proposed evaluation approach, methodology, evaluation matrix and data collection instruments- was prepared and shared with the ERG. Their comments were later incorporated into a second draft, which served as a basis for the evaluation.
- Phase two, field study and primary data collection: This phase took place during 19-30 March 2017. It focused on complementing and deepening the evidence base generated by the preceding phase; validating and enriching the desk review and generating new information; and deepening the enquiry in areas where desk review alone, even where supplemented by interviews, was insufficient.
- Phase three, synthesis and reporting: This phase brought together the composite body of evidence arising from the different streams of data in an initial draft report of the evaluation findings and conclusions. This report was shared and discussed with the ERG for feedback and validation. Written comments on the first draft were provided by the ERG. The evaluator responded to these comments, and addressed them as appropriate in this final report.

1.4. Limitations

30. Like all research studies using qualitative data collection and analysis approaches, this evaluation had a number of limitations. While the evaluation believes that these limitations do not have any meaningful impact on the reliability, validity, or credibility of the its findings and conclusions, they are presented below for readers' consideration:

- The evaluation took place during the last 40 days of the Programme's lifetime. Accordingly, some of the activities were still ongoing and some of the products were not yet finalized. This was true for two activities under Outcome 1, and several activities under Outcome 2. These activities were central to the overall achievement of their related outputs and, in some cases, even outcomes. For these activities and products it was not possible to properly assess quality or impact.
- The programme's financial data that could be provided to the evaluation could only describe the programme situation as of 31 October 2016, i.e. six months prior to the completion of the programme. The financial reports were also estimated and unaudited. The evaluation was thus unable to examine issues related to cost effectiveness and some aspects of efficiency. Similarly, there was no cumulative report on progress made up to the time of the evaluation, rendering the evaluation unable to assess activities and progress made during the last six with the same degree of rigor as it did for those that have been reported.
- Due to changes in the staff, mainly in the lead agency, together with the premature departure of the JP Programme Manager and the late recruitment of the project

coordinator, the institutional memory in regards to the first year of implementation, for example, detail on discussions and decisions during the programme conception phase were not available for analysis.

- The evaluation scope covered the programme activities in the West Bank only. This meant a deliberate exclusion of the 15 MSMEs targeted in the Gaza Strip, all of which were targeted with matching funds under Outcome 2. Hence, the evaluation only reflects an assessment of the project's performance at the level of the 30 CBOs 23 cooperatives targeted in the West Bank. Findings and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily apply to the 15 MSMEs targeted in the Gaza Strip.
- Due to lack appropriate baseline data (though a baseline survey was externally commissioned, its validity was questionable and did not provide the required data to enable tracking progress) and the lack of end-line data on some project indicators, measurement of effectiveness against programme indicators was only done for outputs and outcomes where reliable data could be found.

1.5. Overview of the Report

31. This report consists of four sections: following this introduction, section 2 summarizes evaluation findings and analysis in response to the evaluation questions and sub-questions. Section 3 outlines key lessons learned from project implementation and the evaluation. The final section 4 summarizes evaluation conclusions, and offers forward looking recommendations, including recommendations for immediate action.

2. Findings on Levels of Analysis

32. This chapter presents the main findings that emerge from the evaluation and it is structured along the six evaluation questions. The answers to the evaluation questions and sub-questions are based on the analysis of available data at the level of project indicators (taking into account all information collected on each indicator), and the level of evaluation questions (aggregating information collected for each sub-question as per the evaluation matrix).

2.1. Relevance and Design

Evaluation question 1: The extent to which the objectives of the joint program have been consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country and achieving the SDGs.
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2.1.1. Relevance

Alignment with national development strategies and the UNDAF

33. The PA's national development plans for the periods 2011–2013 and 2014–2016 emphasised partnership with United Nations agencies, and highlighted the need to strengthen these partnerships, to which the JP has contributed. These plans emphasized the need to enhance economic opportunities for young people and women; promote the full participation and empowerment of women in society through mainstreaming gender in government planning and programming processes; and to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the private sector, all of which were inherent in the design of the JP. It is thus no surprise that all Palestinian Authority informants interviewed by the evaluation stated their satisfaction with the degree of the JP's alignment with the national and sectoral strategies and policies, particularly the National Development Plan 2014-2016; the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy (CSNGS) 2014-2016; and the National Export Strategy (NES).

34. The JP was particularly relevant to and very-well aligned with the State of Palestine's strategic approach to economic development and employment as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2014-2016 and the National Labour Sector Strategy 2014-2016. This approach focused on strengthening the foundations of the national economy to provide decent employment opportunities and enhance productivity. It specifically aimed to achieve the following strategic results: Increased employment opportunities through investment; a more enabling environment for balanced economic growth and development; improved productive capacity and competitiveness of Palestinian businesses; and expanded entrepreneurial and innovative initiatives among youth and women. **The JP contributed to all of these results.**

35. The Palestinian Authority's commitment to mainstream gender and the principles of equality, equal opportunity, and active participation of all to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and for the empowerment of Palestinian women was reflected in the CSNGS 2014-2016. The strategy acknowledged that sustainable development requires a focus on the participation and empowerment of women in all economic, social, political, and cultural sectors; and that this requires the integration of gender issues in all national policies and programs. By focusing on enhancing economic and market access opportunities for women MSMEs and cooperatives, and by working towards building capacity within key government institutions and private sector to mainstream gender in their policies, **the JP was well in-line with the CSNGS 2014-2016.**

36. The JP had an explicit alignment with the first and fifth strategic objectives of the CSNGS, which focused on increasing women's participation in the labour market and

mainstreaming gender issues in national policies and programs. Priority interventions under these objectives, and with which the JP was perfectly aligned, included: providing financial and technical support to women to establish and grow their enterprises; supporting the advancement of women in agricultural value chains, including through protective measures; improving the competitiveness of products produced by women and their associations in both local and international markets; fostering marketing linkages for the benefits of women producers; capacity-building of public institutions to undertake gender analysis and develop gender responsive policies and programs; and setting up national accountability frameworks, with the participation of all relevant parties, to address gender equality issues.

37. Though the JP did not target the priority sectors identified in the NES, **it was well aligned with the NES vision of “export-led prosperity, made in Palestine,” as well as with three of its four strategic objectives**, namely: build the capacities of the exporting sector to diversify and penetrate international markets; maximize the contribution of exports to socioeconomic development through enhanced export competitiveness, including promoting involvement of women and marginalized groups in export value chains; and building and promoting the image of the State of Palestine as a supplier of value-added quality products and services. **The JP strategy of establishing a one-stop-shop for providing business development and marketing services to MSMEs and cooperatives was also (and continues to be) very relevant to address the functional deficiencies in the business environment in Palestine**, as identified in the NES and corroborated by key informants consulted by the evaluation.

38. The JP was not yet conceptualized at the time when the 2014-2016 UNDAF was prepared, and thus it was not included as one of the UNDAF projects. However, **it was very well aligned with the UNDAF, directly contributing to two of its outcomes and three of its outputs** under the priority areas of: i) economic empowerment, livelihoods, food security and decent work; and ii) governance, rule of law, justice, security and human rights. Under the former, and through its focus on strengthening the competitiveness of products produced by women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives and creating market linkages for them, the JP directly contributed to Output 1.3 (the Palestinian productive sectors are able to improve quality, quantity and value of goods and services with diversified access to markets). Under the latter, and through the activities planned under its first Outcome, the JP directly contributed to the 2014-2016 UNDAF's Output 2.1 (Palestinian institutions are able to plan, manage resources and coordinate service delivery in a more efficient, responsive, equitable and accountable manner) and Output 2.2 (Palestinian institutions have improved capacities for data generation, analysis and use for evidence-based gender-sensitive planning and policy formulation).

39. It is worth noting here, that the **JP remains relevant to and coherent with the 2017-2022 UNDAF and the National Policy Agenda (NPA) for the same period** with which it is aligned. Coherence is most notable in relation to the UNDAF's Strategic Priorities 2 and 3, which focus, respectively, on: i) enhancing and promoting gender equality and enforcing non-discrimination for all; and, ii) supporting sustainable and inclusive economic development.

Alignment with the needs of the targeted beneficiary groups

40. Beneficiaries and stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation reported that the objectives of the JP were very aligned with their aspirations and needs. When asked to reflect on how this alignment was achieved, the following were noted:

- Women owners of MSMEs reported that **the JP has rightly identified their needs for developing their products to be more competitive and have greater market appeal, as well as enhancing their access to market and market linkages**. The overall consensus of these women was that the one-stop business

development services hub was (and remains) very much relevant to their collective needs, particularly given the fact that most of them lacked the time, knowledge, and financial resources needed to undertake the service functions that were to be offered by the one-stop-shop on their own.

- **Target cooperatives confirmed that access to markets and sustainable market linkages are the key bottlenecks they face**, hence indicated that the JP's focus on building their production capacity and enhancing their market linkages was very much relevant to their organizational development needs, as well as to the needs of their member producers.
- Staff of Gender Units within the targeted **ministries described the capacity building interventions planned under the JP as being "perfectly aligned" with their needs, and in-tune with their analysis of the capacity building needs for mainstreaming gender** within the respective ministries. One informant interviewed by the evaluation made reference to the capacity building on integrating gender in planning and operations that was planned under the programme, describing it as "the best kind of support Gender Units could be provided to be able to discharge their functions more easily, and mobilise the support they need for this purpose." **Trainees in the various ministries that have received training on gender reported that there was a clear need for the type of training and capacity building support that was planned within the framework of the JP**, particularly the training on integrating and mainstreaming gender in national policies, plans, and programs.
- The two private sector companies reported that the support they received within the framework of the JP to undertake a gender audit **was relevant to their overall strategy of creating an equitable and inclusive working environment for their employees.**

41. As we discuss later in the report in chapters 2.2 and 2.3, due to issues related to quality and nature of some inputs provided, **this strong conceptual alignment did not materialize with the same magnitude of responsiveness to needs and aspirations of all targeted beneficiaries during implementation.**

Alignment with the SDG-F Policy Goals and Areas of Intervention, and SDGs

42. Simply by having had been approved for SDG-F funding, **the JP was relevant to the sectoral priorities and policy objectives of the SDG-F.** The OSS-focus on strengthening national policies and policy mechanisms to improve economic opportunities for women, enhancing the competitiveness of women MSMEs and cooperatives and linking them with markets was perfectly aligned with the SDG-F priorities of creating opportunities for good and decent jobs and secure livelihoods for all, as well as those of adding value and raising productivity, and gender equality and women's empowerment.

43. The strategies that the JP was designed to deliver these objectives were also in perfect tune with those promoted in the SDG-F guidance documents. These include strengthening capacity of government and the private sector to be more inclusive in their policies and operations/practices; supporting physical upgrading investments in production capacities of MSMEs and cooperatives; and skilling, information provision, and business-to-business linkages for improved quality and product diversification. In discussions with women beneficiaries, all of these strategies were highlighted as being important to create a level playing field for their small-businesses, and enabling them to be connected to major markets.

44. While the JP set out to respond to the first policy objective of the SDG-F; i.e. inclusive economic growth for poverty eradication, **it was significantly more responsive to this objective's elements of inclusiveness than to elements of poverty eradication.** This was not necessarily by choice as much as it was because the beneficiaries of the matching fund projects with which the JP was aligned did not necessarily have to be poor women. Moreover, the one-to-one approach to enhancing competitiveness and fostering market linkages for women-owned and cooperative businesses which the JP followed did not sufficiently focus on those usually excluded from the market. In so doing, it missed the opportunity of finding points of leverage to address constraints in a scalable manner to reach all socio-economic groups of producers in the targeted sub-sectors.

45. **The programme was of high relevance to international priorities,** in particular: SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere); SDG 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all); SDG 10 (reduce inequality within and among countries); and SDG 17 (strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development). Relevance in regards to SDGs 5, 8, and 10 are rather obvious, as inclusive growth, equality and empowerment are programme objectives, with positive discrimination being a key strategy. Relevance in regards of MDG1 was high because one of the programme's intentions were to address the social marginalization of women, which is a central facet of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. As a joint programme that promotes multilateralism and the UN's Delivering as One, it was clearly relevant to SDG 17.

2.1.2. Programme Design

Design Process and ProDoc

46. The JP's design process followed the SDG-F ToR and Guidance for Joint Programme Formulation. An initial concept note was put together by UN Women, FAO, ITC and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and submitted for the RC's review and consideration. Following the RC's approval of the concept note, it was presented to the NSC which approved its submission to the SDG-F on 16 June 2014. While all submitting agencies had been involved in joint programmes in Palestine the past, the JP was the first time for them to come together as partners. As we shall examine below, **it took time for the partner agencies to get used to working together and understand each other and each other's' strengths.**

47. Approval of the programme concept paper led to the development of a more detailed proposal, but this time without UNCTAD due to its inability to provide matching funds to the SDG-F programme. The initial concept note envisioned developing MSME competitiveness through using UNCTAD's Empretec Programme methodology, which works with entrepreneurs to enhance their productive capacity and international competitiveness through instilling behavioural change among them and developing their competencies in 10 areas. As UNCTAD withdrew from the Programme, the Empretec methodology was removed from the JP's design. The ProDoc posited that "customized services that better meet the level of the beneficiaries will be provided," noting that capacity building services to be provided by the programme for "agricultural targeted cooperatives will also be customized to better fit their needs and to allow them to really benefit from those services and reach the required goals". We discuss how well this was done in ¶60-77 below.

48. A consultant was hired by UN Women with funds from the SDG-F to support the proposal development process, which was undertaken over a period of one month, from late September 2014 until early November 2014. During the design process, with the involvement of

the consultant, each of the three agencies consulted with their respective national counterparts. Consultations were also organized with programme stakeholders, including civil society and private sector organizations, and a few cooperatives. All meetings were properly documented and had action points for both follow-up as well as recommendations from stakeholders.

49. Discussions with programme staff suggest that **the consultation process was effective in two ways**. Firstly, it enabled the participating agencies to examine their activities from the perspective of economic empowerment and gender in order to identify existing gaps. Secondly, it facilitated a process whereby agencies could discuss and agree on their programme activities and budgets, and responsibilities for these. As one participant expressed it “the process was transparent and effective. It enabled us to agree on the individual activities for which our individual agencies will be responsible and the budget we will be allocated for them.”

50. The design process was not equally effective, however, in ensuring that the various activities come together as one synergetic programme (but rather as a collation of bilateral activities for which individual agency responsibilities and budgets were assigned), with a commonly understood results-oriented plan of action. This, along with the fact that thematic responsibilities were not clearly assigned among implementing agencies (the three agencies for example had responsibilities related to enhancing competitiveness and creating marketing linkages) meant that several important issues were left to be agreed during implementation. Examples of these issues included selection process for MSMEs and content and sequence of capacity building activities.

51. Other gaps and weaknesses **in the programme design** that the evaluation was able to identify by reviewing the ProDoc, and corroborated by several stakeholders interviewed are summarized below.

- **Ambitious objectives:** Programme objectives –as reflected in the programme’s two outcomes and their indicators- were ambitious given the duration of the programme (2 years), the constraining economic situation and business environment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the wide spread in the level of development of the MSMEs and cooperatives which reflected their different levels of readiness to engage in markets. It was particularly ambitious in relation to expectations around ability to induce export sales in international markets.
- **Lack of clear identification of synergies and mechanisms to promote joint implementation and cross-fertilisation beyond those proposed by the SDG-F:** The ProDoc lacked clarity around how synergies among the participating agencies, and coordination with ongoing programmes (of partner agencies as well as of others) is going to be achieved beyond the single activity plan and budget it developed. This was particularly important from the perspective of national stakeholders consulted during the concept development phase of the programme development, several of whom pointed to the importance of demonstrating competitive advantages of the participating agencies, how efficiency gains will be realized, and how linkages will be made with other large-scale programmes implemented by other organisations.
- Linked to the previous, lack of clarity around how the matching funds **will be utilized to support the achievement of the JP results**, particularly in relation to the cooperative development activities and Gaza Strip interventions (which were planned to be implemented with matching funds).
- **Limited integration of lessons learned:** Analysis and articulation of readily available lessons learned from ongoing programmes, such as ITC’s Enhancing Women’s SME Development (EWED) programme which had made substantial achievements vis-à-vis enhancing the competitiveness of women-owned MSEs; FAO’s First National

Initiative which focused on enhancing market access for women cooperatives using market-led approaches, and UN Women's Spring Forward Programme was lacking from the ProDoc.

- **Limited participation of MSMEs and market actors in the value chains targeted**, especially critical for Outcome 2 in the design process. Also, government participation was limited to the central level.
- **Analysis of risks and their mitigation was not very thorough** as it did not consider much of the risks associated with engagement with the private sector, MSMEs and cooperatives. These could have been easily identified at the time of the design, such as the likelihood that MSMEs could be reticent to invest in providing samples to prospective buyers. Identification of risks at the design stage –for example, by using ITC's long experience in the area of trade and market development- could have helped the programme plan how to overcome several of the difficulties it faced during implementation.
- **Lack of an exit strategy**: While the ProDoc noted that an exit strategy would be developed during implementation, initial elements of such strategy could have been at least identified during the design stage. Planning for exit was highlighted by several stakeholders in the consultation process.
- Most agreed that the **human resources needs allocated to the Programme were underestimated**. Several also noted that the level of effort expected to be allocated to the programme by some staff as part of the cost sharing arrangement, particularly for the posts of M&E Associate and Programme Officers (see ¶20 and Table 2 above) was unrealistic given their existing workloads and the complexity of the JP.

52. Several stakeholders interviewed felt that the programme design was “somewhat rushed” and that the time allocated to the proposal development phase was too short. Indeed, the design phase could have benefited from an inception phase, particularly important for undertaking the need assessment and customised capacity development approaches espoused in the programme design (see ¶47 above), thereby ensuring a smooth transition into implementation. This led to a delayed start of the Programme¹⁹, and also impacted the relations between the partner agencies, both with consequences for the programme, leading to parallel implementation, with some of the benefits of joint programming, such as identification of potential areas of collaboration, only beginning to emerge towards the end of the programme. A longer design phase or an inception phase, with stronger analytical elements and higher level of participation by beneficiaries, may have enabled the designers to overcome the above weaknesses.

Appropriateness of the Joint Programme Approach as Reflected in the Design and Implementation

53. The **strategies the JP utilized at different levels were appropriate given the types of changes that it was trying to achieve and contribute to** (see ¶15 and Table 1 above). Given the crosscutting nature of the challenges around inducing economic growth and creating equitable economic opportunities for women in Palestine, and the diversity of the population that make up the group that is referred to as ‘women-owned and women-run MSMEs and cooperatives’, there is a lot of logic in combining different perspectives and expertise

¹⁹ ITC started with the implementation of its activities (of the JP) in January 2015, as planned. However, some of the joint activities (dependent on FAO and UNW) were delayed.

represented by various UN agencies. By the same token, the needs of women also fall within the mandates of different sector ministries of government. In that regard, the approach of joint programming was indeed appropriate for addressing the development challenge.

54. The relatively small number of participating UN agencies in the JP also lent itself for enhanced synergies and collaboration. This said, the roles of the UN agencies in the programme did not necessarily reflect their comparative advantages. For example, ITC – even without having country office in Palestine- would have been better placed to handle the entire capacity building components related to competitiveness and market linkages for both MSMEs and cooperatives products instead of UN Women; or at least to have a much stronger advisory role on product development activities implemented separately by FAO and UN Women than it did.

55. The evaluation found that the “jointness” of the JP was defined at the outcome level. However, by definition, an outcome is a broad development result to which no individual UN agency can claim full attribution. It stands to reason therefore, that several UN agencies may contribute to a common outcome as a matter of course without the need of a joint programme. On the other hand, an output is a specific short-term result to which full attribution can be claimed on the basis of specific interventions.

56. In that regard, a joint programme is a situation where two or more UN agencies are contributing to the same output and can all claim partial attribution. **Good practice examples of this in the JP included:** (i) the continuation of market linkage support provided by UN Women to the same women MSMEs targeted by ITC under a former project, and the coordination between UN Women and ITC in this regard; (ii) the support given to women MSMEs and cooperatives in enhancing competitiveness first and then establishing market linkages, where all three agencies collaborated to achieve results; (iii) the complementary work of ITC and FAO to enhance the competitiveness and market access for women food cooperatives, where the former focused on identifying export potential, required marketing mix strategies, and compliance issues, whereas the latter supported both undertaking local market assessments and capacity building support to enable cooperatives to tap the export opportunities; and, most recently, (iv) the support provided by FAO and UN Women to MoNE to conduct its first ever trade awareness workshop with agricultural cooperatives in the West Bank.

57. The preceding good practices notwithstanding, the evaluation identified **a few missed opportunities where the three agencies could have contributed to a common output.** For example, a greater involvement of both ITC and FAO in the work undertaken by UN Women in the area of national policy development under output 1.1 could have provided an opportunity for the three organizations to collaborate on identifying and prioritising policy issues that have an impact on outcome 2 where all three agencies collaborated. The internal coherence could have also been strengthened by targeting the work on the Gender Audit (under output 1.3) also the most advanced MSMEs and cooperatives targeted under Outcome 2, or at least give more attention in this regard to analysing and enhancing decent work conditions in the targeted MSMEs and cooperatives. While working to pave the way for the promotion of the Gender Equity Seal with two of the largest private sector companies was very relevant to the context in Palestine, it was somewhat disjointed from the remaining programme activities.

Results Framework

58. The JP’s results framework was developed in conjunction with the preparation of the ProDoc. As noted above, it included two outcomes, five outputs, and 17 key performance indicators. While the structure and number of indicators of the JP’s results framework were congruent with SDG-F guidance suggesting JP’s designs to be simple and include a small

number of performance indicators, it contained a number of weaknesses that had consequences on monitoring and performance tracking. Unfortunately, these weaknesses were not addressed during implementation, with implications for the overall M&E management system that was supposed to be put in place. **The most salient weaknesses were:**

- **Validity of indicators:** In a number of cases, indicators chosen for measuring changes did not necessarily accurately measure the change that was being expected. Examples of this include the indicator on increased employment within targeted MSMEs and cooperatives, which was unrealistic to use to measure the effectiveness of the planned policy-level interventions given the long it usually takes for economic policies to start showing results. It also inaccurately assumed that changes in service provision and investment policies brought about by the JP would have a direct impact on employment within the targeted MSMEs and cooperative, when the effect of these policies was most likely to induce business investment rather than employment.
- **Clarity of indicators:** several output indicators were neither SMART nor were they properly defined, which complicated their measurement and caused confusion regarding how they should be measured and reported against. Examples of these indicators are all of those indicators that sought to measure satisfaction, where it was not clear in these indicators what exactly is being measured through the satisfaction questions.

59. We examine in section 2.3.2 below how well results framework was used to manage the JP and facilitate results measurement. It is suffice it to note here that by not developing a comprehensive M&E system and tools as proposed in the SDG-F guidance, the JP did not meet the expectations of going beyond the simple indicators matrix. The JP's reliance on the results framework for monitoring and evaluation was too simplistic for a complex programme that involves a diversity of actors and activities.

2.2. Achievement of Results

Evaluation question 2: Extent to which the objectives of the development intervention have been achieved?
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2.2.1. Outputs

60. This section summarises the outputs delivered as reported by the JP and selectively validated by the evaluation through a desk review, interviews, focus group discussion and direct observations, as relevant. It is worth noting here that UN Women led on all outputs under Outcome 1, while all three agencies contributed to the three outputs under Outcome 2, albeit to varying degrees. **Quality of outputs is discussed in chapter 2.3.3 under Efficiency.**

Outcome 1: Support public and private sectors to enhance policies for inclusive socio-economic development of women owners of MSMEs and cooperatives

61. ***Output 1.1, Palestinian public institutions are better able to develop and apply more equitable policies and technical services to support and protect increased economic activity in the private sector, was delivered largely, but not yet entirely, as planned.*** This was done through, both, building the capacity of partner public sector entities in gender and gender mainstreaming approaches, as well as supporting them –on a relatively limited scale, however- to develop policies that promote inclusive economic development.

62. The JP delivered training, working sessions and awareness raising workshop on gender mainstreaming in planning and service delivery to 211 (137 women, and 74 men) civil servants at various managerial levels from partner public institutions and bodies received. In interviews,

key informants and trainees from the beneficiary organizations indicated that the training they had received under the JP helped them improve their knowledge of gender concepts and the meaning of gender mainstreaming, and for a few of them this was the first time they have participated in any kind of training on gender. Table 4 below gives an overview of the different capacity building activities implemented by the JP.

63. Also as planned, a policy expert, hired by the JP, worked with the NCWE to develop policy proposals for: (i) instituting mechanisms that provide market protection for traditional agricultural and cultural products produced and manufactured by women MSMEs and cooperatives from unfair competition; and (ii) providing growth and development incentives for women-owned/led cooperatives in the agriculture sector. At the time of the evaluation, the final policy paper, which integrated policies for both protection and incentive provision, had just been submitted to the NCWE, after having been revised on the basis of recommendations given by senior PA officials, including the Prime Minister’s Policy Advisor, in “validation workshop” held in Ramallah. Prior to this, the paper had gone through five revisions (on the basis of feedback received from members of the NCWE). Having taken much longer to develop and deliberate than originally planned, the policy paper was not yet endorsed by the NCWE or adopted by the government at the time of evaluation.

Table 4: Capacity building activities implemented for the benefit of partner public sector institutions

Partner	Description	Beneficiaries	F	M	Total trainees per Activity	Total trainees per Partner
MoNE	Training workshop on gender mainstreaming in planning and service delivery	Heads of Units and staff with service delivery responsibilities	17	7	24	24
MoA	Awareness workshop on gender mainstreaming	Senior decision makers and planning and gender unit staff	33	22	55	131
	Training workshop on mainstreaming gender in service delivery planning and programming	Field staff in all MoA Directorates in the West Bank	48	28	76	
MoL	Training workshop on strategic action planning from a gender perspective	Members of the Gender Units' Support Committee	15	6	21	41
	Training workshop on gender mainstreaming in labour inspection	Inspectors	11	9	20	
All + NCWE	Training workshop on gender integration in public sector programming	Selected members	13	2	15	15
Total			137	74	211	211

64. *Output 1.2, targeted private companies have increased engagement and social responsibility towards inclusion of women in the economic sector based on values of gender equity and promotion of women’s rights, was fully achieved.* Two private companies –The Bank of Palestine (BoP) and Birzeit Pharmaceuticals Company (BPC),

the largest companies in their respective sectors- have been assisted to undertake a comprehensive gender audit using ILO's gender audit methodology. This was done through a participatory process, facilitated by local experts certified by ILO that involved building gender awareness and analysis capacity within both companies through training and accompaniment of 14 staff, and participation of more than 100 staff from both companies in the assessment activities through focus group discussions and interviews. The process culminated in an audit report for each company, with policy and operational recommendations for enhancing equality and gender equity in the workplace and in key operations/services. As envisaged in the JP's results framework, recommendations included suggestions for changes in the complaint mechanisms and policies related to sexual harassment, which were being under consideration by the Board of the two companies at the time of evaluation.

Outcome 2: Increased access [to markets for] and competitiveness of women run MSMEs and cooperatives' products in local, regional and international markets

65. *Output 2.1, women-owned/runMSMEs and cooperatives strengthen their capacity to improve their competitiveness in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way, was largely achieved for MSMEs, but not yet fully for cooperatives.* A total of 43 MSMEs, 18 cooperatives, and 2 private marketing companies (connected to cooperatives) were assisted by the JP to improve their competitiveness through a wide range of activities implemented at both the supply and demand side of the market. The results for and approach followed being different for targeted MSMEs compared to cooperatives, we discuss these separately below.

Support to MSMEs under Output 2.1

66. Building on previous work ITC had delivered under the EWED Programme in partnership with BWF, UN Women led on the delivery of the elements of output 2.1 related to women-owned MSMEs specializing in cultural and handicrafts products. This was done through the BWF Consortium (see ¶21 above), which was contracted following a competitive process to: “develop, design and run an OSS business development services’ hub (BDSH) with an incubation space for women entrepreneurs/businesses, MSMEs and cooperatives”²⁰. In doing so, the BWF Consortium followed the programme of capacity building activities that was prescribed by UN Women, which involved training and coaching in both institutional development topics and business skills, competitiveness-oriented advice, and production improvement-oriented grants.

67. A total of 45 MSMEs were selected (out of 104 applicants) to receive support through the OSS/JP to enhance their competitiveness. Selection of these MSMEs was undertaken following a very transparent process and using criteria that focused on both readiness and willingness of applicants to uptake the planned capacity building support. Despite all the good efforts that went into the selection process, two of the selected MSMEs dropped during the first month of implementation of the OSS activities due to personal reasons, leaving the total number of beneficiary MSMEs at 43 (28 in the West Bank and 15 in Gaza Strip). Of these, 13 (all in the West Bank) had previously received (and continued, until October 2015, to also receive) substantial competitiveness enhancement support from the EWED Programme through which ITC provided co-financing to the JP. This support involved the provision of extensive one-to-one product development advice and mentoring over a period of nearly eight months, which

²⁰ UN Women, CALL FOR PROPOSALS: “One Stop Shop” Business Development Services for Women MSMEs.

ended just before competitiveness enhancement support began under the JP with SDG-F resources.

68. At the time of the evaluation, All planned capacity building activities planned to enhance the competitiveness of the targeted MSMEs had been completed or were near to be completed as per the agreement between UN Women and BWF Consortium. These activities included:

- Establishing a physical space for the provisions of business development services (but not necessarily incubation) with a retail outlet within the premises of BWF in the city of Al-Bireh to serve as the one-stop-shop/BDSH for MSMEs.
- Providing 21 days of in-class training to all 43 women owners of the targeted MSMEs on the following topics: Marketing (3 days), financial management (3 days), business management (2 days), communication and social media (4 days), lobbying and advocacy (1 day), trade (2 days), trade facilitation (2 days) and export management (2 days), insurance and legal obligations and contracting (2 days). Following the trainings, each MSME was coached individually on pricing and costing (2 days), while a group coaching event was conducted for interested MSMEs on managing customs clearance. A visit to Ashdod Port was also organized as part of the training on export management and logistics, in which 15 women participated. In addition, ITC provided the 15 MSMEs that were also targeted by the EWED Programme with 11 trainings on similar topics and with a slightly lighter agenda.
- Developing general organizational development plans, business plans and marketing and promotion plans for each of the targeted MSMEs. Individual and group coaching sessions were organized and delivered for MSME on each of these plans to ensure that they are properly understood to catalyse their implementation. Advice on pricing, packaging, segmentation and when and how to approach corporate buyers using an assessment conducted within the framework of the OSS were central themes in these coaching sessions. It is worth noting here that BWF's capacity to deliver competitiveness and market linkage support services to MSMEs was built with the support of ITC under the EWED and previous projects implemented by the two organisations.
- Supporting the process of registration with the MoNE and the Chambers of Commerce for previously unregistered MSMEs and re-registration for those whose registration needed renewal. Of the targeted MSMEs, those provided with support to register with MoNE for the first time were 23, those provided with support to obtain membership in a Chamber of Commerce were 17, and those who were supported to renew registration they previously had were 12. Eight MSMEs (2 in the West Bank and 7 in Gaza) declined the offered support for registration. It is worth noting here that only two of the 17 MSMEs that got registered with MoNE were registered as industrial companies, whereas the remaining 15 were registered as individually-owned enterprises.
- Based on the findings of a demand-side market assessments that examined corporate buyers' and individual consumers' preferences²¹ and purchasing behaviour vis-à-vis the four clusters of products produced by the targeted women MSMEs, providing one-to-one, expert technical assistance and advice on product development and branding was

²¹ The assessment of corporate buyers preferences and behaviours was conducted by ITC. The assessment of individual buyers' preferences and behaviours was conducted by UN Women. The two assessments were not designed in a holistic manner, however. The depth of analysis and breadth of information provided in the former was much greater than what was presented in the latter.

provided to each of the targeted MSMEs. Product development advice included suggestions for new patterns and shapes, new products, and product variations. Branding support was highly appreciated by interviewed MSMEs, and included supporting them in re-designing their logos and packaging, establishing internet domain names, and improving their presence and visibility on social media.

- Providing competitiveness enhancement-oriented grants ranging in value from US\$ 2,600-6,500 to 34 MSMEs. These MSMEs were selected on the basis of the level of commitment they exhibited to the capacity building programme carried out as well as their growth potential and aspirations which was assessed using their business plans.

69. A catalogue featuring samples of the products of all targeted MSMEs was produced and disseminated as part of the promotional activities of the OSS. An electronic version of the catalogue was uploaded onto the OSS Portal, established as one of the activities under Output 1.1. Another -quite impressive and more personal- catalogue featuring product samples and potential product curations, and the personal stories and contact details of women behind MSMEs was also produced and disseminated both in print and digitally. The latter catalogue which was produced by ITC, however, focused on the 15 women MSMEs that were also supported under the EWED Programme.

70. All of the women beneficiaries interviewed by the evaluation expressed satisfaction with the support with which they were provided within the framework of the JP, and all of them expressed that their competitiveness and capacity has improved as a result, albeit to varying degrees. **Women were particularly appreciative of the grants they received, as well as the extensive one-to-one technical assistance provided to them on product and brand development.** Appreciation for the latter was most vociferous among the women who benefitted from support under both the JP and ITC's EWED Programme (before the beginning of the JP). This was expected given the hand-holding approach followed, the type of expertise provided, and the length and nature of technical support and advice that these women received (and needed) within the framework of the JP.

71. Women beneficiaries had the opportunity to learn about the concept of perceived value and how important it is when dealing with markets, which has had a positive impact on their businesses. Several of them have made leaps and bounds in the product development phase and have been able to increase their business both locally and internationally. And, they had a valuable opportunity to learn how long the sampling and development process takes when doing custom work, which has **helped them develop a future mind-set in doing business.**

72. The previous notwithstanding, **beneficiaries had a few things to complain about** in relation to the capacity building programme. **These included:** training being either too long, too theoretical, or not sufficiently customised to their particular enterprise circumstances and development needs; lack of proper consideration of the competing work demands women have that reduce their ability to effectively benefit and/or participate in training and other capacity building activities; experts not having the technical knowledge related to their products in specific (voiced particularly by MSMEs specializing in soap and jewellery making); and, as we shall discuss in ¶89 below, the inappropriate timing of the grants and the time allocated for their disbursement, which rendered them less effective in inducing competitiveness than it could have been.

Support to cooperatives under Output 2.1

73. FAO and ITC collaborated on supporting cooperatives to achieve Output 2.1, demonstrating good synergies between the two agencies. FAO led on the JPs' activities aiming at enhancing the competitiveness of women-owned agricultural and food processing cooperatives, focusing mainly strengthening the regulatory environment through working with the Palestinian Standards Institute (PSI) to develop quality standards for products produced by targeted cooperatives, and by enhancing cooperatives' production capacity in line with market demand.

74. FAO signed two Letters of Agreement (LoA) with ESDC (on 5 May 2015 and 24 March 2016) to implement the JP's planned activities under Outputs 2.1. At the time of the evaluation, activities under both LoAs had been completed, with 16 cooperatives (compared to 15 planned) having benefited from the JP's activities under the first LoA (May 2015 – March 2016), and 17 cooperatives (compared to 20 planned) benefiting under the second LoA (April 2016 – March 2017). These were:

- Supporting the establishment and opening of two retail business shops to provide direct access to the local market to women cooperatives in the West Bank. These shops were managed by Al-Thimar and Al-Rozana, two women-owned food marketing companies that operate in the northern and southern West Bank respectively, which were provided with incentives by the JP to integrate the targeted cooperatives into their supply chains. Support included financial assistance for shop set-up, training on accounting and pricing, as well as supporting both companies with branding through the establishment and registration of a common brand (*Baytuti*, which means homemade), development of packaging materials and product labels, and development of a marketing strategy for both companies.
- Undertaking a market demand assessment for cooperative products, which provided recommendations for the marketing mix and value propositions that cooperative could work on developing to improve their competitiveness in the local market.
- Undertaking an organizational assessment of the targeted cooperatives (in year 1), which identified organizational and production capacity development needs.
- Based on the result of the market and organizational assessments, training and coaching on quality production management and pricing strategies was provided to 10 cooperatives that showed the most promising market potential. This included training and coaching sessions on good food production procedures, production quality control processes for seven different products with high market potential, and packaging and labelling. Coaching and training reports reviewed by the evaluation showed that 113 members of targeted cooperatives received 80 training hours and more than 41 coaching visits aimed at enhancing their production quality over the JP's lifetime.
- To further help cooperatives overcome the problem of inconsistent quality that market assessments identified as one of the main bottlenecks preventing the development of the cooperative agribusinesses, developing 20 standard production manuals for the top 20 food products processed by the targeted cooperatives. These manuals were prepared by food technology experts with private sector experience, and were in the final stages of print design at the time of evaluation.

- Characterization²² of the top 20 products produced by cooperatives, and, in collaboration with PSI, developing national standards for 3 products (*Maftool*, thyme, and *Makdous*) identified by ITC to have the highest growth and export potential (see ¶**Error! Reference source not found.**⁷⁵ below), and starting the standard development process for the fourth product (*Friekeh*).
- Providing equipment to 12 cooperatives (of which 7 only were targeted by the JP) to enhance their production capacities. Equipment included electrical chilli grinding machines, manual packaging and wrapping machines, small-scale pasteurisations machines, and electronic scales.

75. As part of the JP partners' consolidated plan to achieve Outcome 2, ITC over the JP's lifetime provided important technical advice and undertook in-depth market assessments that had significant impact on shaping the direction of the preceding achievements. This included undertaking a food and drink market assessment in the European Union (EU), which provided sort of a roadmap for building the capacity of Palestinian enterprises to export ancient grains, herbs and spices, and pickled condiments to Europe. This was later followed by developing a marketing strategy which identified international market linkages for women cooperatives in Palestine; price analysis of Palestinian products in the EU markets; and initial compliance checks for some products and product labels.

76. The EU market assessment concluded that Palestinian specialities stand to benefit from the interest in Middle Eastern food, which is one of the international cooking styles that generate strong attention. In-country assessments carried out by ITC further indicated that there was a gap between the requirements and the products being offered (particularly, in terms of certified quality and food safety systems); and that the value proposition of the cooperatives targeted by the JP suffers from the lack of scale of production, business and language skills, use of international promotion tools such as websites, brochures and business cards in English and production costs. Recommendations were thus made (correctly, no doubt) and taken-up by the JP partners to support the cooperatives with the implementation of a quality and food safety systems and obtaining the respective certifications; consolidate the product offer into larger quantities of uniform quality through introducing a value chain approach, in which the producers were linked to an intermediary exporter –New Farm Company (NFC) - with the necessary business skills and resources. **At the time of the evaluation, and in accordance with the workplan, ITC was continuing a process of technical guidance to market proposition of NFC, while FAO was poised to assure the quality and export readiness of the products.**

77. Cooperatives met by the evaluation reported mixed levels of satisfaction with the training and capacity building support with which they have been provided under the JP, with the majority of them reporting that their competitiveness has not improved. For most of these cooperatives, achieving competitiveness is best measured by increased sales, which is something they have not yet realized as a result of the improved production technologies, packaging, or any other tangible product features they have introduced. For the few cooperatives that reported increased competitiveness, this was mostly

²² Characterisation is the first step in the process of standards development. Product characterization usually reveals biochemical and biophysical nature of the product as well as the nature of product-related substances and impurities. Thorough product characterization is a necessary precursor to determine critical quality attributes (CQAs) and the associated analytical methods that in turn can be used as in-process controls and specifications, and for stability testing.

the result of the production cost reductions brought about by the new equipment they received, and, in one case, reduced production losses as a result of production technology training they received.

78. *Output 2.2, women-owned/run MSMEs and cooperatives increase their participation in trade, was delivered as planned,* using a range of market-led approaches and activities that were implemented in parallel to competitiveness strengthening activities. In addition to the formal linkages made between the cooperatives and the two business shops, activities implemented to enhance the targeted cooperatives and MSMEs participation in trade included supporting their participation in local, regional, and international fairs and exhibitions which has enabled them to establish linkages with various buyers, including –with ITC support- traders in the US, Germany and Canada; providing them with market intelligence data, facilitating business matching events and meetings with potential buyers (B2B); and hiring of sales agents for them in Europe, the United States and the Gulf.

79. JP reports show that **significant (and commendable) efforts have been made by the JP partners (particularly ITC who led and contributed the highest co-financing for output 2.2) to create market linkages for both MSMEs and cooperatives during the lifetime of the JP.** This included, inter alia, the organisation of participation of women MSMEs in exhibitions in the Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Berlin, Germany; Geneva, Switzerland by ITC; and, several local exhibitions by FAO and UN Women. It also included facilitation of B2B meetings for MSMEs with prospective buyers (ITC), as well as organisation of a trip for a group of German traders specialising in ethnic foods to Palestine to meet with and explore business opportunities with cooperatives (ITC). Moreover, NFC –the intermediary exporter- was supported by ITC to have representation in the “SIAL Food Event” in Paris, as well as to present its products to and meet with a wide range of potential European buyers in April 2017 (several of them have expressed strong interest).

80. Overall, the **support provided to MSMEs and cooperatives to enhance their participation in trade has resulted in increasing their sales (see ¶84 below) and enabled a few of them to create new market linkages.** However, given the differences in their stages of development, business acumen, and in their capacities (human, physical and financial) to respond to buyers’ and agents’ requests for samples on timely basis, **benefits from trade facilitation activities were not felt systematically across the targeted MSMEs.** Similarly, while a number of cooperatives witnessed increases in trade volumes as a result of their relationship with the two business shops established by the JP, not all cooperatives targeted benefited, and those that did witnessed considerable differences in their trade volumes and values with the shops. Discussions with stakeholders not only suggested that both companies managing the shops faced growth constraints that prevented them from increasing their trade with cooperatives, but also that agreements could not be reached between them and the cooperatives on quality, consistency, and trade terms.

81. Increases in **export trade for the benefit of cooperatives showed good potential** at the time of the evaluation with the positive results of the B2B meetings organised between NFC and European buyers. However, **additional support is likely to be needed** by both NFC and the beneficiary cooperatives to respond to the market pull induced by the JP in this regard. Recommendations are provided in this regard below.

82. *Output 2.3, promotion of Palestinian products produced by women owned MSME’s and cooperatives in local, regional and international markets is increased, was only partially delivered as planned.* In addition to the preceding achievements which the evaluation believes can also be claimed under output 2.3, linkages have also been also created with the Palestinian Embassy in Geneva, Switzerland. Several meetings with the Palestinian Ambassador in Geneva were organized by ITC (in support of UN Women

who was leading on Output 2.3) to promote the newly produced collection of the beneficiaries. A showcase for the products was organized by ITC with the embassy in Geneva at the United Nations premises where products that reflected the Palestinian culture and heritage were showcased. The event also served as a business matching event, through which MSMEs made a few business deals. This said, the JP fell short of achieving its target of promoting Palestinian products through establishing linkages with Palestinian embassies as only one of three such linkages were established, with no tangible long-term strategy for sustainability. Without the support provided by ITC to UN Women in organizing the Geneva exhibition, progress towards Output 2.3 could have not been realised at all.

2.2.2. Outcomes

83. The achievement of **Outcome 1, support public and private sectors to enhance policies for inclusive socio-economic development of women owners of MSMEs and cooperatives, in such a way that reflects itself positively on employment creation in MSMEs and cooperatives as envisaged in the programme design, is quite unlikely given the current political and socio-economic realities in Palestine and what was planned by the JP.** For policies to induce inclusive growth and employment creation in the MSME and cooperative sectors, three key things were needed: i) a more in-depth assessment of the systemic policy constraints preventing the growth of women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives; ii) focused lobbying and advocacy to affect changes in policies identified under (i); and iii) longer term capacity building and enforcement support. The JP delivered partially on (i) and (ii), but delivering on (iii) was not possible given the 24 months given by the lifespan of the SDG-F programmes.

84. What capacity was built within partner Ministries and the NCWE is an achievement that the JP should seek to build upon to enable both the public and private sector to adopt inclusive development policies and programmes. Discussions with partner Ministries clearly indicated a need for more hands-on capacity building in policy analysis and programme planning from a gender perspective, include a strong appetite for capacity building support in gender auditing which was seen as an important entry point for developing more inclusive policies.

85. Outcome 2, increased access [to markets for] and competitiveness of women run MSMEs and cooperatives' products in local, regional and international markets, was partially achieved. In the absence of credible baseline data, the evaluation with the help of BWF Consortium asked targeted MSMEs to compare between their sales in 2016 (towards the end of the JP) and in 2014 (before the JP started). This data showed that the 35 of the 43 targeted MSMEs (81.2%) realised sales turnover increases since the beginning of the programme, with the remaining MSMEs (8 or 18.2%) having witnessed a drop in their sales over the same period. On average, **targeted MSMEs reported a 42.8% increase in their sales turnover compared to the 2014 (i.e. before the programme started), well above the JP's target of 20%.** Among those MSMEs that witnessed increases in sales, the average increase was 59.7%, with 12 more MSMEs having witnessed three digit growth figures in their sales (ranging between 100-800%) between 2014 and 2016 (see Annex 4 for changes in sales of targeted MSMEs). Discussions with the women owners of the targeted MSMEs strongly suggest that the support provided by the JP - particularly registration (which enabled the women to access market corporate channels that were untenable otherwise), advice on marketing to corporate buyers, exhibitions, and product development support provided by ITC, played a central role in increasing their sales. The exact contribution of the JP in this regard, however, could not be measured by the evaluation due to the lack of counterfactual on the one hand, and the complexity of attribution of change at the enterprise level to the JP due to the dynamic nature of business and market.

86. While both Al-Rozana and Al-Thimar witnessed impressive increases in their sales turnover in 2016 compared to the baseline (40% and 68.1%, respectively), discussions with both companies as well as with targeted cooperatives strongly suggest that the benefits of these increases did not trickle down to the cooperatives in tangible manner due to two main reasons: Firstly, the increase in sales realised by both companies was driven by increased sales of food products that were processed by the companies themselves, where they captured the overwhelming return on value addition captured by them. Secondly, despite having signed supply memoranda of understating with both companies, not all targeted cooperatives have had sales deals with the companies, and those that did reported only marginal increases. Discussions with both companies and cooperative leaders pointed to a number of constraints -at both the supply- and demand side- that have prevented greater integration of the targeted cooperatives into the two companies' supply chains, which were not systematically addressed in the JP during the design or implementation. On the demand side, these constraints include access to working capital, reduced confidence in cooperatives' abilities to produce consistently; and marketing capacity. On the supply side, constraints include high input and production costs, inefficient supply chain, limited working capital, and lack of access to market information.

87. NFC reported a record US\$ 177,334 in purchases from cooperatives in 2016, of which one third (34% or US\$ 60,294) was from 13 cooperatives targeted by the JP. While positive, this achievement was an unlikely result of the JP since: (i) NFC was already purchasing from the targeted cooperatives prior to the JP; (ii) cooperatives had not yet introduced the quality management systems and operations that the JP promoted; and (iii) market linkage assistance provided the JP to NFC had not yet resulted in confirmed orders. The evaluation believes that a longer timespan than what was possible under the SDG-F and a slightly more incentive-oriented development approach was needed for achieving the JP's second outcome for cooperatives, particularly in light of NFC's own organizational and financial constraints.

2.3. Efficiency

Evaluation question 3: Extent to which resources/inputs (funds, time, human resources, etc.) have been turned into results.
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2.3.1. Utilisation of Financial Resources and Timeliness

88. A budgetary summary as of October 2016 (table 5), six months prior to the JP's extended end date, shows disbursements and commitments at 81%, with ITC achieving 91% expenditure of funds, and FAO and UN Women showing expenditure at 83% and 75% respectively. Discussions with the three agencies suggest that full financial expenditure will be achieved by the end of April 2017.

89. This said, the evaluation notes that full financial implementation does not immediately reflect on the timely utilisation of resources throughout implementation. In fact, it was noted that while ITC started its planned activities under the JP on time as planned, the JP overall faced significant delays in implementation during its first year due to a much-longer than-expected partner coordination and programme setup time, which effectively meant that the critical mass of the JP's activities related to MSME capacity building and market linkages could not start until 10 months after the programme starting date. This had negative impact on partners' ability to effectively leverage and align the activities they were implementing with matching funds with the JP as originally envisaged. Examples of this include, the ITC having to close out its EWED programme by the end of 2015, and thus being unable to extend product development advice through its competitiveness expert hired under this to the MSMEs newly

selected under the JP²³; and UN Women having to disburse MSME competitiveness grants (funded with co-financing) and ensure that grant resources are spent prior to the completion of the product development stage of its MSME capacity building programme under the SDGF.

Table 5: Financial status as of 31 October 2016

		SDG-F	% SDG-F	Matching Funds	Matching Funds	Total	% Total
Total Approved Budget	UN Women	\$ 726,600	48%	\$ 700,000	47%	\$ 1,426,600	48%
	FAO	\$ 426,700	28%	\$ 450,000	30%	\$ 876,700	29%
	ITC	\$ 346,700	23%	\$ 350,000	23%	\$ 696,700	23%
	Total	\$ 1,500,000	100%	\$ 1,500,000	100%	\$ 3,000,000	100%
Total Budget Transferred Budget	UN Women	\$ 726,600	100%	\$ 700,000	100%	\$ 1,426,600	100%
	FAO	\$ 426,700	100%	\$ 450,000	100%	\$ 876,700	100%
	ITC	\$ 346,700	100%	\$ 350,000	100%	\$ 696,700	100%
	Total	\$ 1,500,000	100%	\$ 1,500,000	100%	\$ 3,000,000	100%
Total Committed Budget	UN Women	\$ 79,907	11%	\$ -	0%	\$ 79,907	6%
	FAO	\$ 99,589	23%	\$ 145,750	32%	\$ 245,339	28%
	ITC	\$ 64,422	19%	\$ -	0%	\$ 64,422	9%
	Total	\$ 243,918	16%	\$ 145,750	10%	\$ 389,668	13%
Total Disbursed Budget	UN Women	\$ 413,226	57%	\$ 575,256	82%	\$ 988,482	69%
	FAO	\$ 180,043	42%	\$ 304,250	68%	\$ 484,293	55%
	ITC	\$ 227,226	66%	\$ 340,000	97%	\$ 567,226	81%
	Total	\$ 820,495	55%	\$ 1,219,506	81%	\$ 2,040,001	68%
Total Committed & Disbursed	UN Women	\$ 493,133	68%	\$ 575,256	82%	\$ 1,068,389	75%
	FAO	\$ 279,632	66%	\$ 450,000	100%	\$ 729,632	83%
	ITC	\$ 291,648	84%	\$ 340,000	97%	\$ 631,648	91%
	Total	\$ 1,064,413	71%	\$ 1,365,256	91%	\$ 2,429,669	81%

2.3.2. Programme Governance and Management

Governance, Coordination Management and the Programme Secretariat

90. As mentioned earlier, as designed, the governance of the JP was to be done through a three-tier management structure as per the SDG-F guidelines, with an NSC, a PMC and a PMT. While the NSC was established and met during the programme conceptualization phase (concept note), it never met during implementation of the JP. The PMC, which was envisaged to facilitate operational coordination between the programme partners and ensure cross fertilisation among them, was never formed.

91. The PMT met on a regular (almost monthly) basis throughout most of the JP's implementation, but it did not have the clear remit or the mechanisms to assume the leadership role that the PMC was supposed to provide; and which was needed to ensure that the JP maintained a strategic and results-oriented approach. While the Programme Secretariat (PS) could have helped in bridging some of the gaps caused by the absence of a PMC, discussions with programme stakeholders suggest that the PS itself did not function as originally planned due to changes in the SDG-F Programme Manager that took place during the implementation of the JP, interdependence between the SDG-F Programme Manager and the lead agency (which,

²³ Coaching on product development provided by ITC under the JP was not part of ITC's explicit responsibilities under the JP. However, it was necessary since work on product development goes hand in hand with market linkages: ITC had to collect feedback from buyers, improve the products to be able to sell to the identified buyers.

according to one stakeholder, “raised concerns about objectivity and independence of the PS altogether, and did not help in breaking the silos between the partner agencies until very late into programme implementation”), and a certain level of disempowerment by the PM of the M&E Officer, rendering him without the level of authority needed to fully discharge his functional responsibilities and leadership vis-à-vis the JP monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

92. The PS used the tools proposed by the SDG-F, such as the annual work plan and budget and the bi-annual reports, to track the implementation and financial progress of the JP. Aside from these tools, the partner agencies maintained traditional work practices such for monitoring, reporting and implementation. Financial practices too were in line with each of the three agencies’ requirements. This, together with a lack of pre-planned strategy for strengthening joint implementation and ownership of results, proved to be a key barrier for maximising the “jointness” and coherence of the programme. Several stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation felt that the requirements for effective implementation of joint programmes, such as flexibility, adaptive management, and strong management oversight, were not adequately assessed at the time of design or addressed by the JP during implementation.

Degree to which M&E contributed to effective management and result measurement

93. In accordance with the SDG-F guidelines, the JP developed a common M&E Framework, on which basis a Joint Performance Monitoring Plan was developed. AS the lead agency, UN Women was responsible for the overall monitoring of the JP. The Monitoring Plan -which was basically a standard M&E Matrix plus a few additional details on measurement methods- was agreed and reviewed bi-annually with inputs from the three agencies. While measurement methods and tools were identified in the JP’s Monitoring Plan for each indicator, these did not come together in a M&E comprehensive system and monitoring was decentralised to the level of the agencies. The Monitoring Plan focused mainly on tracking progress on outputs and outcomes against their agreed measurements indicators. Activities were not listed in the Monitoring Plan or the M&E Framework.

94. In the absence of a detailed M&E system and guidance from the Program Secretariat, focal points continued to use their agency’s internal monitoring mechanisms, coming together only at the level of reporting where the information had to be aligned with the required SDG-F format. In several instances, the evaluation heard concerns over the lack of alignment between the JP’s monitoring framework and the one used in the partner agencies, which, given that monitoring was done at the agency level, made it difficult for agencies at certain times to track progress for the specific purposes of the JP. The evaluation also heard concerns about the lack of alignment between certain JP activities implemented by specific partner agencies and the framework outcomes, which highlight the significance of M&E limitations discussed above.

95. Delays in the rollout of the JP, turnover in the PM post, and empowerment-related issues in the M&E function (see ¶91 above) played a role, combined, in delaying the start of the baseline, which was only finalized in the second year of the programme. The baseline survey provided a huge amount of data and information on the targeted MSMEs and cooperatives, but it did not succeed in providing the JP with the type of summative and aggregated data on the condition of the targeted enterprises prior to the start of the programme that it needed for tracking progress against outcomes in particular. It also did not deliver improvements in the M&E system as envisaged. While the partner agencies collaborated on reviewing and commenting on the baseline survey report, the baseline measurement process itself was not properly used to reflect on the M&E framework itself and the need to revise the JP’s monitoring plan due not only to issues discussed above (see ¶91 above), but also to the inability of the hired baseline consultant to deliver.

96. Joint monitoring of the programme beyond the PMT meetings, where monitoring-related issues had little space, and the M&E officer was not invited- was not evident to the evaluation. Beyond the monitoring of their individual activities and outputs according to the JP's M&E matrix, partner agencies saw little role for themselves in the overall monitoring of the programme given that the PS' responsibility in this regard. The evaluation believes that a greater sense of ownership of the programme's overall results, a more empowered and better resourced M&E function, and a more elevated sense of joint responsibility for overall programme monitoring among partners may have resulted in improved M&E performance overall.

97. Moreover, discussions with both partner agencies, implementing organisations, and government counterparts clearly suggest that there was a certain level of disregard for analysis and feedback stemming from monitoring systems and processes. While peer-to-peer feedback was reported in the context of management meetings such as those of the PMT, it was limited to partner agencies in most cases. Where feedback on performance was provided by counterparts in the context of meetings, workshops, and joint activity implementation, it was not always evident that feedback was duly considered or taken up to the level where joint decisions could be made about it. The lack of a systemic process for analysis of monitoring data and stakeholder feedback, as well as the lack of a sufficient level of empowerment of the designated M&E Officer, may have played a central role in weakening analysis and decision-support mechanisms within the JP.

The JP's communications strategy: Contribution to Efficiency

98. The ProDoc dedicated a chapter to outlining the JP's planned approach to advocacy and communication, highlighting partners' commitment to strengthening advocacy and public awareness on issues related to women's rights, equality and economic empowerment. The ProDoc stated that "success of the JP will depend on the capacity of stakeholders to undertake successful advocacy and mobilization at the community and national level in support to policies and change of perceptions of public opinion and mass media towards local production of MSMEs and its potential contribution to economic growth and inclusive development. Documentation and promotion of the JP through raising profiles of beneficiaries will support the progress and results of the JP as well as overall advocacy on women's economic rights and promotion of the SDGs."

99. FAO designated a Communications Officer to support the development of an Advocacy and Communications Strategy for the JP, and to act as a focal point for communication matters, but this did not happen until six months after implementation started. A detailed communications and advocacy strategy was developed in July 2015, with inputs from the partner agencies. A JP communications team was formed from of the communications specialist from UN Women, and communication focal points of FAO and ITC. The communications team developed a ToR for itself, detailing how joint communications should be done and at which stages of implementation.

100. The process of development of the communications strategy and the communication strategy itself provide a good example of how synergies and operational efficiency gains could be achieved in joint programmes. The alignment of the communication strategy with the agency's activities provides yet another example of good practice that could be scaled up in any developmental programme. During implementation, however, the scope of the strategy in practice was reduced to using communication tools to give visibility to the programme's key events and success stories. In doing so, the JP did not live-up to its promise of bolstering advocacy on broader issues related to women's rights, equality and economic empowerment through communication. This was missed opportunity where the JP, the evaluation believes, could have left a considerable mark.

101. The visibility aspects of the strategy was implemented as planned, particularly in relation to major events such as the launch ceremony of the OSS and the JP's closing event. However, discussions with partner agencies and a desk review of the communication materials published by the JP indicated that there were some exceptions to this overall conclusion, where a few activities were either not adequately made visible as planned, or did not follow the agreed joint communication protocol. Implementing the communication strategy exactly as planned would have required a greater degree of joint commitment and flexibility on the part of the partner agencies, as well as a greater accountability and appreciation for communication as an advocacy tool.

2.3.3. Quality of Outputs

102. Generally, with some exceptions, outputs delivered were of **good quality**. This judgment is based on the definition the evaluation used for assessing quality, that is: **fitness for use**. Beneficiaries were mostly satisfied with the content of equipment they received through the matching funds, the hands-on product development advice provided, and branding and marketing advice. Based on feedback from beneficiaries and government counterparts and the evaluation's own expert judgment the following points provide a more nuanced assessment of the quality of the JP's outputs:

- **Training on gender integration/mainstreaming in planning and programming:** The quality of training was variable, depending on the trainer. Overall, however, the quality of training was below the trainees' expectations and that of the government focal points. While beneficiaries' expectations from the training were probably too high to begin with, some measures could have been taken to enhance the quality of training and beneficiaries perceptions thereof. These include ensuring that: (i) training is based on clear and agreed training agenda and material, with clear and measurable learning objectives, detailed session plans, and interactive learning methodologies; (ii) training materials are adequately reviewed in terms of content and relevance to learning objectives and agreed methodologies; (iii) trainers possess the training required and technical expertise needed to deliver learning objectives, and (iv) government counterparts are actively engaged in the identification of their needs, learning objectives, and –to the extent possible- trainers.
- **Policy paper:** The policy paper was not yet finalised at the time of the evaluation. The quality of the last version of the policy paper in terms of content, issue framing and direction of recommendations was substantially improved from earlier drafts that the evaluation examined. Though most stakeholders indicated concern about the quality of the policy paper, the evaluation found its quality to be satisfactory given that it is was yet to be completed.
- **Training and capacity support to the BoP and BZP in gender auditing:** Staff and counterparts in both companies were highly satisfied with the training and support they received by the JP to undertake the gender audit, as well as the audit report itself. The evaluation examined both the training materials and the training report and found those to be of high quality in terms of both clarity and richness in content. This said, the evaluation noted that there was little (and much needed) follow-up on gender audit by the JP (UN Women).
- **In-class training to women-owned MSMEs:** All the training materials related to the in-class training offered to MSMEs by the BWF Consortium reviewed by the evaluation was of high quality. Women's satisfaction with and perceived utility of the training varied considerably, however, depending on trainer, topic, and level of development of the enterprise the woman owned. Training on communication and

social media, marketing, and pricing were of particular use to all targeted enterprises, whereas the training on export and import procedures was more useful to the more advanced MSMEs. Training on taxation was very much needed, but the training itself was not useful to most beneficiaries met. The remaining trainings were assessed as useful, but only in the narrow sense of providing more knowledge than addressing practical needs. The overall consensus among women beneficiaries interviewed was that they have been over-trained and thus hope for their capacity to be built either through methods that do not involve training, or through specialized training.

- **Coaching of women-owned MSMEs (ITC):** The quality of coaching provided by the ITC to the 15 women MSME that had been previously targeted by the EWED Programme and continued to receive support under the JP was of very high quality. It involved extensive, market-oriented advice delivered through one-to-one coaching sessions. Women beneficiaries met by the evaluation reported that this type of coaching was very useful to them, citing several example of how it helped them develop their business identity and products to meet market requirements. Particularly appreciated by women, was the experts' in-depth knowledge of market requirements and their ability to provide practical advice on product development.
- **Coaching of women-owned MSMEs (BWF Consortium):** The evaluation could not objectively assess the quality of the content of advice and support provided to MSMEs provided by the BWF Consortium due to lack of detailed documentation of the content of the coaching visits. Women interviewed were generally not satisfied with the coaching visits they received, indicating that coaching was not as practical as they would have liked and did not help them address practical problems as promised. The few women that reported being satisfied with the coaching visits reported being supported with defining their marketing activities and marketing mix more generally, with immediate impact on their sales.
- **MSME Business Plans:** The plans reviewed by the evaluation were of high quality in terms of content and structure. They all followed a standard format and reflected the specific dynamics and conditions of the MEMEs for which they were prepared. The level of effort that went into their development is clearly reflected in their sheer length and financial analysis. This said, both the utility of the business plans to the targeted MSMEs and the satisfaction of women with them were relatively low. The business plans did not necessarily provide the inspiration for or reflect the personal aspiration of the women, which are very important for driving the growth of small businesses. This is why, most women interviewed, reported having not used or referred to their business plan after it was completed.
- **MSME Marketing Plans:** Marketing plans developed for MSMEs are judged as being of poor quality because they were not sufficiently tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the MSMEs.
- **MSME Product Development, Marketing and Market Linkages:** Advice in product design and support to MSME participation in trade fairs not only added significant value to them, but it was also a distinguishing feature of the type of high quality inputs provided by the JP.
- **Infrastructure development, equipment and inputs provided with MSME Competitiveness-oriented grants:** Purchases of equipment and production inputs and infrastructure development works were undertaken by women beneficiaries themselves with the grants from matching funds (UN Women). Women were highlight satisfied with the value of grants provided to them, which –according to them- enabled

them to procure high quality works and inputs. Efficiency could have been better, however, with improved timeliness of the granting process as discussed earlier in the report.

- **Product Standards:** Three of four standards were completed at the time of the evaluation, and these were useful for providing protection and differentiation for women producers from sub-quality products available in the market.
- **Quality Operation Manuals:** The usefulness of these manuals to the cooperatives could not be judged as they were not yet disseminated at the time of evaluation. Samples of manuals reviewed by the evaluation were of good quality in terms of the breadth of their coverage of the production cycle. Discussions with producers suggest that these manuals will be very useful to them.
- **Cooperative training and coaching:** Training provided by FAO to cooperatives was of good quality in terms of its usefulness to cooperative needs for improved production practices. However, training materials were not of very high quality in terms of content and design. The evaluation could not independently assess the quality of cooperatives coaching as coaching sessions were not well documented. Based on feedback from cooperative, however, the evaluation believes that coaching was of somewhat lesser quality than training as it was relatively short, not sufficiently focused in terms of content, and not sufficiently market-oriented.
- **Coaching sessions and technical advice provided to NFC (intermediary exporter):** Advice and coaching provided to NFC by ITC experts enabled NFC to identify its capacity gaps and product development needs in a very practical and market-oriented manner. NFC staff interviewed by the evaluation described the advice provided to them as being “extremely professional” and “very useful”.
- **Cooperative capacity building grants/equipment:** In-kind support provided with matching funds (FAO) to (9) cooperatives in the form of equipment grants resulted in higher productivity and better quality products. Efficiency was however reduced by the fact that not all targeted cooperatives received support, and those that did were not necessarily provided with equipment that could help them improve the competitiveness of the same product for which they were originally supported. The evaluation also noted that some of the provided equipment was not put to use as training on how to operate it was yet to be provided.

2.4. Impact

Evaluation question 4: Extent to which the JP had positive and negative effects, including on and SDGs?

103. While measuring the impact of an ongoing programme was not possible, available evaluation data allowed validating the initial stages of the envisaged progression to change implied by the project’s theory of change. These, in the opinion of the evaluation, are part and parcel of the impact of the JP. There was no information available, yet, on the extent to which achievements made had influenced, or will influence, changes in gender equality and inclusive economic growth. However, as outlined in chapters 2.1 and 2.2, the JP had made important contributions in view of both influencing the enabling environments for such changes, as well as by improving business services and market linkages for MSMEs and cooperative, and enhancing their capacity to effectively use these services.

104. The question of the JP’s impact cannot be discussed in isolation from its contribution to the SDGs. One key question in this regards is, of course, whether the JP’s clear relevance to the SDGs has indeed translated during implementation to affecting poverty alleviation, inclusive

development, and gender equality in the context of occupation. The straight and simple answer to this question is that it has. While the magnitude of the progression it has made towards the SDGs could not be measured, the JP has, without doubt, made important contributions to all the SDGs with which it was aligned, i.e. SDG1, 5, 8, 10, and 17.

- While the JP did not necessarily directly benefit poor women and producers in a targeted manner, it made tangible indirect contributions to poverty alleviation through building capacity of enterprises and enabling them to grow. Data collected by BWF shows that the JP's support to enterprise development enabled nearly half of the MSMEs it targeted to offer new employment opportunities for women, most of whom were reportedly vulnerable.
- By supporting women-owned business and helping build the profile and image of these businesses, the JP directly contributed to SDG8 targets 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life) and 5.5c (adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels). In doing so, the JP also directly contributed to SDG10 through its focus on promoting policies and services that reduce inequality within Palestine.
- The JP's policy work, deliberate focus on supporting the formalisation of informal MSMEs, as well as support to enhancing the value added of both agricultural and cultural products have made contributed to SDG8 target of promoting "development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and [encouraging] the formalisation and growth of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises."
- Contribution to SDG17 was reflected in several ways, including: the resources it made available to development assistance in Palestine through multilateral funding windows (SDG17.3); the good examples of knowledge-sharing among partner agencies and North-South cooperation on knowledge transfer (ITC) (SDG17.6, 17.16, and 17.17); the support to targeted technical assistance and capacity building in support of the implementation of national strategies (SDG17.9); and the focus on enhancing MSMEs and cooperatives export capacity and building agricultural marketing chains to support exports (17.11). One of the most important –and probably most tangible- impact of the JP vis-à-vis SDG17, was the capacity it built within the partner UN agencies to jointly plan and implement development assistance programmes, as well as the capacity it built and left behind with BWF to provide business development services for women MSMEs.

105. Moreover, and in addition to changes on MSMEs discussed in chapter 2.2 above, the JP made significant contributions to enhancing the economic empowerment and agency of the beneficiary women-owners of MSEMs. Women interviewed by the evaluation gave consistent examples of this contributions, the most common of them were: increased income as a result of increased sales; greater self-confidence and self-appreciation; improved status within the household and community; and an enhanced sense of being part of a support group.

106. Overall, stakeholders consulted widely agreed that while progress has been made, considerably more time and efforts are needed before the impact of the JP on women-owners of cooperatives can be tangibly realised. In this context, as well as in the context of support provided to MSMEs, the overwhelming majority of consulted stakeholders emphasised the need for longer term –and some said more-focused and market-oriented- development support for upgrading value chains and market systems where women producers find themselves locked in the bottom and unable to upgrade their products and/or access rewarding market channels.

This consensus confirmed both the relevance of the JP and the need for leveraging it for further market development support.

107. The matching funds provided by the partner agencies played a central role in the progress made by the JP towards its results (outputs and outcomes) as well as above impact areas. For example, co-financing provided by UN Women (through the SFW Regional Programme jointly funded by UN Women and the EU) and FAO for physical capacity upgrading had immediate positive impacts on the bottom line of the targeted MSMEs and cooperatives, which reflected itself positively on the income of women owners of these enterprises. ITC's matching funds which were used to provide high-quality product development advice and support the participation of women MSMEs in trade exhibitions, and to provide MSMEs with training were directly reflected in improved sales and market links for at least 13 of the 43 beneficiary MSMEs, and indirectly for the rest.

108. The JP left a considerable mark on the capacity of the implementing partner organizations, particularly the BWF Consortium (BWF, Agility and PSC). As a result of the programme, these organisations organically developed a cooperation model that leverages their unique technical expertise in providing a package of business development services to MSMEs. Without the JP, such a model –most likely- would not have developed.

109. The evaluation was quite attentive throughout the data collection and analysis process to the question whether the JP had any unintended negative impact, but it could not identify any such impact. In a couple of targeted MSMEs and cooperatives interviewed by the evaluation, workers' pay seemed to be an issue but this was not an exception rather than the rule. The key observation that the evaluation makes in this regard relates to a finding that was already discussed in chapter 2.1.2 above, that is: it could have been beneficial for the JP to support the undertaking of gender audits, looking at issues of decent employment, within the targeted MSMEs as it did with both private sector companies.

2.5. Sustainability, Human Rights and Gender Equality

Evaluation question 5: Probability of the benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term.

Evaluation question 6: Extent to which the JP has contributed to advancing the human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women agenda in Palestine?

110. As the JP was still under implementation while evaluated, it is rather early to assess potential sustainability of results. Nevertheless the following assessment is possible at this stage:

- The JP made appropriate and largely successful efforts to create or strengthen existing conditions likely to foster the continuation and dynamic adaptation of results under Outcome 1 by:
 - Contributing to strengthening the overall enabling environment for addressing women's economic rights in the context of the local market for agricultural and cultural products as regards the existing legal and policy frameworks. This included: (i) helping to increase the availability of relevant, locally generated policy analysis and data on gender equality and equity dimensions in different parts of the economic space affecting women producers of agricultural and cultural products, which will remain available to stakeholders beyond the duration of the JP; (ii) helping to develop individual and organizational capacities of key public sector actors (duty bearers as well as gender advocates), and supporting these actors in assuming or expanding their already existing leadership role as regards gender mainstreaming in the context of their respective public sector responsibilities; and (iii) facilitating partnerships and

networking among national and local actors, thereby enhancing actual and potential future coordination of efforts among them.

- Supporting national ownership of results, e.g. by ensuring that partners were not only beneficiaries, but co-creators and drivers of different initiatives.
- Demonstrating how, through simple technical support and capacity building, private business could analyse their business performance and operations from a gender perspective. This helped to increase awareness and knowledge of formerly neglected issues, in particular the situation and needs of working women in the private sector, thereby contributing to key actors acknowledging the need to address these needs.
- At the same time, a variety of contextual factors beyond the immediate influence of the JP are threatening the sustainability of the achievements that the project achieved and contributed to under Outcome 1. These include the continued lack of buy-in and support from high-level decision makers in relevant government agencies, including for the policy paper; and the challenging overall socio-economic situation and political instability affecting Palestine. The latter contributes to the existing, (and likely worsening) situation as regards the availability resources for government institutions (and NGOs), many of which are dependent on external donor funding when it comes to gender equality related initiatives.
- As a general observation, the JP did not have a clear “exit strategy”, for example how to gradually phase out or hand over support. Perspectives for technical sustainability at the level of direct beneficiaries are mixed. In most of the MSMEs and cooperatives visited, the evaluation noted follow-up investments and a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Most but not all MSMEs and cooperatives expressed that they would continue participating in trade fairs, using the know-how they have obtained in the course of the programme. In some cooperatives and MSMEs, there is little evidence that capacities built will be maintained without further external support.
- The sustainability of the market linkages facilitated by the JP between the Al-Rozana, Al-Thimar and NFC is uncertain. While the three companies have commitments to source from the targeted cooperatives and to maintain the business shops established by the JP, there is currently insufficient incentive to suggest long-term sustainability of the business relationship between the two.
- While the JP (including its complementary matching funds, particularly those provided by ITC) has contributed to enhancing BWF’s capacity to run the OSS and provide a set of needed services to women MSMEs through enabling it to put in place a system and approach to provide business development services to MSMEs , the OSS/BDSH remains financially unsustainable. Hence, the sustainability of the OSS/BDSH is largely dependent on the ability of BWF’s ability to secure the needed funding for maintaining it, as well as for developing the business model that will make it more likely to be sustainable on the long run.

3. Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

111. This chapter sets out the Evaluator’s conclusions on the strategy and performance of the OSS-JP. It also presents the key lessons learned from the strengths and weaknesses of the way the programme was programmed and implemented, which, along with the recommendation, can help optimise the approach to current and future support of similar programmes.

3.1. Conclusions

Relevance and Design

112. The JP was (and continues to be) relevant in view of national and international commitments and strategic priorities of the Government of the State of Palestine, and the United Nations strategic priorities as identified in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the State of Palestine (UNDAF). It is also very well aligned with UN Women’s, FAO’s, and ITC’s corporate and country-level priorities, as well as with the SDGs (particularly SDG1, 5, 8, 10, and 17) and the SDG-F policy goal of inclusive economic growth for poverty eradication and gender mainstreaming. Its relevance to the economic empowerment needs of the beneficiary women and their businesses and cooperatives, and to the capacity development needs of the targeted Palestinian Authority ministries was clearly evident.

113. The JP was deliberately shaped to simultaneously address constraints to inclusive growth and women empowerment at different levels, with and through multiple stakeholders, and from different angles. The joint programme was appropriate for this broad approach, given the needs of the target group and the types of change the programme set out to achieve. The relatively small number of participating UN agencies in the JP also lent itself for enhanced synergies and collaboration. This said, the roles of the UN agencies in the programme could have been revised to reflect their best comparative advantages. Particularly, ITC, as a technical trade organisation, could have played a greater role in leading the enterprise and competitiveness development activities of the JP.

114. The design of JP was in line with SDG-F ToR and guidance, with joint programme design being a particular strength of the programme. The design process was participatory and consultative, thereby facilitating proper identification of needs. The JP’s proposed response to these needs was ambitious, with objectives and indicators that did not seem to be commensurate with the 24 months given by the lifespan of the SDG-F programmes and the context in which the JP was to operate. The JP’s design process itself was a bit rushed, which gave little room for: (i) the participation of some groups of right bearers in the design, and (ii) in-depth analysis of strategies and potential risks. It also seems to have had negative effects on the quality of the results framework, which had a few deficiencies. Overall, however, and despite these limitations, the JP’s design met the basic quality design requirements.

Effectiveness

115. The project achieved, albeit to varying degrees, all of its envisaged outputs, and made significant progress towards its two planned outcomes. Particularly strong contributions were noted in relation to enhanced competitiveness of women-owned MSMEs, and, understandably, to a somewhat lesser extent, their access to markets. Women beneficiaries had the opportunity to learn about the concept of perceived value and how important it is when dealing with markets, which has had a positive impact on their businesses. Several of them have made leaps and bounds in the product development phase and have been able to increase their business both locally and internationally. And, they had a valuable opportunity to learn how long the sampling and development process takes when doing custom work, which has helped them develop a future mind-set in doing business.

116. Of the 43 targeted MSMEs, 35 (81.2%) realised sales turnover increases since the beginning of the JP, with the remaining MSMEs (8 or 18.2%) having witnessed a drop in their sales over the same period. On average, targeted MSMEs realised a 42.8% increase in their sales turnover compared to the year before the programme, well above the JP's target of 20%. Among those MSMEs that witnessed increases in sales, the average increase was 59.7%, with more 12 MSMEs having witnessed three digit growth figures in their sales. Discussions with MSMEs strongly suggest that the JP (including its matching funds, particularly those provided by ITC) have played a key role in enabling the targeted MSMEs to realize these increases.

117. While both companies with which the JP connected its targeted cooperatives witnessed impressive increases in their sales turnover in 2016 compared to the baseline (40% and 68.1%, respectively), the benefits of these increases did not trickle down to the cooperatives in tangible manner. Similarly, While NFC, an export intermediary used by the JP to support cooperatives-reported sourced 34% (US\$ 60,294) of its total supplies from 13 cooperatives targeted by the JP, this did not represent a significant increase from the baseline. It is thus concluded that support to competitiveness of and access to markets for women-owned/run cooperatives has materialised in enhanced potential, which the test of time will only prove the extent to which it will be actualised.

118. Contributions to enhancing the capacities of relevant duty bearers to enhance policies for inclusive socio-economic development were considerable, but varied in their reach, depth and likely sustainability within the respective partner organizations. A greater level of achievement in such a way that reflects itself positively on employment creation in MSMEs and cooperatives as envisaged in the JP's results framework was unrealistic given the current political and socio-economic realities in Palestine and what was planned by the JP. For policies to induce inclusive growth and employment creation in the MSME and cooperative sectors, three key things were needed: i) a more in-depth assessment of the systemic policy constraints preventing the growth of women-owned MSMEs and cooperatives; ii) focused lobbying and advocacy to affect changes in policies identified under (i); and iii) longer term capacity building and enforcement support. The JP delivered partially on (i) and (ii), but delivering on (iii) was not possible given the 24 months given by the lifespan of the SDG-F programmes.

119. What capacity was built within partner Ministries and the NCWE is an achievement that the JP should seek to build upon to enable both the public and private sector to adopt inclusive development policies and programmes. Discussions with partner Ministries clearly indicated a need for more hands-on capacity building in policy analysis and programme planning from a gender perspective, include a strong appetite for capacity building support in gender auditing which was seen as an important entry point for developing more inclusive policies.

Efficiency

120. It is most likely that the JP will achieve full financial implementation by its end date. However, the rate of expenditure was sluggish due to delays in the programme start-up, which had consequences on the timeliness and quality of delivery of some programme outputs (and results).

121. Joint-programming" was a particular strength, but "joint-implementation" in terms of delivering-as-one, mutual ownership of results, and collaborative implementation and learning has not fully materialized. Joint-programming contributed to the harmonization of UN support in the sense that UN input was well coordinated. The clear separation of tasks at the design stage prevented overlaps, but also did not encourage joint activities beyond those where joint planning and implementation was blatantly obvious and necessary. Joint implementation needed strong and experienced JP management and effective governance structures which were

not always available to the JP. While inputs converged at the beneficiary level, agencies still worked rather in parallel than jointly.

122. Programme governance and management did not materialise as planned, leading to inefficiencies. The NSC met only once during the entire programme cycle to discuss the JP, while the PMC was never formed. Strategic coordination and coherence suffered as a result, with consequences for the operational “jointness” of the programme. The PMT, which met regularly throughout much of the programme implementation and which was delegated by the RC to follow-up on operational coordination, not only had little remit to fill the gap left by the absence of the PSC and PMC, but itself also needed a higher level management structure for guidance and strategic decision making. Moreover, The PS did not function as expected due to changes in the SDG-F Programme Manager that took place during the implementation of the JP, and the lack of sufficient level of authority and empowerment for the M&E function.

123. The JP monitoring, in practice, came together only at the level of reporting where the information had to be aligned with the required SDG-F format. An M&E system as that envisaged (and needed) in the SDG-F guidance was not developed. The monitoring framework needed to be further developed and revised during implementation to ensure better alignment with the between certain JP activities implemented by specific partner agencies and the framework outcomes, as well as with partner agencies M&E systems. Moreover, due to changes in the programme management that resulted from turnover in the SDG-F Programme Manager that took place during the implementation of the JP (the JP had two different Managers during its lifetime, while the already stretched UN Women's team had to take over during the gap in recruitment) and a certain disregard by the Program Managers for the M&E function, the PS did not function as planned, with particular consequence for the JP's M&E performance. Despite various efforts made to ensure streamlining monitoring mechanisms and systems, the M&E function was not sufficiently empowered to effectively design and deliver a truly jointed M&E system as envisaged in the SDG-F guidance. Joint monitoring of the programme beyond the PMT meetings, where monitoring-related issues had little space to begin with, was not evident to the evaluation. Beyond the monitoring of their individual activities and outputs according to the JP's M&E matrix, partner agencies saw little role for themselves in the overall monitoring of the programme given the PS' responsibility in this regard. The evaluation believes that a greater sense of ownership of the programme's overall results, a more empowered M&E function, and a more elevated sense of joint responsibility for M&E may have resulted in improved M&E performance overall.

124. A good quality advocacy and communication strategy was developed, but its implementation fell short as its scope was reduced to providing visibility to main programme activities and individual success stories. In doing so, the JP did not live-up to its promise of bolstering advocacy on broader issues related to women's rights, equality and economic empowerment through communication. This was missed opportunity where the JP, the evaluation believes, could have left a considerable mark.

125. Generally, with some exceptions, outputs delivered were of good quality, judged by their fitness for use. Beneficiaries were mostly satisfied with the content of equipment they received through the matching funds, the hands-on product development advice provided, and branding and marketing advice. These were the outputs with most utility for the beneficiaries.

Impact

126. The JP had made important contributions in view of both influencing the enabling environments for gender equality and inclusive economic growth. Considerable progress was also made as regards to improving business services and market linkages for MSMEs and cooperatives, and enhancing their capacity to effectively use these services. The matching funds

provided by the partner agencies played a central role in the progress made by the JP towards its results (outputs and outcomes).

127. The JP has, without doubt, made important contributions to all the SDGs with which it was aligned, i.e. SDG1, 5, 8, 10, and 17. It also made significant contributions to enhancing the economic empowerment and agency of the beneficiary women-owners of MSEM. This said, more time and efforts are needed before the impact of the JP on women-owners of cooperatives can be tangibly realised.

128. The evaluation could not identify any negative impacts of the JP. An assessment of pay and working conditions within targeted MSMEs and cooperatives is probably warranted in the future, however, to ensure no-harm.

Sustainability

129. While the evaluation found that it was too early to judge sustainability of the JP, it also found the JP made appropriate and largely successful efforts to create or strengthen existing conditions likely to foster the continuation and dynamic adaptation of results under Outcome 1, including (i) contributing to strengthening the overall enabling environment for addressing women's economic rights in the context of the local market for agricultural and cultural products as regards the existing legal and policy frameworks; (ii) supporting national ownership of results; and (iii) demonstrating how, through simple technical support and capacity building, private business could analyse their business performance and operations from a gender perspective, which is likely to be taken up in the future.

130. Sustainability threats exist nonetheless. These include the continued lack of buy-in and support from high-level decision makers in relevant government agencies, including for the policy paper; and the challenging overall socio-economic situation and political instability affecting Palestine. The latter contributes to the existing, (and likely worsening) situation as regards the availability resources for government institutions (and NGOs), many of which are dependent on external donor funding when it comes to gender equality related initiatives.

131. Sustainability of Outcome 2 results, and particularly vis-à-vis MSMEs, is likely due to the high levels of interest and commitment to continuous improvement. Most but not all MSMEs and cooperatives expressed that they would continue participating in trade fairs, using the know-how they have obtained in the course of the programme. In some cooperatives and MSMEs, there is little evidence that capacities maintained without further external support. The sustainability of market linkages established/facilitated built will be by the JP is uncertain, but would be likely if additional follow-up is provided.

132. The OSS/BDSH that the JP created is neither financially sustainable nor propped up by a clear and feasible business model. Hence, its sustainability is likely so long BWF is able to fundraise for it.

3.2. Lessons Learned

133. The key lessons emerging from this evaluation follow. These are based on the review and analysis of project documents, interviews and meetings with key informants.

Conceptualisation and Design-Related Lessons

134. The success of JPs in promoting multilateralism and true joint programming starts with joint planning and analysis at the conceptualisation and design stages, with the active participation of national stakeholders, both duty bearers and right holders. Proper planning for JPs thus requires adequate time and effort to be devoted to analysis of developmental needs and challenges; lessons learned from previous interventions aiming to address identified needs;

possible intervention strategies and their strengths and weaknesses; resources –both internal and external- that could be leveraged; and partners’ synergies and competitive advantage.

135. Internal risks to the effective implementation of JPs are plentiful, and can sometimes have more serious implications than external risks if not well identified and mitigated during both the design and implementation of JPs. Issues of alignment between matching funds, particularly time-related limitations on disbursement; alignment between beneficiary groups targeted by different agencies as well as beneficiary selection processes; ability of programme staff to devote the planned time allocations to the JP; staff turnover; interdependence between the JP Manager and the lead agency; and the different administrative and financial procedures used by partner agencies can all be issues that pose considerable risks to JPs.

136. Linked to the previous points, JPs need to be realistic about their objectives and targets. This requires analysis of the baseline situation, understanding of the operating context, and changes processes. Clearly articulated, visually represented, and stakeholder-validated theories of change are helpful for testing the realism of objectives and targets.

137. JPs can have a steep learning curve, which can have consequences on planned results. Flexibility is a key success factor in flattening the learning. Moreover, clarifying roles and responsibilities that underscore joint accountability; developing tools that facilitate coordination, joint planning and delivery, including -quite possibly- implementation manuals; and recruitment and orientation of programme could all help level the learning curve at the design and inception stages of JPs.

138. Capacity and policy development requires time and high-level expertise to be effective. Efforts aiming to support the process of capacity and policy development need to be tailored to the respective stakeholders needs and expectations, and employ a variety of complementary strategies, including communication and advocacy.

Product Development, Competitiveness and Market Linkages Related Lessons

139. Building the capacity of MSMEs and cooperatives to effectively engage in and benefit from markets is a long-term process that requires both supply- and demand-side interventions. Capacity building and product development support alone do not guarantee automatic access to markets for small-scale producers. Market linkages that create incentives for buyers and sellers to engage and continue working with each other are critical components of the capacity building process.

140. Formalisation of MSMEs, though procedurally simple and does not constitute a barrier in certain contexts such as Palestine, is often not pursued due to misperceptions about requirements, implications, and benefits. Raising awareness about formalisation (registration) procedures, demonstrating the benefits that could be achieved as a result of formalisation (access to market channels that otherwise would be untenable), providing incentives for registration can be very effective strategies in promoting the formalisation of MSMEs.

141. Feedback from buyers on requirements and quality is valuable. Different clients and different cultures have different standards of beauty as well as different ideas about what passes for good quality. Learning about the concept of perceived value and how important it is when dealing with various markets and clients is essential for convincing producers to change or upgrade their products. For example, in Palestine embroidery is highly revered and the actual handwork is considered the most important part of a garment or cushion, the quality of the base or background fabric is less important. In many European markets as well as the US and the UK the base fabric is hugely important. It is not possible to sell a highly embroidered pillow for a high price if the base fabric is polyester or a low-quality material. It is only possible to command a high price for a product if the base fabric is considered a high-quality textile (linen, cotton, silk, silk velvet) in addition to the embroidery and embroidery thread being of a high quality.

142. Quality, consistency in quality, and ability to meet requirements are required capacities for sustainable business relations, irrespective of the market. In the competitive market today there are many different directions a customer can go to fulfil their requirements. Even in solidarity and fair trade markets where buyers choose to work with companies they that they believe in, buyers will not compromise on quality and standards.

143. Sustainable supply contracts require investment in time and money on behalf of both buyers and sellers. In designing and implementing market development interventions, programmes should acknowledge that product design and development processes require time, and often multiple samples to be produced and sent to the buyer before an end product is agreed. Often production of samples in a timely manner is problematic for businesses, particularly MSMEs like the ones targeted by the JP under evaluation. It is thus very important to manage expectations and plan for providing the incentives needed for business to invest in product development and market linkages. Buyers often look at products and new collections multiple seasons in a row before they decide to buy. Selling to a higher priced international market is a long game, it requires perseverance and patience as well as a willingness to accept the demands buyers place on producers.

144. A market-led product development strategy is most effective and most sustainable. The experience from this JP showed that it is critical to link product development with the sales process and to have a retail market and sales strategy from the beginning. When creating and developing new products it is important to have the buyers in mind. With a coherent strategy in place to develop marketing materials and products aimed at specific customers relationships can be created in advance, while the product is being developed with inputs from buyers about their needs and desires.

3.3. Recommendations

145. This evaluation found many areas of strong performance in the JP under review. It does not take space here to recommend the continuation of what is being done well. It focuses on areas where follow-up is needed before the close out of the JP under evaluation, and where a redefinition or adjustment of future follow-up programmes and JPs would be beneficial. The Table 6 presents the principal recommendations of the evaluation. Recommendations are grouped according to key issues identified in the preceding chapters, with recommendations connected with a rationale and the entity to which they are assigned.

Table 6: Recommendations

No.	Issue	Rationale	Recommendation	Responsibility & timing
1.	Needed Follow-up to ensure appropriate close-out	Contribution to multilateralism and development learning are key objectives of the SDG-F. The evaluated JP produced a considerable amount of research, standards, operational manuals, training materials, assessment reports, brochures, reports and visibility materials. Most, but not all, of this valuable body of knowledge has been already disseminated.	Disseminate the achievements, lessons learnt and technical knowledge developed by the JP, at several levels. The partner agencies should collaborate to put together a repository of all knowledge materials produced under the JP and work on disseminating it to government, MSMEs and cooperatives (through their representative organizations), and the general public. The OSS Portal should be heavily used for this purpose.	UN Women, FAO, and ITC: by end of June 2017
2.		The evaluation found that some cooperatives that received equipment from FAO to improve production/productivity have not all been trained on the use/maintenance of the equipment they received.	Ensure that training is provided to cooperatives on how to operate the equipment they have received through FAO matching funds is provided as planned.	FAO: by end of June 2017

3.	Design of future JPs	<p>The SDG-F provided funding for hiring a consultant to help with the development of the ProDoc. This was very useful and should continue into the future. However, the time allocated to this consultant and to the entire proposal development process was too short for a complex programme that involves multiple sectors and several stakeholders. Several of the weaknesses in the implementation identified by the evaluation, including limited participation of key market actors, had their roots in the rushed design process.</p>	<p>Ensure that sufficient time and resources are allocated to the process of design of future JPs, with meaningful participation of the partner agencies, government counterparts, as well as right holders and beneficiaries to maximise responsiveness to needs and alignment with beneficiaries' priorities in line with aid effectiveness principles. For this purpose the extend the proposal/ProDoc development phase to three months to enable wider participation and use of more effective participatory mechanisms.</p>	SDG-F: for immediate consideration
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4.		<p>The evaluation noted a number of weaknesses in the design and implementation of the M&E system and processes of the JP under evaluation, as well as some weaknesses in the clarity of results, choice of strategy and end beneficiaries. The JP under evaluation did not develop an M&E strategy to ensure that monitoring is done using standard tools by all agencies (as appropriate), and that monitoring goes beyond the monitoring matrix. The M&E Officer was not sufficiently empowered to discharge the M&E function. Combined, these weaknesses affected the achievement of results and weakened joint implementation.</p>	<p>Strengthen programme formulation, M&E guidelines and their implementation, and ensure that change objectives and their indicators are realistic given the lifespan of JPs.</p> <p>Ensure that the JP has adequate and empowered M&E resources, with sufficient levels of authority given to the M&E function.</p>	<p>UN Agencies: whenever designing and implementing new JPs.</p>
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5.	JP Governance and Management	<p>While the PMT of the JP under evaluation met regularly, meetings usually focused on largely bilateral issues, and discussions were somewhat mechanical. Given that members of the PMT are usually the ones with most engagement with beneficiaries and counterparts in government, they should be provided with the space to discuss substantive matters related to maximizing the benefits of joint implementation. Not discussing such issues at the level of the PMT will ultimately result in missed opportunities for coordination, and – potentially- in inefficiencies. It will also build strong ownership of the JP, as opposed to the agency activities within it.</p> <p>The evaluation found that human resource needs were underestimated at the time of the design. This meant that resources during implantation could not be secured, including for M&E which was had an allocation of 50% full-time-equivalent.</p>	<p>Ensure that Programme Governance and Management Structures are in place at the time of design, and take an active part in the design process.</p> <p>At a very basic level the NSC and PMC should be identified and take part in the design process. The PMC, in particular, should help identify the mechanisms and tools that it will use to fulfill its mandate of achieving operational coordination. Sufficient and adequate resources should be secured for the Programme Secretariat, including for M&E and communications. With regard to the latter, the evaluation suggests allocating a full-time M&E officer to the JP Secretariat. However, if agency focal points are going to be implementing M&E, guidance support should be adequately planned.</p> <p>Ensure that Programme Management Teams responsible for the day-to-day implementation of JPs have the space not only to meet regularly, but also to plan for and implement activities together, including M&E activities.</p>	UN Agencies: whenever designing and implementing new JPs.
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6.	Support to MSME/ cooperative/ private sector development	<p>The main weaknesses of the JP under evaluation related to its relatively small outreach to poor women, scalability, and, to a lesser extent, sustainability. These weaknesses stemmed from an intervention design that used direct intervention approaches, and which did not give sufficient attention to answering the questions of sustainability and scalability. The impact of the JP, while significant at the level of the targeted enterprises, did not transcend beyond the direct target group. Moving to a systems development approach, based on a critical gendered analysis of bottlenecks preventing the growth of MSMEs and cooperatives in value chains where women are present or can benefit, would not only enable better identification of intervention areas where impact can be realised at scale, but it would also be the most appropriate approach for a joint programme of UN agencies with various mandates and specialisations. The good practice of linking cooperatives with an intermediary exporter (FAO/ITC), the customer feedback mechanisms to MSMEs (ITC), the policy development work (UN Women), and the market linkages promoted through incentives to sales agents (ITC) are all examples of activities that could continue –but in a much more concerted manner, linked to specific market systems- under the suggested approach.</p>	<p>Using good practices already introduced, gradually shift focus from supporting the development of individual enterprises and cooperatives to supporting development of more inclusive, pro-poor market systems on the basis of a solid understanding and analysis of market system bottlenecks and constraints. This should include gradually less emphasis on MSME-level direct technical assistance and a greater shift to market-led development approaches that enhance business linkages between producers (MSMEs) and upstream value chain actors, as well as supporting upgrading the position of MSMEs in value chains through horizontal and vertical integration.</p>	<p>UN Agencies: whenever designing and implementing new JPs.</p>
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Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation ToR

Background

UN Women (UNW), grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. Placing women's rights at the centre of all its efforts, the UN Women leads and coordinates the United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world. It provides strong and coherent leadership in support of Member States' priorities and efforts, building effective partnerships with civil society and other relevant actors.

UN Women plays an innovative and catalytic role in Palestine since its inception in 1997. UN Women in the State of Palestine focuses its activities on one overarching goal, namely to support the implementation at the national level of existing international commitments to advance gender equality in line with the national priorities. In support of this goal and thoroughly taking into consideration the specificities of Palestinian context, UN Women concentrates its efforts and interventions towards the realization of the following strategic goals: Engendering governance, peace and security; Supporting women's economic security and rights; and Promoting women's rights and protection against violence.

The One Stop-Shop for Sustainable Businesses Joint programme – Funded by the SDG-F (The Sustainable Development Goals Fund is a development cooperation mechanism created in 2014 to support sustainable development activities through integrated and multidimensional Joint Programmes. It builds on the experience, knowledge, lessons learnt, and best practices of the MDG Fund and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) experience, while focusing on the fostering of sustainable development, public-private partnerships and gender and women's empowerment as cross-cutting priorities in all our areas of work. The SDG Fund aims to act as a bridge in the transition from MDGs to SDGs providing concrete experiences on how to achieve a sustainable and inclusive world as part of 'Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.')

–aims to contribute to fostering institutional and sustainable economic development through supporting women owned or run Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME's) and cooperatives working in the cultural and agricultural sectors. Through this joint programme, UN Women has

led the implementation in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations International Trade Centre (ITC). The Joint Programme (JP) contributes to economic growth and social justice by promoting and working towards the reduction of inequalities, a more inclusive growth, decent employment and social protection, as well as developing essential services and ensuring the access for all.

To achieve these objectives, the JP partners are working jointly to improving the livelihood of the Palestinian women, through expanding women owned/run MSMEs and cooperatives; by preserving cultural and agricultural products, and turning them into marketable and exportable products. This is in addition to the creation of a regulatory environment for the protection of local production of women and the establishment of incentives for women cooperatives to be more engaged in the labour market, which is followed by encouraging creative and innovative products and turning them into successful businesses that have better marketing opportunities locally, regionally and internationally.

These interventions are supported by the One-Stop-Shop Business Development Services Hub, located in Ramallah, which provides diverse technical, vocational and marketing services for women MSME's; in addition to the two business-shops, located in the North and South of the West Bank, which serves women run/owned cooperatives in terms of selling, assembling packaging etc. Finally, the JP contributes directly to institutionalizing, standardizing, and marketing cultural and agricultural products produced by the women MSME's and cooperatives, in Palestine. The programme will achieve the following outcomes:

1. Public and private sectors have enhanced policies and practices for inclusive socio-economic development of women owned/run MSME's and cooperatives; and
2. Increased access and competitiveness of women run MSME's and cooperatives' products in local, regional and international markets.

Overall Goal of the Evaluation:

To promote accountability, organizational learning, stocktaking of achievements, performance, impacts, good practices and lessons learnt from implementation towards SDGs.

The evaluation is designed based on the UNEG guidelines and it aims to:

1. Assess the progress in achieving the results of the Joint Programme against the proposed

- outputs and outcomes as per the Programmes' document;
2. Document and record lessons learnt, good practices and success stories on the different levels of the programme implementation including programme management structure, community level, individual women, family, and women center level; and
 3. Inform decision makers and stakeholders by providing evidence based data on up-scaling, replicating, and improving the project design and implementation mechanism on a national level.

Scope of the Evaluation and Specific Objectives:

This final evaluation has the following specific objectives:

1. Measure to what extent the joint programme has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase;
2. To measure the degree of implementation, efficiency and quality delivered on outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised;
3. Measure to what extent the joint programme has attained the results originally foreseen in their project document, M&E frameworks, etc.;
4. To measure the impact of the implementation of the joint programme on the achievement of the SDGs;
5. Assess the alignment of the programme with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment;
6. Determine the impact of the intervention in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment;
7. Analyze how the human rights based approach was integrated in the design and implementation of the programme; and
8. To identify and document substantive lessons learnt and good practices on the specific topics of the thematic areas and crosscutting issues: gender, sustainability and public private partnerships.

The end of programme evaluation will assess the collective performance and implementation of all programme partners, including UN Women, FAO, ITC in addition to the responsible parties within the period of the programme implementation starting on 1 January 2015 until February 2017. The evaluation will cover the entire geographical area targeted by the programme in the West Bank, and will assess all aspects of the programme at the institutional, policy and

individual levels; including policy development and the work on strengthening the government's gender responsive services as well as the work with women run and/or owned MSME's and cooperatives.

Evaluation Questions:

The evaluation is based on the UNEG guidelines and it will apply the Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD-DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability as well as the additional criterion of human rights and gender equality by addressing the following questions (note that the questions are not comprehensive and the evaluation consultant is expected to build on them for a thorough evaluation):

Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country and achieving the SDGs.

1. How has the JP contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase, in particular with reference to the baseline situation?
2. To what extent was the joint programme aligned with national development strategies and the UNDAF (2014-2017)?
3. To what extent was the joint programme the best option to respond to development challenges described in the programme document?
4. To what extent are the objectives of the joint programme still valid in the context of national policy objectives and SDGs?
5. To what extent have the implementing partners participating in the joint programme contributed added value to solve the development challenges stated in the programme document?

Effectiveness: Extent to which the objectives of the development intervention have been achieved.

1. To what extent did the joint programme attain the development outputs and outcomes described in the programme document?
2. What good practices, success stories, lessons learnt and replicable experiences have been identified? Please describe and document them.
3. To what extent has the joint programme contributed to the advancement and the progress of fostering national ownership processes and outcomes (the design and

implementation of National Development Plans, UNDAF, etc.)?

4. To what extent did the joint programme help to increase stakeholder/citizen dialogue and or engagement on development issues and policies?

Efficiency: Extent to which resources/inputs (funds, time, human resources, etc.) have been turned into results.

1. To what extent was the joint programme's management model (governance and decision-making structure, i.e. lead agency, Joint Programme Coordinator, Programme Management Committee and National Steering Committee, financial management and allocation of resources, i.e. one work plan, one budget) efficient in comparison to the development results attained?
2. To what extent were joint programme's outputs and outcomes synergistic and coherent to achieve better results when compared to single-agency interventions? What efficiency gains/losses were there as a result?
3. What type of work methodologies, financial instruments, business practices did the implementing partners use to promote/improve efficiency?
4. What type of (administrative, financial and managerial) obstacles did the joint programme face and to what extent have these affected its efficiency?

Impact – Positive and negative effects of the intervention on development outcomes, SDGs.

1. To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme contribute to the SDGs?
2. To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme contribute to the targeted cross-cutting issues: gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, public private partnerships (PPPs) and sustainability at the local and national levels?
3. What impact did the matching funds have in the design, implementation and results of the joint programme?
4. To what extent did the joint programme have an impact on the targeted beneficiaries? Were all targeted beneficiaries reached? Which were left out?
5. What unexpected/unintended effects did the joint programme have, if any?

Sustainability: Probability of the benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term.

1. Which mechanisms already existed and which have been put in place by the joint programme to ensure results and impact, i.e. policy, policy coordination mechanisms,

partnerships, networks?

2. To what extent has the capacity of beneficiaries (institutional and/or individual) been strengthened such that they are resilient to external shocks and/or do not need support in the long term?
3. To what extent will the joint programme be replicated or scaled up at local or national levels?

Human Rights and Gender Equality:

1. Are there any signs that suggest that the programme has contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women in Palestine?
2. Are there any signs that suggest that duty bearers will adopt gender sensitive planning and implementation as a direct result of the programme?

Evaluation Design:

Methodological Approach:

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with UN Women's evaluation guidelines and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms. The methodology will be developed by the Final Evaluation Consultant and presented for approval of UN Women and the Evaluation Reference Group. The methodology should use a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods that are appropriate to address the main evaluation questions. The entire methodology will ensure a fully participatory process, engaging a diverse group of stakeholders from the planning to the final reporting stage. It will also ensure that a human rights and gender equality perspective is integrated within its methodology and throughout the analysis. This is particularly important to understand and assess the programme addressing complex, intersectional issues of women's rights.

The methodology will be developed by the Evaluation Consultant and presented for approval by the Reference Group during the inception phase along with a detailed work plan for the evaluation, clearly indicating timing of activities, deliverable deadlines and resources in line with the signed contract between UN Women and the consultant, which will be submitted along with the methodology. The methodology should detail the data collection methods and participatory tools for consultations with the different stakeholders. The methodology should identify how the consultant will guarantee the respect of confidentiality of information provided

by the different stakeholders, identify a sampling frame (area and population represented, rationale/criteria for selection), and identify measures to be taken to ensure quality, reliability and validity of the collected data.

Roles of Actors in the Evaluation:

The main actors in the evaluation process are the SDG-F Secretariat, the management team of the joint programme, including the Joint Programme Coordinator, M&E Officer, in addition to the Programme Management Committee. This group of institutions and individuals will serve as the Evaluation Reference Group. Its role will extend to all phases of the evaluation, including:

1. Facilitating the participation of those involved in the evaluation design;
2. Identifying information needs, defining objectives and delimiting the scope of the evaluation;
3. Providing input on the evaluation planning;
4. Prepare communication and dissemination plan;
5. Providing input and participating in the drafting of the Terms of Reference;
6. Facilitating the Evaluator's access to all information and relevant documentation, as well as to key actors, stakeholders and informants;
7. Monitoring the quality of the process and deliverables generated;
8. Prepare improvement/action plan following the submission of the final evaluation report; and
9. Disseminating the results of the evaluation, especially among the organizations and entities within their interest group.

This final evaluation will make use of:

1. All relevant secondary information sources, such as reports, programme documents, internal review reports, programme files, strategic country development documents, evaluations;
2. Primary information sources including: interviews, surveys, etc. to ensure participatory approach and appropriate consultation and engagement of stakeholders; and
3. Triangulation of information to allow for validation and discern discrepancies.

The methodology and techniques to be used in the evaluation should be described in the inception report and the final evaluation report, and should contain, at minimum, information

on the instruments used for data collection and analysis, whether these be documents, interviews, field visits, questionnaires or participatory approaches.

Duties and Responsibilities

Under the overall guidance of the UN Women Special Representative and direct supervision of the Evaluation Manager (assigned by UN Women at the country level), and in close coordination and cooperation with the Evaluation Reference Group, the Evaluation Consultant will undertake the following tasks, duties and responsibilities:

1. Drafting the Final Evaluation's Inception Report:

This report will be 10 to 15 pages in length and will propose the methods, resources and procedures to be used for data collection. It will also include a proposed timeline of activities and submission of deliverables. The Inception Report will propose initial lines of inquiry about the joint programme. This report will be used as an initial point of agreement and understanding between the Evaluator and the Evaluation Reference Group. The report will follow the outline specified in Annex II.

2. Provide a Draft Final Evaluation Report:

The draft final report will follow the same format as the final report (described in the next paragraph) and will be 30-40 pages in length. See Annex III for the Final Evaluation Report Template.

3. Final Evaluation Report:

The final evaluation report will be 30-40 pages in length. It will also contain an executive summary of no more than five pages that includes a brief description of the joint programme, its context and current situation, the purpose of the evaluation, methodology and major findings, conclusions and recommendations. The final report will be sent to the Evaluation Reference Group. This report will follow the template and the outline specified in Annex III.

All deliverables must be submitted in English. A summary evaluation report is requested in English and Arabic languages outlining the JP objectives, key interventions, evaluation methodology and main findings and recommendations. The Consultant should submit the

summary evaluation along with the final evaluation report.

Timeline for the Evaluation

- One month and a half: The assignment is expected to start in February 2017 and to be finalized by end of March 2017.

Scheduled date and Main activities:

1. Desk study/review (Five days): Submission of the inception report from the desk review and evaluation methodology, based on the briefing done initially with the evaluator, in addition to presenting the report for the Evaluation Group validation;
2. Field visit (Five days): Field visit conducted by Evaluator based on the planned agenda; and
3. Final Report (15 days): Submission of draft final report by Evaluator:
 1. Review of report by the evaluation reference group;
 2. Review of report by Secretariat; and
 3. Finalization of the report by the Evaluator and admission to secretariat.

Expected Outputs and Deliverables:

1. Submission of the inception report including the findings from the desk review and evaluation methodology, in addition to presenting the report on PowerPoint for the Evaluation Reference Group validation, where an indicative agenda for the field visits will be drafted and approved;
2. Submission of draft final report by the Evaluator, with a Power Point Presentation on the initial findings, according to the following outline;
 1. Introduction;
 2. Background to the evaluation: objectives and overall approach ;
 3. Identification of main units and dimensions for analysis and possible areas for research;
 4. Main substantive interventions of the joint programme;
 5. Methodology for the compilation and analysis of the information; and
 6. Criteria to define the mission agenda, including field visit.
3. Submission of draft final report by Evaluator to UN Women and the Reference Group according to the following outline:

1. Cover Page;
 2. Executive Summary – a brief description of the joint programme, its context and current situation, the purpose of the evaluation, its methodology and its main findings, conclusions and recommendations;
 3. Introduction;
 1. Background, goal and methodological approach;
 2. Purpose of the evaluation;
 3. Evaluation methodology; and
 4. Constraints and limitations of the study conducted
 4. Description of the development interventions carried out:
 1. Detailed description of the development intervention undertaken: description and judgement on implementation of outputs delivered (or not) and outcomes attained as well as how the programme worked in comparison to the theory of change developed for the programme.
 5. Levels of Analysis: Evaluation criteria and questions (all questions included in the TOR must be addressed and answered);
 6. Conclusions and Lessons Learnt ;
 7. Recommendations; and
 8. Annexes.
4. Finalization and submission of the report by Evaluator and submission to the Secretariat after it is reviewed by the Evaluation Reference Group.

The report will form a basis for learning and reflection on future interventions and scale-up phase of the project. The report will be disseminated by UN Women, ITC and FAO to national stakeholders and international donors, as relevant. A summary evaluation report is requested in English and Arabic languages outlining the JP objectives, key interventions, evaluation methodology and main findings and recommendations. The Consultant should submit the summary evaluation in both languages along with the final evaluation report.

Ethical Principles and Premises of the Evaluation:

The evaluation of the joint programme is to be carried out according to ethical principles and standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG):

- Anonymity and confidentiality - the evaluation must respect the rights of individuals

who provide information, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality;

- Responsibility - the report must mention any dispute or difference of opinion that may have arisen between the Evaluator and the Joint Programme in connection with the findings and/or recommendations. The team must corroborate all assertions, or disagreement with them noted;
- Integrity - the Evaluator will be responsible for highlighting issues not specifically mentioned in the TOR, if this is needed to obtain a more complete analysis of the intervention;
- Independence - the Evaluator should ensure his or her independence from the intervention under review, and he or she must not be associated with its management or any element thereof;
- Incidents - if problems arise during the fieldwork, or at any other stage of the evaluation, they must be reported immediately to the SDG Fund Secretariat. If this is not done, the existence of such problems may in no case be used to justify the failure to obtain the results stipulated by the Secretariat in these terms of reference;
- Validation of information - the Evaluator will be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information collected while preparing the reports and will be ultimately responsible for the information presented in the evaluation report;
- Intellectual property - in handling information sources, the Evaluator shall respect the intellectual property rights of the institutions and communities that are under review; and
- Delivery of reports - if delivery of the reports is delayed, or in the event that the quality of the reports delivered is clearly lower than what was agreed, the penalties stipulated in these terms of reference will be applicable.

Annex 2: List of Stakeholders Interviewed (alphabetically)

Al-Rozana Foods Company

Ms. Fatina Ananis, Owner and CEO

Al-Thimar Agroprocessing and Marketing Company

Ms. Sawsan Sawafta, CEO

Bank of Palestine

Ms. Nazmeya Manaa, Business Development Manager

Ms. Rawan Mu'aget, Human Resources Manager

Beneficiary MSMEs

Ms. Ala' Jaradat

Ms. Amina Zahran

Ms. Amira Rabi'e

Ms. Ayda Zarouq

Ms. Claudia Stefan

Ms. Helana Abu Shareefa

Ms. Huwaida Abu Yaqoub

Ms. Ikhlas Sawalha

Ms. Khawla Khatib

Ms. Khitam Suleiman

Ms. Nadia Ghatas

Ms. Nahil Adnan

Ms. Naima Zayyad

Ms. Nisreen Fkheida

Ms. Rawand Saifi

Ms. Rihab Daqawieh

Ms. Tujan Musha'sha

Beneficiary Cooperatives and Women Associations

Mr. Alaa' Khashan, Baqa Sharqeya Cooperative

Mr. Ikrima Rayyan, Beit Duqqo Cooperative

Mr. Maher Jaber, Baqa Sharqeya Cooperative

Mr. Mumen Abu Muhsen, Al-Aqaba Cooperative

Ms. Amal Assaf, Kufr Lqef Cooperative

Ms. Amira Mas'oud, Burqa Women Association

Ms. Farida Ismail, Beita Charitable Association

Ms. Fatina Anani, Beit Ommar Cooperative

Ms. Hanan Mughrabi, Jiftlik Cooperative

Ms. Huda Shadid, Dura Cooperative

Ms. Inshirah Daoud, Beita Charitable Association
Ms. Nadia Akra', Qabalan Cooperative
Ms. Nawal Khalil, Deir Ballout Cooperative
Ms. Raja' Jaber, Kufr Laqef Cooperative
Ms. Samah Kayed, Sabastya Women Club Association
Ms. Thuraya Tabib, Izbet Tabib Cooperative

Birzeit Pharmaceuticals Company

Ms. Alia Nasser Edeen, Human Resource Manager
Ms. Rasha Azem, Head of Training Department

BWF Consortium

Mr. Nedal Uwaidat, Agility - CEO
Mr. Yazid Zakarneh, Palestinian Shippers Council
Ms. Do'aa Wadi, BWF -Executive Director
Ms. Hadeel Sous, BWF - Project Manager
Ms. Jumana Salous, BWF -Programme Manager
Ms. Rawan Alloush, Palestinian Shippers Council

ESDC

Mr. Jamal Burnat, Project Manager

FAO

Mr. Azzam Saleh, Head of Programmes
Ms. Intissar Shtayeh, Programme Officer
Ms. Michelle Gyeney, Communications Officer

Government Counterparts

Mr. Samer Titi, MoA
Ms. Iman Assaf, MoL and NCWE
Ms. Jihad Jarayseh, MoNE and NCWE
Ms. Khitam Hamayel, MoA
Ms. Sami Suhwail, MoWA and NCWE

ITC

Mr. Freek Jan Koekoek, Expert Trade Consultant/Processed Foods
Mr. Gultekin Ozaltinordu, Technical Advisor on SMEs Competitiveness
Ms. Eman Beseiso, Project Manager
Ms. Marianne Schmitt, M&E Unit
Ms. Reily Salyards, Expert Consultant/Handicrafts

New Farm Company

Mr. Hasan Atyani, Acting General Manager

Public Sector Trainees

Mr. Fadel Raba', MoNE

Mr. Rashad Yousef, MoNE

Ms. Amal Shihadeh, MoNE

Ms. Ghadir Qeimary, MoNE

Ms. Hiba Allan, MoA

Ms. Mayad Khreiheh, MoA

Ms. Samah Joudeh, MoA

Ms. Sandi Zidan, MoA

Ms. Sireen Shanti, MoENE

Resident Coordinator Office

Ms. Loris Elqura, Resident Coordinator's Office

UN Women

Mr. Allaa Eddin Ayeshe, M&E and Reporting Officer

Mr. Mohammad Sinokrot, Programme Associate

Mr. Sa'ad Khatib, Consultant

Ms. Hadil Nasser, Programme Analyst

Ms. Inas Margieh, National Programme Coordinator

Ms. Sabine Machl, Special Representative of UN Women of Palestine

Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Data collection methods
Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country and achieving the SDGs.	How has the JP contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase, in particular with reference to the baseline situation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comparative analysis of Stakeholders' and beneficiaries opinions of the needs before and after the programme, and whether these have changed in any way to demonstrate lesser or different needs than those identified at design. - Level of satisfaction of beneficiaries with programme interventions. - Level of engagement of beneficiaries in the programme design.. 	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review and In-depth interviews
	To what extent was the joint programme aligned with national development strategies and the UNDAF (2014-2017)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alignment with CCA and UNDAF priorities. - Consistency of programme objectives and strategy with relevant government policy, strategy and plans. - Opinions of national stakeholders about program alignment 	Program Document, UNDAF, CCA, and National development plans and strategies	Desk Review, semi-structured interviews
	To what extent was the joint programme the best option to respond to development challenges described in the programme document?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depth of Analysis of strategies in the Project Document, and subsequently during implementation. - Opinion of stakeholders regarding the programmes' choice of strategies. 	Program Document, beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi-structured interviews, an focus group discussions
	To what extent are the objectives of the joint programme still valid in the context of national policy objectives and SDGs?	Analysis of preceding questions	-	-
	To what extent have the implementing partners participating in the joint	- Review of Project Document for analysis of comparative advantage and how it should be exploited and	Programme M&E system (reports), Program	Desk Review and In-depth interviews

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Data collection methods
	programme contributed added value to solve the development challenges stated in the programme document?	<p>maximized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of how value added espoused in the Project Document materialized during implementation. - Consideration of partner organizations' potential to add value in the context of other actors' (including implementing partners) strengths and weaknesses. - Analysis of theory of change inherent in the programme design - Individual agency roles assigned according to their comparative advantage. - Roles, modalities and strategies of individual agencies deployed in a unified framework to maximize results (rather than as discrete components). 	Document, beneficiaries and partner organizations	
Effectiveness: Extent to which the objectives of the development intervention have been achieved.	To what extent did the joint programme attain the development outputs and outcomes described in the programme document?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of planned vs. achieved outputs. - Analysis of baseline vs. available endline data on outcome indicators. - Satisfaction of beneficiaries with changes witnessed as a result of programme interventions. - Analysis of factors that have catalyzed 	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Data collection methods
		or prevented achievement of results.		
	What good practices, success stories, lessons learnt and replicable experiences have been identified? Please describe and document them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of factors that have helped or impeded implementation and achievement of results. - Analysis of programme innovations (and stakeholders' opinions of these) and their replicability/scale-up potential. 	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions
	To what extent has the joint programme contributed to the advancement and the progress of fostering national ownership processes and outcomes (the design and implementation of National Development Plans, UNDAF, etc.)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level to which national partners have participated in the programme design implementation. -Capacity of national implementing partners assessed during design/implementation. - 	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions
	To what extent did the joint programme help to increase stakeholder/citizen dialogue and or engagement on development issues and policies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature of policies changed and their importance from a national, and GE/WE perspective. - Level of national capacity built to undertake policy analysis. - Assessment of level to which systemic changes/transformational changes have been brought about in national dialogue and decision making processes in support of WE/GE. 	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions
Efficiency: Extent to which resources/inputs (funds, time, human resources, etc.) have	To what extent was the joint programme's management model (governance and decision-making structure, i.e. lead agency, Joint Programme Coordinator,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of programme costs allocated to various components. - Management and leadership strategies and roles are clearly understood by all 	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Data collection methods
<p>been turned into results.</p>	<p>Programme Management Committee and National Steering Committee, financial management and allocation of resources, i.e. one work plan, one budget) efficient in comparison to the development results attained?</p>	<p>stakeholders, including the functions of the UNCT, RC, Lead and Partner Agencies.</p> <p>- Cost sharing opportunities utilized where feasible/appropriate.</p>		
	<p>To what extent were joint programme's outputs and outcomes synergistic and coherent to achieve better results when compared to single-agency interventions? What efficiency gains/losses were there as a result?</p>	<p>- Reduced burdens through streamlined policy dialogue with government and stakeholders, programme management and monitoring, etc.</p>	<p>Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations</p>	<p>Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions</p>
	<p>What type of work methodologies, financial instruments, business practices did the implementing partners use to promote/improve efficiency?</p>	<p>- Streamlined financial management in place.</p> <p>- Strategies applied for joint resource mobilization.</p> <p>- Use of joint strategies for performance monitoring and measurement</p> <p>- Shared implementation plans developed which are synchronized among partner agencies.</p>	<p>Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations</p>	<p>Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions</p>
	<p>What type of (administrative, financial and managerial) obstacles did the joint programme face and to what extent have these affected its efficiency?</p>	<p>Analysis of preceding questions</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>Impact - Positive and negative effects of the</p>	<p>To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme</p>	<p>Analysis of changes brought about by the programme in the domains of the</p>	<p>Programme M&E system (reports),</p>	<p>Desk Review, semi structured interviews,</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Data collection methods
intervention development outcomes, SDGs.	contribute to the SDGs?	following SDG goals: 1, 5, 8, and 10.	beneficiaries and partner organizations	and focus group discussions
	To what extent and in what ways did the joint programme contribute to the targeted cross-cutting issues: gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, public private partnerships (PPPs) and sustainability at the local and national levels?	Analysis of various Evaluation questions under effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability.	-	-
	What impact did the matching funds have in the design, implementation and results of the joint programme?	Contribution analysis of the effect of the matching grants on enterprise performance. Specific positive impacts attributed by beneficiaries to matching grants	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions
	To what extent did the joint programme have an impact on the targeted beneficiaries? Were all targeted beneficiaries reached? Which were left out?	Analysis of preceding impact-related questions. - Changes in women's income as a result of increased sales/capacity attributed to the programme. - Changes in intra-household dynamics as a result of increased income/agency.	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations. Analysis of pathways to empowerment through case studies with individual women	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions
	What unexpected/unintended effects did the joint programme have, if any?	- Analysis of preceding questions	-	-
Sustainability: Probability of the	Which mechanisms already existed and which have been put in place	-Analysis of changes in national policy and institutional frameworks before and	Programme M&E system (reports),	Desk Review, semi structured interviews,

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Analysis/indicators	Main sources of information	Data collection methods
benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term.	by the joint programme to ensure results and impact, i.e. policy, policy coordination mechanisms, partnerships, networks?	after the programme. - Analysis of programme's contribution to identified changes	beneficiaries and partner organizations	and focus group discussions
	To what extent has the capacity of beneficiaries (institutional and/or individual) been strengthened such that they are resilient to external shocks and/or do not need support in the long term?	Analysis of changes in knowledge of trainees. Beneficiaries report improved capacity to undertake policy analysis on their own Evidence of beneficiaries applying knowledge and skills gained through the programme.	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions
	To what extent will the joint programme be replicated or scaled up at local or national levels?	- Evidence of increased institutional capacity to replicate programme intervention. - Enterprises supported are financially sustainable	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions
Human Rights and Gender Equality	Are there any signs that suggest that the programme has contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women in Palestine?	Key national partners provide examples of how the programme has contributed to increasing their capacity to support GE/WE in Palestine. Programme outcomes are noted by women beneficiaries as key for improving their economic empowerment and agency.	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions
	Are there any signs that suggest that duty bearers will adopt gender sensitive planning and implementation as a direct result of the programme?	Analysis of level of commitment of national partners to the implementation of policies promoted by the programme. Analysis of sustainability of policy interventions	Programme M&E system (reports), beneficiaries and partner organizations	Desk Review, semi structured interviews, and focus group discussions

Annex 4: Reported MSME sales, Pre-OSS compared to 2016

No.		Targeted by ITC prior to OSS	annual sales (NIS) in 2014, pre-OSS	annual sales NIS) in 2016	Percentage Increase
1	Rasha Abu Zayed	No	26,600	53,200	100.0%
2	Shireen Afaneh	No	18,080	3,600	-80.1%
3	Alaa Jaradat	No	5,000	24,000	380.0%
4	Helana Abu Shareefa	Yes	288,000	384,000	33.3%
5	Randa Ghanem	No	1,800	4,000	122.2%
6	Howaida Abu Yacoub	Yes	5,982	50,000	735.8%
7	Maha Abu Sedo	No	27,000	35,000	29.6%
8	Halima Abdul Aziz	No	154,000	194,000	26.0%
9	Ola Dabba	No	4,800	6,000	25.0%
10	Rukia Lulu	No	7,200	3,600	-50.0%
11	Inas Abu Hamda	No	2,500	22,500	800.0%
12	Fatima Abu Musa	No	6,255	8,400	34.3%
13	Kamila Thabet	No	4,000	15,000	275.0%
14	Rozan Khizindar	No	12,000	24,400	103.3%
15	Taghreed Abu Sroor	No	106,400	135,000	26.9%
16	Aida Zarrouk	Yes	15,600	37,000	137.2%
17	Mira Najjar	No	3,600	8,400	133.3%
18	Aida Samara	Yes	20,000	42,180	110.9%
19	Nehaya Abu Khater	No	30,700	35,700	16.3%
20	Amina Zahran	Yes	52,000	38,614	-25.7%
21	Aisha Dweikat	No	5,000	13,200	164.0%
22	Ikhlas Sholi	Yes	195,000	231,800	18.9%
23	Amal Obeid	No	20,000	25,140	25.7%
24	Sana Ghoul	No	47,570	60,820	27.9%
25	Amna Muhanna	No	5,200	1,100	-78.8%
26	Fadwa Nayef	No	10,000	13,000	30.0%

27	Khetam Sulaiman	No	170,000	450,000	164.7%
28	Nadia Abu Ghattas	No	184,700	277,200	50.1%
29	Fatina Anani	Yes	19,150	63,000	229.0%
30	Claudia Stephan	No	21,000	45,000	114.3%
31	Aya Idekedek	No	24,000	42,000	75.0%
32	Khawla Khatib	Yes	100,000	60,000	-40.0%
33	Ameera Nabhan	No	64,000	30,000	-53.1%
34	Naheel Adnan	No	12,000	48,000	300.0%
35	Asmahan Ilayan	No	180,000	120,000	-33.3%
36	Rawand Saifi	Yes	6,000	28,000	366.7%
37	Naima Zeyad	Yes	310,000	350,000	12.9%
38	Faten Nairoukh	Yes	18,000	26,000	44.4%
39	Nisreen Fkheideh	No	72,000	120,000	66.7%
40	Rehab Daqawieh	Yes	140,000	300,000	114.3%
41	Tujan Mushasha	No	48,000	61,800	28.8%
42	Alaa Abu Sharekh	No	4,200	3,800	-9.5%
43	Sana Jafari	Yes	80,000	115,000	43.8%
Total			2,807,430	3,609,454	42.8%

Annex 5: Project Logical Frame/Monitoring Matrix

Expected results (outcomes, outputs, responsible UN agency(s) and implementing partner(s))	Indicators (with baselines & indicative timeframe)	Means of verification	Collection methods (with indicative timeframe & frequency)	Responsibilities	Risks & Assumptions
<p>JP Outcome 1:</p> <p>Public and private sectors have enhanced policies and practices for inclusive socio-economic development of women owned/run MSME's and cooperatives</p>	<p>Indicator: Overall increase of women employed by targeted MSMEs and cooperatives</p> <p>Baseline: TBD through baseline survey</p> <p>Target: 20% by 2016</p>	HR records	Field visits to the centers/offices/associations very two quarters	JP M&E Officer	<p>Assumptions: Continued engagement of public and private institutions in development initiatives for socio-economic inclusion of women owned MSMEs/cooperatives</p> <p>Risks: Structural distortions of Palestinian economy and trade resulting from Israeli restrictions deepen halting economic activity in production sector</p>
<p>JP Output 1.1:</p> <p>Palestinian public institutions are better able to develop and apply more equitable policies and technical services to support and protect increased economic activity in the private sector.</p> <p>Responsible Agency: UN Women</p> <p>Implementing Partners: MoWA, MoA, MoE, and MoL/NCWE</p>	<p>Indicator: # of policies drafted for protection of local products and incentives for women cooperatives</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: 2 by year 2015</p>	Policy documents	Records from NCWE Annual	JP M&E Officer	<p>Assumptions: Relevant Ministries commitment continues to develop and apply more equitable policies and interventions to meet priorities and gender needs in economy.</p> <p>Risks: Change in government leading to change in priorities</p>
	<p>Indicator: level of satisfaction of women owned MSMEs and cooperatives with the MoNE's technical assistance for business development</p> <p>Baseline: Low level of satisfaction reported during</p>	Satisfaction questionnaires	Field visits to MSMEs and cooperatives quarterly	JP M&E Officer	<p>Assumptions: Quality, and consistence of services provided and adequate personnel in all governorates.</p> <p>Risks: Gap between knowledge acquired and application by appointed staff.</p>

Expected results (outcomes, outputs, responsible UN agency(s) and implementing partner(s))	Indicators (with baselines & indicative timeframe)	Means of verification	Collection methods (with indicative timeframe & frequency)	Responsibilities	Risks & Assumptions
	<p>consultations</p> <p>Target: Increase to high level of satisfaction by year 2015</p>				
	<p>Indicator: Level of knowledge of MoNE-BDC staff on gender sensitive service provision</p> <p>Baseline: No previous knowledge or mis knowledge</p> <p>Target: Substantial increase by 2015</p>	Tests	Trainer will conduct pre and post knowledge assessments during ToT	Trainer JP M&E Officer	<p>Assumptions: High quality of trainings and full attendance by participants.</p> <p>Risks: Turnover of MoNE personnel.</p>
<p>JP Output 1.2: Targeted private companies have increased engagement and social responsibility towards inclusion of women in the economic sector based on values of gender equity and promotion of women's rights</p> <p>Responsible Agency: UN Women</p> <p>Implementing Partners: UN Women</p>	<p>Indicator: # of mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: 2 by 2015 through the Gender Equity Seal</p>	<p>Internal HR policies</p> <p>Certificates issued by UN Women</p>	Follow up report developed by consultant annually	UN Women Consultant JP M&E Officer	<p>Assumptions: Private companies understand the benefits of adopting gender sensitive policies.</p> <p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in management of targeted companies • Gender mainstreaming and adoption of gender sensitive policies relatively recent in Palestinian business culture
<p>JP Outcome 2:</p> <p>Increased access and competitiveness of women run MSME's and cooperatives' products in local, regional and</p>	<p>Indicator: % of increase in sales of targeted MSME's and cooperatives</p> <p>Baseline: To be determined</p>	<p>Financial records</p> <p>Reports ESDC BWF</p>	Information gathered through field visits every two quarters and incorporated in annual intermediate	JP M&E Officer	<p>Assumptions: Capacity and resources to increase production of targeted MSMEs/cooperatives</p> <p>Risks: Structural distortions of Palestinian economy and trade resulting</p>

Expected results (outcomes, outputs, responsible UN agency(s) and implementing partner(s))	Indicators (with baselines & indicative timeframe)	Means of verification	Collection methods (with indicative timeframe & frequency)	Responsibilities	Risks & Assumptions
international markets	by baseline survey Target 2016: 20% increase		reports		from Israeli restrictions deepen halting economic activity in production sector
<p>JP Output 2.1</p> <p>Women owned/run MSME's and cooperatives strengthen their capacity to improve their competitiveness in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.</p> <p>Responsible Agency: UN Women and FAO (ITC to support)</p> <p>Implementing Partners: BWF (UN Women implementing partner) and ESDC, Al-Thimar, Al-Rozana (FAO's implementing partners)</p>	<p>Indicator: Level of satisfaction with business services provided</p> <p>Baseline: No service deliverance in place</p> <p>Target: High level of satisfaction of 90% of women by 2015</p>	Satisfaction questionnaires	Questionnaires distributed after consultancies & technical assistance on ongoing basis	JP Experts JP M&E Officer	<p>Assumptions: Availability of technical expertise to deliver business assistance and trainings.</p> <p>Risks: gaps between knowledge and application</p>
	Indicator: # of cooperatives and companies adopting PSI quality standards for food	Certificate issued by PSI Committee on Food Quality	Certificate collection on ongoing basis	Programme associate M&E FAO	<p>Assumptions: Technical capacity and equipment to meet standards</p> <p>Risks: Adoption not consistent over time</p>

Expected results (outcomes, outputs, responsible UN agency(s) and implementing partner(s))	Indicators (with baselines & indicative timeframe)	Means of verification	Collection methods (with indicative timeframe & frequency)	Responsibilities	Risks & Assumptions
	processing Baseline: 0 Target: 20 by 2016				
	Indicator: # of women receiving capacity building to increase competitiveness of their MSMEs and or cooperatives Baseline: 0 Target: At least 215 by 2016	Lists of attendance	By trainers during trainings and workshops ongoing basis	JP M&E Officer	Assumptions: Trainings well design and delivered, full attendance of participants. Risks: Gap between knowledge and application
	Indicator: # of cooperatives benefiting from business shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of attendance to trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By trainers during trainings and workshops ongoing basis 	Programme associate M&E FAO	Assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainings well design and delivered, full attendance of participants.

Expected results (outcomes, outputs, responsible UN agency(s) and implementing partner(s))	Indicators (with baselines & indicative timeframe)	Means of verification	Collection methods (with indicative timeframe & frequency)	Responsibilities	Risks & Assumptions
	(selling and marketing capacity building) Baseline: 0 Target: 20 by 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoUs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visits to the cooperatives quarterly 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selling shops in line with market needs Risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap between knowledge and application Inconsistence in quality of products over time
OUTPUT 2.2. Women owned/run MSME's and cooperatives increase their participation in trade. Responsible Agency: ITC Implementing Partners: ITC, UN Women, BWF, and PalTrade	Indicator: % of increase in sales of targeted women owned MSMEs and/or cooperatives at regional/international level Baseline: TBD through baseline survey Target: 30% by 2016	Financial records of MSMEs/cooperatives	Data gathered through field visits and incorporated monitoring reports every two quarters	JP M&E Officer	Assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSMEs/cooperatives have the capacity and resources to increase production Targeted have the capacity to assume increase of costs resulting from export procedures Risks: Political instability leading to increase Israeli restrictive policies for exports.
	Indicator: # of transactions conducted by selected women-owned MSMEs and/or cooperatives (exporting or with potential to export)	New orders / commitments resulting from business matching events	ITC consultants will follow up on events' outcomes per targeted MSME /cooperative on ongoing basis	JP M&E Officer	

Expected results (outcomes, outputs, responsible UN agency(s) and implementing partner(s))	Indicators (with baselines & indicative timeframe)	Means of verification	Collection methods (with indicative timeframe & frequency)	Responsibilities	Risks & Assumptions
	<p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: At least 1 by 50% of the MSMEs/cooperatives by 2016</p>				
<p>JP Output 2.3.</p> <p>Promotion of Palestinian products produced by women owned MSME's and cooperatives in local and regional markets increased</p> <p>Responsible Agency: UN Women and FAO (ITC to support)</p> <p>Implementing Partners: UN Women, MoWA, and BWF.</p>	<p>Indicator: # of Palestinian Embassies/Consulates/Chambers of Commerce in the Gulf region</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: At least 3 by 2016</p>	<p>MoA records</p> <p>E-mails</p>	<p>Follow up on C&A strategy's outcomes by the C&A team on ongoing basis</p>	<p>C&A team</p> <p>JP M&E Officer</p>	<p>Assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local communities understand the importance of consuming Palestinian products as a mean for economic growth Continued promotional commitment of stakeholders both at origin and at destination. <p>Risks: Increase of tension with Israeli occupying forces resulting on escalation of violence diverting attention from economic development</p>

