

One Stop Shop for Sustainable Businesses
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINALPROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: FROM *January 2015 TO April 2017*

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: One Stop Shop for Sustainable Businesses • Programme Number (<i>if applicable</i>) • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 00091539 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p><i>occupied Palestinian territory</i></p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Women • FAO • ITC 	<p>More women own, launch and/or better manage small and medium and large enterprises</p>
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: US\$ 3,000,000 MPTF /JP Contribution⁴: US\$ 1,500,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>by Agency</i> UN Women: US\$ 726,600 FAO: US\$ 426,700 ITC: US\$ 346,700 <p>Agency Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>by Agency</i> 	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) • Palestinian Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) • Palestinian Ministry of National Economy (MoNE) • Business Women Forum (BWF) in consortium with Agility Consulting and the Palestinian Shippers Council (PSC) • Palestinian Standards Institution (PSI) • Economic and Social Development Center of Palestine (ESDC) • Rozana Business Women Group • Al Thimar Company
	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration (<i>months</i>) Start Date⁵ 01/12/2014 Original End Date⁶ 31/03/2017 Actual End date⁷ 30/04/2017</p> <p>Have agency(ies) operationally closed the Programme in its(their) system?</p> <p>Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Financial Closure date: 05/10/2017</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).

⁴ The MPTF/JP Contribution is the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations – see [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities. Please see [MPTF Office Closure Guidelines](#).

UN Women: 700,000.00
FAO: 450,000
ITC: 350,000

Government Contribution
(if applicable)
Other Contributions (donors)
(if applicable)

TOTAL:

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

Evaluation Completed

Yes No Date: 31.05.2017

Evaluation Report - Attached

Yes No Date: 31.05.2017

Report Submitted By

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FINAL PROGRAMME REPORT FORMAT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In ½ to 1 page, summarise the most important achievements of Programme during the reporting period and key elements from your detailed report below. Highlight in the summary, the elements of the main report that you consider to be the most critical to be included in the MPTF Office Consolidated Annual Report.

I. Purpose

The 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. This was done 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 and competitiveness of women run MSMEs and cooperatives' products in local, regional and international markets.

The JP was relevant to the 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 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 programme had two outcomes, namely:

II. Assessment of Programme Results

- This section is the **most important in the Report** and particular attention should be given to reporting on **results / and changes** that have taken place rather than on activities. It has three parts to help capture this information in different ways (i. Narrative section; ii. Indicator based performance assessment; iii. Evaluation & Lessons learned; and iv. A specific story).

i) Narrative reporting on results:

- **Outcomes:** Outcomes are the strategic, higher level of change that your Programme is aiming to contribute towards. Provide a summary of progress made by the Programme in relation to **planned outcomes from the Project Document / AWP**s, with reference to the relevant indicator(s) in these documents. Describe if final targets were achieved, or explain any variance in achieved versus planned results. Explain the overall contribution of the programme to the Strategy Planning Framework or other strategic documents as relevant, e.g.: MDGs, National Priorities, UNDAF outcomes, etc . Explain who the main beneficiaries were. Highlight any institutional and/ or behavioural changes amongst beneficiaries at the outcome level.

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

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:

1. 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 regarding 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 on 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.

A policy paper incorporating the main national policy directions related to women's economic participation was drafted. The policy paper was produced under the auspices of the National Committee for the Women's Employment (NCWE) in full partnership with the Ministries of Agriculture, National Economy, Labor and Women's Affairs. It focused on 1) the protection of local products of the women MSMEs and 2) creating incentives for women businesses and cooperatives. The policy paper was prepared based on national priorities stipulated in the National Policy Agenda and the sector and sub-sector strategies and sets the basis for identifying priority areas that requires the development of policy instruments that will shape the policy intervention for the main stakeholders involved including the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of National Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

2. Supporting national ownership of results, e.g. by ensuring that partners were not only beneficiaries, but co-creators and drivers of different initiatives.
3. Demonstrating how, through simple technical support and capacity building, private businesses started to shift their mind-sets and 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.

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

23 women's cooperatives have contractual agreements to supply two private business shops with their products for direct sales. The two shops are dedicated to selling products by the women's cooperatives providing them with direct access to the local market. Both companies, Al-Rozana and Al-Thimar, witnessed impressive increases in their sales turnover in 2016 compared to the baseline (40% and 68.1%, respectively). For Althimar Company in Jenin, sales to the public during the project implementation period totalled 262,896 NIS (about USD 72,000), while for Al Rozana Company in Halhoul sales to the public totalled 149, 834 NIS (about USD 41,000), for a combined total sale from the two shops of around USD 113,000. In addition, more than USD 205,000 was generated from exports. New Company Farm, an export intermediary used by the JP to support cooperatives, 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.

35 of the 43 targeted MSMEs (81.2%) realized sales turnover increased since the beginning of the programme. On average, targeted MSMEs reported a 28.6% increase in their sales turnover compared to 2014, well above the JP's target of 20%. Among those MSMEs that witnessed increases in sales, the average increase was 46.2%, with 12 more MSMEs having witnessed three-digit growth figures in their sales (ranging between 100-800%) between 2014 and 2016. 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.

Women beneficiaries had the opportunity to learn about the concept of perceived value and how important it is when dealing with markets, which had a positive impact on their businesses. Women beneficiaries were able to improve the quality of production and were able to increase sales and access to market at the local and internal levels. Also, the programme contributed to shifting the mind-set of women entrepreneurs to a market driven and demand drive mindset, which increased their opportunities to access markets and export chains as planned. The targeted women became more confident to upscale their businesses, and negotiate business deals in order to sustain their businesses; where they reported that the acquired skills will help them sustain their businesses after the programme ends.

- **Outputs:** Outputs are the more immediate results that your Programme is responsible for achieving. Report on the key outputs achieved over the duration of the Programme, in relation to **planned outputs from the Project Document / AWP**s, with reference to the relevant indicator(s) in these documents. Describe if final targets were achieved, or explain any variance in achieved versus planned results. If possible, include the number of beneficiaries. Report on how achieved outputs have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and explain any variance in actual versus planned contributions to the outcomes.

JP 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.

Throughout the lifetime of the programme, 91 public servants (56 F & 35 M) improved their knowledge of gender concepts and the meaning of gender mainstreaming. The public servants from the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture participated in a capacity building trainings and awareness raising sessions aimed at developing the skills and knowledge of the ministries' staff for developing gender sensitive policies. The targeted staff members together with staff from the Ministry of Labor and under the leadership of the National Committee for Women's Employment (NCWE) worked with the national consultant hired through the JP 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. The final policy paper, which integrated policies for both protection and incentive provision, was submitted to the NCWE for final revision and approval, 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. With a view of pooling efforts to develop the two policies on protection of local products and giving incentives for women cooperatives, a variety of meetings were conducted by the policy making consultant with a multitude of stakeholders in order to identify a baseline to prepare the policy. Moreover, two national consultation sessions were conducted, the first workshop targeted, representatives from the civil society and the private sector, women entrepreneurs and cooperatives, while the second targeted; the public sector and governmental institutions. The two consultation sessions intended to discuss the policies and mechanisms related to the development and protection of the Palestinian traditional and agriculture products. The two sessions came up with recommendations that have been taken in consideration in the first draft.

JP Output 1.2: Targeted private companies have increased engagement and social responsibility towards inclusion of women in the economic sector based on values and gender equality and promotion of women rights

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. The two private companies have shown high commitment towards the inclusion of gender sensitive policies. Particularly, Bank of Palestine expressed their interest to embed part of the recommendations raised by the Gender Audit.

JP Output 2.1: Women owned/run MSME’s and cooperatives strengthen their capacity to improve their competitiveness in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way

The two business shops (Al Thimar and Al Rozana), opened in the first reporting period, continued to provide access to the local market to women cooperatives in the West Bank and received additional support through training and in-kind assistance to reinforce their capacities and autonomy. During the reporting period, the two shops maintained and strengthened their sales relationships with their 23 supplier cooperatives as well as received trainings and materials (computer and software) to enhance their bookkeeping practices. The shops create a direct linkage between the cooperatives and the consumers allowing the cooperatives an effective access to the local market and are fully stocked with products from the women cooperatives. Under the Baitutie brand, the shops have increased their efforts to locally market the products by participating in six food exhibitions, namely the Amman International Exhibition (November 2016 and March 2017), Jenin Saturday Market (March 2017), Al Birah Food Exhibition (March 2017), ASALAH organized exhibition in Ramallah (mid-March 2017), Near East Foundation Exhibition in Ramallah (March 2017) and the Hebron University Exhibition (April 2017). The unified, comprehensive marketing plan designed for both companies (Althimar and Alrozana) during the last reporting period was rolled out. Building on previous coaching and marketing campaigns conducted during previous reporting periods, the work of the marketing plan focused on improving the quality and competitiveness of products; opening new markets and increasing sales; and raising the market profile of the products produced by women’s cooperatives among Palestinian consumers. FAO continued to provide technical support to the participating women’s cooperatives during the reporting period. During the project’s implementation, 637 women from the cooperatives selling their products at the two shops received training and coaching related to food processing, food safety and quality control, packaging and labeling, and marketing. Twenty operational manuals tailored to the needs of the 20 targeted women cooperatives were developed and rolled out to normalize the quality of their products and marketing services that are linked to the two shops. Through matching funds, four of the cooperatives received a variety of inputs and training as well as coaching and support to build a sales relationship with the West Bank-based marketing firms Mount of Green Olives Company and New Farm. Furthermore, FAO strengthened the institutional and managerial capacities of these women’s cooperatives through introducing ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems as well as building the capacities of their management and finance staff to conduct financial business analysis and economic feasibility assessments. In addition, matching funds were used to procure inputs for the two business shops, including a new sign for Al Rozana and a redesigned set of labels for 20 products featuring the Baitutie logo as well as freezers, display refrigerators, pasteurization equipment and other equipment required for high quality processing.

UN Women and ITC continued providing capacity developing initiatives to the participating MSME's during the reporting period, including coaching and training. Both UN Women and ITC facilitated training sessions on topics ranging from financial management, business strategy design and export quality management to negotiations skills and gender and business. Work with the women on improving product design continued and included coaching women in producing new collections that are in line with international market requirements while at the same time upholding traditional artistry. During the reporting period, 43 women MSMEs participated in a technical training related to shipping and custom clearance services in addition to coaching services on reviewing the certificates and documents needed for shipment to ensure that the shipment is safely delivered on time to the final customers. The participating MSME's participated in a three days training course on "Distribution Channels" organized to familiarize the MSMEs with the network used to get a product to the wholesaler or retailer, and how to calculate their breakeven point and ensure profitability from their deals with wholesalers, retailers, and direct sales. As a result of the training, 78% of the women MSMEs are now keeping their business accounts separate from their personal accounts demonstrates that MSMEs started recognizing the importance of keeping business accounts separate as their businesses started to take the shape of legal entities. Moreover, 90% are now aware of the importance of proper bookkeeping and 48% of the MSMEs reported that they started using the Excel templates in recording all the data into designated books. 15% of the women MSMEs employed accountants to do the bookkeeping. Furthermore, the majority of the women MSMEs are now aware of the importance of customizing their products to meet the needs of their customers (58% of the MSMEs are now customizing their products to meet the needs of their customers whether individuals or organizations) and keeping a database of their customers to make sure of continuing communication and feedback between each other.

UN Women, through the established consortium, continued the process of legal registration of the MSME's with the MoNE and the Chambers of Commerce for unregistered MSMEs in addition to providing technical assistance to registered MSME's to re-register, as needed. 23 MSME's were provided with support to register with MoNE for the first time, 17 women MSMEs were provided with support to obtain membership in Chamber of commerce and 12 women were assisted to renew registration they previously had. It is worth mentioning that 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. Moreover, the Palestinian Shippers Council (Consortium Partner) in coordination with the Gender Unit in the MoNE supported women MSMEs to register their trademarks. In addition to the above, 17 MSME's have registered internet web domain names allowing them to communicate with customers and partners more professionally. Furthermore, and to improve the women MSMEs competitiveness, a list of local, regional, and international sources for raw materials required in the production process of the MSMEs products was prepared by the partner consortium and distributed to the MEME's. The list will provide the MEME's with a future reference to be able to get lower prices for raw materials.

JP Output 2.2: Women owned/run MSME's and cooperatives increase their participation in trade

A market led approach was used to ensure that the targeted products, from both cultural and agricultural products, will successfully access to the targeted markets, as follows:

1. Food products:

Products with export potential were selected by ITC expert, and a roadmap on the international market requirements was provided:

- A field visit was organised by ITC to the State of Palestine in May 2015, with the aim of selecting the most promising products for export to Europe and of identifying gaps between the local business practices and international standards. During the visit, cooperatives and producer groups managed and owned by women producers and entrepreneurs were visited across the West Bank, and participated in workshop on export marketing. As a result of this mission, the products with the best

export potential were selected; several criteria were used for the selection of the products. These criteria concern both the supply and the demand side of the market, as well as the intervention logic.

- A comparison of the current status of the selected projects with the required international market standards, in terms of packaging, certification, volume, promotion, etc., was conducted. The main issues identified in the analysis are as follows: low level of quality management and the small scale production process limit the market to that segment that is most eager to buy the product. To overcome the limitation in export skills of the producer groups, as well as the small production volumes, ITC recommended using a supply chain or value chain approach. In this case, ITC selected New Farm (intermediary exporter) to take over the role of exporting and export marketing and to ensure that the market requirements provided by ITC experts are met prior to committing to any transaction.

2. Coaching and backstopping of the intermediary exporter to meet international requirements provided:

The intermediary exporter “New Farm Company” was able to align the selected products with the market requirements. They have better understanding of market requirements. This was one of the main results of the continued coaching and guidance provided to the intermediary exporter by ITC expert. The backstopping component covered several aspects, including: compliance requirements, labelling requirements, pricing, packaging, and the best marketing and sales approach. A compliance check list, labelling check list, and a marketing strategy have been provided to the intermediary exporter. This has resulted in updated price lists and information sheets and may have contributed to more effective communication with prospective clients.

3. Market linkages were created with optional buyers from the EU markets:

- An intensive marketing campaign of six months took place from September 2016 until April 2017. The campaign was conducted by the ITC in collaboration with the beneficiary export company New Farm Company (NFC). During the campaign, more than fifty potential buyers have been contacted in the EU market, specifically, Germany, Netherlands, and the UK.
- Meetings with potential buyers: ITC met with potential buyers in the trade fairs of SIAL Paris, which took place in October 2016, and Biofach Nuremberg, which took place in February 2017. Samples, brochures, product specifications, prices and other information were shared with interested prospects. Feedback was collected by ITC expert from the buyers. For more details, please review the report on SIAL event in annex
- A Business Tour was organised for food representatives to Europe: A business tour took place from 27 March to 2 April 2017. The objective of the tour was to promote the Palestinian cooking among French and English cooks, and to participate in the business meetings sessions (B2B meetings) organized by ITC expert. In this tour the intermediary exporter and the FAO representative together with the ITC met prospective customers in the Netherlands, Germany and France. Together with the well-known author Ms. Joudie Kalla, writer of Palestine on a Plate, a dinner annex promotion event was organised in Paris.
- Another promotion event was organized in Paris with the French chef cook Vincent Piette. The marketing campaign resulted in the following :(i) three buyers have expressed their firm intention to buy products from New Farm Company. These companies are based in the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Canada. The concrete product interest is for maftoul, freekeh, za'atar, olive oil, olive tapenade, and maqdous. The webshop downtownsales.co.uk based in London committed to list all products from the catalogue, while also offering them in three physical shops they have in London. Twelve other buyers are classified as high priority prospects (category A) and have a good chance to start buying in the foreseeable future.

4. Cultural products:

Similar approach was used with women owned SMEs producing cultural products. conducted to assist the product development process for the EU/Netherlands market. Details are below:

- Analyzing markets requirements: ITC undertook two market studies (EU and MENA region) with the objective to find new buyers to source from the targeted women owned SMEs and cooperatives, and to identify market requirements. ITC has finalized its work on product design and development with this group of beneficiaries, based on the recommendations provided in market requirements studies undertaken in March 2015. In addition to that, marketing research for the Portfolio of Products was
- Collecting, continuously, feedback from buyers on adjusting products: During the life cycle of the project, women owned SMEs and cooperatives had the opportunity to learn about the concept of perceived value, and market requirements. Through hand on holding, advisory, and coaching, women were able to adjust their products to match buyers' requirements.
- Linkages with buyers: ITC contacted more than 109 organizations, mostly in the UK, Germany, USA and the Netherlands, and more than fourteen advanced negotiations with prospective customers took place; five/seven orders took place in Q1 2017.
- Creating Linkages with buyers, including, high-end design brands for women in the handicraft sector and famous cooks for the food sector in Paris and the United Kingdom, in addition to creating opportunities with hotels (chains) and resorts in the US: This project has made it possible to link targeted women in handicraft with designers from the US and European markets.
- Matchmaking Events: Organization for the participation of a group of the Palestinian businesswomen in the textile international fair in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on 16-19 April. The selected group of women showcased their products at the International Textile Fair in Abu Dhabi, alongside exhibitors from Europe, Turkey India, China, India, Japan and Korea. Business-to-business (B2B) meetings with buyers in the UAE following the Fair have been arranged. ITC also organised for the participation of women to the Bazaar Berlin that took place in the period Nov.16-20. Furthermore, ITC presented samples from other Palestinian women entrepreneurs at the Caspian Fashion Week, which took place in Astrakhan on 21-24 April. Moreover, ITC organized for a trip for a group of German potential buyers to Palestine during the period 9-13 May 2016. A major "mainstream" importer joined the tour.

JP Output 2.3: Promotion of Palestinian products produced by women owned MSME's and cooperatives in local, regional and international markets is increased.

FAO, ITC and UN Women provided technical and financial support for the promotion of cooperatives and MEME's products during the programme lifetime.

1. Business Deals:

Under the signed cooperation agreement between FAO and the Palestine Standards institution (PSI), specifications for "Maftoul", a product of targeted cooperatives, was developed to bring the number of products with specifications to three. The specifications for freekeh are still being finalized as the results of seasonality related delays. PSI has taken ownership of this activity and is committed to working with Araneh Cooperative to finalize these standards after the project's implementation period. The standards developed for these products based on the specifications will allow for expanding the market for these products to international and regional market. In addition, the two business shops established through the support of FAO continued to build on its agreement with the "Al Hannonna Market" in Amman, Jordan. By 1 March 2017, the value of exports to this shop totaled 56,700 (USD 15,500). During the same period, Al Rozana had sold 48,000 NIS (about USD 13,100) of their products at Carrefour in Amman, Jordan. The companies also signed a sales agreement with the local marketing company New Farm, which sells Baitutie products on the local market and generated USD 177, 234 as of 1 March 2017.

Through the support of the UN Women and the consortium, business deals were concluded with one MSME's to export soap to Germany and the UK. The business deals were worth a total of 40,000 USD. Another MSME managed to establish a business deal and shipped soap to the UK for a total of 50,000 USD. One of the MSME's managed to conduct a business deal to ship 120,000 USD worth of embroidery and handcraft products to Chile. The established One Stop Shop provided technical support related to the shipment including packaging, issuing the needed documents and certificates for shipping and custom clearing.

2. Product Development:

During the reporting period, more progress in terms of products development and market linkages for the participating MSME's was achieved. 15 women MSMEs managed to produce new items / new production lines that are currently being promoted on several websites, internal and external retailer stores and in BWF exhibitions. This progress on the MSMEs products came as a result of a comprehensive process that included products assessment for all the MSMEs and on the job coaching that included recommendations in terms of product development, building a brand, packaging and market linkages.

3. Market Linkages and Exhibition:

Linkages have been created with the Palestinian Embassy in Switzerland during the reporting period. ITC had several meetings with the Palestinian Ambassador to promote the newly produced collection of the beneficiaries. A showcase for the products will be organised with the embassy in Geneva at the United Nations premises on 2-3 June 2017. The objective is to show the Palestinian culture and heritage. After finalizing the preparatory stage of the product development, the Palestinian Shippers Council and the Business Women Forum and in coordination with the market linkages consultant recruited through the JP conducted several meetings with the MSME's to discuss marketing options of their products. The consultant accordingly approached many retailers locally, regionally and internationally, to promote and explore potential business deals. As part of the efforts for promoting the MSME's products, Carrefour, a leading shopping mall in Jordan, expressed interest in having the soap of one of the women MSMEs to be presented in the mall. Beit Al Turath, a Jordan based company specialized in cultural handicraft, agreed to display MSMEs products in their shops including embroidery, handcrafts and Soaps. Istiklal Library company, one of the oldest and most respected stationary companies in Jordan, agreed to test some products produced by the MSME's particularly wooden boxes, wooden notebooks and coasters and to check their marketability. It is also worth mentioning that the consultant managed also to coordinate with many private companies and tourist stores at the local level who expressed their interest in the MSMEs products like. As a result, Heritage Touch, a participating MSME, concluded a deal with a total of 7000 USD for specialized pillows for a tourism shop in Jerusalem. Also Tujan's Art, another participating MSME, concluded deals the Bank of Palestine and the European Union offices in Palestine.

In addition, the JP facilitated the participation of MSME's in the following events and exhibitions: he Baitutie brand, the shops have increased their efforts to locally market the products by participating in six food exhibitions, namely the Amman International Exhibition (November 2016 and March 2017), Jenin Saturday Market (March 2017), Al Birah Food Exhibition (March 2017), ASALAH organized exhibition in Ramallah (mid-March 2017), Near East Foundation Exhibition in Ramallah (March 2017) and the Hebron University Exhibition (April 2017). The two shops helped support ESDC and FAO with the development of 20 product manuals designed to streamline preparation standards. These manuals were designed, printed and disseminated in April 2017. Moreover, the unified, comprehensive marketing plan designed for both companies (Althimar and Alrozana) during the last reporting period was rolled out. Building on previous coaching and marketing campaigns conducted during previous reporting periods, the work of the marketing plan focused on improving the quality and competitiveness of products; opening new markets and increasing sales; and raising the market profile of the products produced by women's cooperatives among Palestinian consumers. Throughout this reporting period our partner consortium BWF and PSC continued their work in facilitation of participation of MSMEs in trade shows and exhibitions, where these exhibitions

help the women MSMEs to get exposure, market their products, make network and business deals in addition to open new horizons to new markets. this reporting period witness improve in the sales performance; where the total sales from the beginning of the programme until this reporting period reached more than NIS 240,000, through participation in various local, regional and international exhibitions as listed below.

- Berlin Market throughout the ITC
 - The Closing Ceremony of the One Stop Shop Programme
 - BWF Annual Exhibition 2017
 - An exhibition with the Ministry of Finance
 - An exhibition with Friend's Society of Islamic Orphanage School in Jerusalem
 - The American Consulate Bazaars held in Jerusalem
 - The Europe Day
- **Qualitative assessment:** Provide a qualitative assessment of the level of overall achievement of the Programme. Highlight key partnerships and explain how such relationships impacted on the achievement of results. Explain cross-cutting issues pertinent to the results being reported on. Has the funding provided by the MPTF/JP to the programme been catalytic in attracting funding or other resources from other donors? If so, please elaborate. For Joint Programmes, highlight how UN coordination has been affected in support of achievement of results.

The Joint Programme (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 was 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 JP strategy of establishing a one-stop-shop for providing business development and marketing services to MSMEs and cooperatives was (and continues to be) very relevant to address the functional deficiencies in the business environment in Palestine, as identified in the National Export Strategy (NES) and corroborated by key informants consulted by the evaluation.

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 could 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.

Per the final evaluation, of the 43 finally targeted MSMEs, 35 (81.2%) reported realizing 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 realized 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.

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.

“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. However, the relatively small number of participating UN agencies in the JP also lent itself for enhanced synergies and collaboration. 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.

Cross-cutting issues

1) The sustainability of the JP work

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.

Under Outcome 2:

The JP worked with the Business Women's Forum (BWF) to train women owned enterprises and connect them to markets, in the process providing BWF with the approach, materials and hands-on practice to deliver these services. BWF used the skills and experience developed with ITC support under the complementary project to deliver support to women owned businesses under the JP . BWF replicated the model that it previously developed and rolled out with ITC support.

The JP also continued building the capacity of Business Women Forum (BWF) to continue providing better services by creating the one-stop-shop/business service hub shops. It is expected that the BWF will act as a multiplier institution by extending its services to more women in other sectors. This will strengthen the demand for BWF services and will make it more sustainable in the long-term. Registration of MSMEs and cooperatives in the Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Health, Chambers of Commerce and other related line ministries is crucial to ensure the continuity and the sustainability of the MSME's and cooperatives, moving from the informal to the formal economy businesses will open a new window for them to reach a new markets in the regional and international markets, this will drive income and employment generation, as well as contribute to improve the livelihoods of women and their families, and improve the overall socio-economic development of the country. A cooperation agreement was signed with the Palestine Standards institution (PSI) in order to develop Palestinian standards for four products – makdous, thyme (za'atar), freekeh and maftoul. Of these, PSI standards are ready for Maftool, Zaatar and Makdous, while for Freekeh were not yet field tested because of seasonality PSI has taken ownership of this process and will follow with Araneh Cooperative with the aim of finalizing the standards during the upcoming freekah season.

At the enterprise Level:

During the life of the project, selected women-owned SMEs integrated the knowledge and skills acquired through training and advisory services provided by the project's technical experts and consultants (from ITC and UNW). The commitment of selected enterprises and the positive results will ensure that the new techniques will be well integrated in the enterprises' business processes and will continue to be used in the long term. It is expected that women who benefited from the project will be able to train future groups of women involved in similar value chains. In addition to that, the JP engaged a specialised exporter for making market linkages: ITC provided coaching and advisory to the intermediary exporter on markets requirements, including: market compliance, pricing, marketing, certification, packaging and marketing. It is expected that the intermediary exporter will act as a multiplier entity by extending the knowledge they obtained to more cooperatives and small producers, who will be exporting their production through the intermediary exporter. This approach has been used to resolve several issues including: small production, language barriers, etc.

2) The promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality

Gender equality and women's empowerment are core development objectives of the project. Fundamental for the realization of human rights and key to effective and sustainable development outcomes, gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed in all of the JP's outcomes, outputs and Activities as detailed below:

At the institutional level:

The capacity that 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.

At the private sector level,

- The JP worked on strengthening women owned/run MSME's and cooperatives capacity through many specialized approaches like coaching, trainings, business to business methods. Additionally, the one-stop shop/ business service hub and the two business shops are especially designed to enhance women economic empowerment. The project supported (45) women-owned businesses and cooperatives to meet buyer requirements. Matchmaking events and business and business meetings were also organized to create concrete sales opportunities. Furthermore, the project is also directly engaging and supporting the private sector through its two point of sale business shops in the north and south of the West Bank, which are now also selling their products through the marketing company New Farm Company in the West Bank and through Al Hanona Market in Amman, Jordan and Kafour Mall in Amman.
- The JP promoted a more inclusive and gender sensitive working environment in the private sector. 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 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 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. 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. 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.

At the socio-economic level:

Using a results-oriented model for women's economic empowerment, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund joint programme 'Creating a one-stop shop for sustainable businesses' has enhanced the socio-economic status and decent working conditions of its women beneficiaries. With the joint programme's support, beneficiaries' women-owned and operated cultural and agricultural businesses are positively impacting Palestinian communities, building economies inclusive of the most marginalized, and contributing to the preservation of Palestinian cultural heritage.

3) The engagement in public-private partnerships

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 Labor 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 contribute to 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. As part of its responsibilities, UN Women managed to create a full partnership with the Ministries of Agriculture, National Economy, Labor and Women's Affairs with regards to developing the policy paper. The process for developing the paper included meetings and consultation sessions with a multitude of stakeholders from the civil society, the private sector, women entrepreneurs, cooperatives, public sector and governmental institutions in order to identify priority areas for developing the policy. These sessions and meetings came up with recommendations related to the mechanisms for development and protection of the Palestinian traditional and agriculture products.

UN Women also created partnerships with two private companies which underwent the Gender Audit exercise. 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 the evaluation.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is part of the committee that supported FAO to develop a needs assessment and marketing study. Through the project's implementation, FAO facilitated MoA's strategic engagement with the private sector (business shops run by Al Thimar and Al Rozana companies) as well as civil society (ESDC), which also acts as an intermediary for women's associations and cooperatives. Under the JP, FAO works in coordination with the MoA, Al Thimar, Al Rozana and ESDC towards successful project outcomes.

Marketing linkages was also created between the participating MSME's and cooperatives with many private sector companies in Palestine and in the region through the JP. The linkages established ensured more exposure to the MSME's and the cooperatives and provide for sustainability for business deals.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Using the **Programme Results Framework from the Project Document / AWP**s - provide details of the achievement of indicators at both the output and outcome level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, clear explanation should be given explaining why.

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<p>Outcome 1⁸: 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 1: Overall increase of women employed by targeted MSMEs and cooperatives Baseline: 635 Employed by the 43 MSMEs Planned Target: 22 full time (20% increase)</p> <p>Indicator 2: Policy making process that is gender responsive, participatory and accountable Baseline: Current Policy making process that is gender responsive, participatory and accountable is weak (indicators of weakness in notes) Planned Target: Policy making process that is gender responsive, participatory and accountable is strong (Reversing the weak points and increasing use of complaints to 25%)</p> <p>Indicator 3: 50% increase in level of satisfaction of women owned MSMEs and cooperatives with protection and incentives provided</p> <p>Baseline: 8% were satisfied with product protection , 20% Satisfied with MSME sensitivity, and 25% satisfied with given priority to women MSMEs/Coop Planned Target: 12% satisfied with product protection, 30% Satisfied with MSME sensitivity, and 37.5% satisfied with given priority to women MSMEs/Coop</p>	<p>35% increase in the number of full time employees compared to 2015, and 20 % increase in the total number of part time job employees and 14% increase in the sessional job.</p> <p>The JP has finalized the process of a comprehensive gender sensitive review and update of the existing legal framework, variety of meetings and sessions conducted with a multitude of stakeholders from the civil society, the private sector, women entrepreneurs, cooperatives, public sector and governmental institutions; in order to identify a baseline to prepare the policy.</p>		<p>Qn.10 of the women Survey- (ME4), and HR records</p> <p>Consultant report The reference group of policy papers M&E Report End of Project/Annual Women survey (ME4)</p> <p>End of Project/Annual Women survey (ME4)</p>

⁸ Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlines in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

	<p>More time was needed to be able to measure the impact of the two policies on the programme's beneficiaries.</p>		
<p>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.</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.1: Two policy proposals drafted on protection of local products and incentives for women cooperatives working in agriculture by the end of year 1, endorsed and put in place by end of year 2 Baseline: 0 Planned Target: Two policy proposals on protection of local products and incentives for women cooperatives working in agriculture drafted, endorsed and put in place by end of year 2</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.2: 50% increase in level of satisfaction of women owned MSMEs and cooperatives with the MoNE's technical assistance for business development by the end of year 1. Baseline: 30% satisfaction with technical assistance with MoNE Business development Planned Target: 45% satisfaction with technical assistance with MoNE Business development</p> <p>Indicator 1.1.3: 50% of staff increase their knowledge, skills and attitude on gender sensitive service deliverance by the end of year 1 Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 50% of MoNE & MoA staff in directorates increase their knowledge, skills and attitude on gender sensitive service deliverance; and 50% of staff appointed to provide services through BDC increase their knowledge, skills and attitude on gender sensitive service deliverance.</p>	<p>A policy paper incorporating the main national policy directions related to women's economic participation was drafted during the reporting period. The policy paper was produced under the auspices of the National Committee for the Women's Employment (NCWE) in full partnership with the Ministries of Agriculture, National Economy, Labor and Women's Affairs. It focused on 1) the protection of local products of the women MSMEs and 2) creating incentives for women businesses and cooperatives. The policy paper was prepared based on national priorities stipulated in the National Policy Agenda and the sector and sub-sector strategies and sets the basis for identifying priority areas that requires the development of policy instruments that will shape the policy intervention works for the main stakeholders involved including the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of National Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.</p>		<p>-Form ME 3: Policy (MOWA /MONE Gender Unit/Committee/MoA) M&E Report -MOWA/NCWE records -The Policy documents</p> <p>End of Project/Annual Women survey (ME4)</p> <p>-Pre and post assessment questionnaires of learning acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude- documented in CB report -Assessment of application questionnaire, 3 month after CB : quarter report ME 3 -Staff at Relevant Ministries</p>

	<p>MoNE's gender sensitive services are yet to be fully developed and rolled out. The planned work on developing policy instruments will have direct impact on women and women entrepreneurs and will be measured regularly.</p> <p>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. 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.</p>		
<p>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>Indicator 1.2.1: Mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment in place in two private sector companies by year one. Baseline: No mechanisms in place Planned Target:</p>	<p>Recommendations from the Gender Audit exercise included suggestions for changes in the complaint mechanisms and policies related to sexual harassment, which are being under consideration by the Board of the two companies at the time of evaluation.</p>		<p>Quarter report based on milestones questionnaire</p>

<p>Outcome 2: Increased access and competitiveness of women run MSME's and cooperatives' products in local, regional and international markets.</p> <p>Indicator 1: % of increase in sales of targeted MSME's and cooperatives in local, regional and international markets</p> <p>Baseline: Total sale is 320,306 ILS per month for the 46 enterprises and cooperatives according to the results of the baseline survey 9</p> <p>Planned Target: 20% increase in sales</p>	<p>Both companies, Al-Rozana and Al-Thimar, witnessed impressive increases in their sales turnover in 2016 compared to the baseline (40% and 68.1%, respectively).</p> <p>On average, targeted MSMEs reported a 28.6% increase in their sales turnover compared to 2014</p>		<p>Quarter Women survey (ME1) (Qn. 3 in women Survey) and for those with no records Table in Page 3 in survey to calculate the sales Financial records</p>
<p>Output 2.1 Women owned/run MSME's and cooperatives strengthen their capacity to improve their competitiveness in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.1: At least 70% of women entrepreneurs benefiting from business services report high level of satisfaction with services provided by the end of year 1 Baseline: Planned Target: At least 70% of women entrepreneurs benefiting from business services report high level of satisfaction with services provided by the end of year 1</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.2: At least 20 cooperatives and companies adopt PSI quality standards for food processing by year 2 Baseline: 6 are adopting them partially Planned Target: At least 20 cooperatives and companies adopt PSI quality standards for food processing by year 2, and are aware of international standards</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.3: At least 46 women benefited from capacity building to increase competitiveness of their MSMEs and or cooperatives by the end of year 2. Baseline: Planned Target: At least 46 women undergone capacity building to increase competitiveness</p> <p>Indicator 2.1.4: At least 20 MSME's and/or cooperatives benefit from two business</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>FAO: 23 women's associations and cooperatives, which have 922 members, are linked by FAO to the two business shops (Alrozana and Althimar in the</p>		<p>Pre and post assessment questionnaires of learning acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude Application assessment questionnaire, 3 moth after CB (ME2) Focus Group Discussion with women (ME8)</p> <p>-Women Quarter survey</p>

<p>shops (selling and marketing capacity building) by the end of year 2 Baseline: 12(7 Themar, 5 Rozana) are dealing with the 2 companies 1 company is new and needs capacity building 2 companies need to increase their sales and marketing so that women could fully benefit</p> <p>Planned Target: At least 20 MSME's and/or cooperatives have agreements with the two business shops by the end of year 2 2 shops increased their competencies in selling and marketing At least 20 Women enterprises benefit from the 2 shops as reported by women</p>	<p>North and South of West Bank). These cooperative members received entrepreneurship training.</p> <p>FAO: New PSI standards are ready and adopted for Maftool, Zaatar and Makdous, while for Freekeh because of seasonality limitations the standards are not finalized. PSI has taken ownership of this activity and will follow up with Araneh Cooperative with the aim of operationalizing the standards this season. All 23 cooperatives are aware of PSI standards and certification processes but due to the time and resources required to develop new standards, PSI quality standards are not yet available for all of their products. UN Women: One of the targeted women MSMEs adopted the PSI quality standards</p> <p>FAO : 637 women from the women's associations and cooperatives were trained by FAO and provided with technical assistance on: food processing, food safety and quality control, packaging and labelling and marketing, extension visits .</p> <p>UN Women: 45 women owned /run MSM's are directly targeted, with specialized technical trainings on advocacy, business management,</p>		<p>(ME1) -PSI certificates</p> <p>Reports from records and CB reports ME2 List of attendance Pre and post assessment questionnaires of learning acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude- documented in CB report</p> <p>Documented agreements/MOU</p> <p>List of attendance to trainings</p> <p>Number of contracts between implementing partner/business shops and women's associations & cooperatives Focus Group Discussion with women (ME8)</p>
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	<p>communication, export management, financial management, marketing, Legal and trade facilitation, on job trainings, trade facilitation and other direct support like products development developing business plans, promotional plans and marketing plans.</p> <p>Contracts were signed between 23 women's associations/ cooperatives and the two business shops, which will enable the 23 coops to supply their products to the business shops for selling and marketing. 637 women from the 23 associations/ cooperatives were trained on food processing, food safety and quality control.</p>		
<p>OUTPUT 2.2. Women owned/run MSME's and cooperatives increase their participation in trade</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.1: At least 20% of targeted women owned 30 MSMEs and/or 20 cooperatives increase their sales at regional/international level by the end of year 2. Baseline: 0 transactions done, although exporting is carried informally Planned Target: At least 1 transaction (to document formal operation) conducted by 30% of the selected women-owned MSMEs and/or cooperatives (exporting or with potential to export) by the end of year 2.</p> <p>Indicator 2.2.2: At least 1 transaction conducted by 30% of the selected women-owned MSMEs and/or cooperatives (exporting or with potential to export) by the end of year 2. Baseline: 0 transactions done, although exporting is carried informally Planned Target:</p>	<p>Of the 43 finally targeted MSMEs, 35 (81.2%) reported realising sales turnover increases since 2015</p> <p>Both companies (Thimar and Al-Rozana) with which the JP connected its targeted cooperatives witnessed impressive increases in their</p>		<p>Financial records of MSMEs/cooperative</p> <p>ESDC and BWF reports</p>

	<p>sales turnover in 2016 compared to 2014 (40% and 68.1%, respectively)</p> <p>9 out of 43 of the UN Women MSMEs and the two targeted business shops managed to conduct businesses regionally and internationally (11 out of 45 for a 24% of all targeted MSME's and businesses)</p> <p>ITC: Advanced negotiations, with (17) prospective customers, are in progress. More than (7) orders took place in Q1 2017, and (3 orders took place in Dec 2016).</p> <p>As a result of the JP, transactions have been made by the selected group of women in different events, such as: Solidarity day for the Palestinian people, participation in Abu Dhabi trade show, the participation in the Fashion Show in Astrakhan, and the visit of the German Buyers to Palestine.</p> <p>ITC is working closely with different sales focal points, mostly in the UK, Germany, USA and the Netherlands, in approaching buyers, collecting their feedback and creating linkages.</p>		<p>Documented agreements/MOU Women quarter survey-ME1-Qn.3 (d and e)</p> <p>End of project: Women survey ME7</p>
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<p>Output 2.3. Promotion of Palestinian products produced by women owned MSME's and cooperatives in local and regional markets increased</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.1: At least 3 venues in Palestinian embassies/Consulates/Chambers of Commerce commit to presenting the documentary on Palestinian products by the end of year 2 Baseline: Few meeting conducted with embassies and promises, but nothing is materialised yet Chambers of Commerce are committed to present the documentary Planned Target: At least 3 venues in Palestinian embassies/Consulates/Chambers of Commerce commit to presenting the documentary on Palestinian products by the end of year 2</p> <p>Indicator 2.3.2: Promotional marketing materials are prepared Baseline: Online marketing manual by ITC: http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Redesign/Projects/Arab-States/Palestine_low-res_spreads%20(3).pdf Planned Target: Film, brochures and online hub/ PORTAL for marketing</p>	<p>UN Women: 35 women MSMEs participated in Nine local exhibitions; 2 women MSMEs participated in a regional exhibition in Abu Dabi and 5 Women MSME participated in an international exhibition in Geneva and Germany, coordinated by ITC.</p> <p>FAO: the two business shops participated in six exhibitions in Ramallah, Hebron, Jenin and Amman</p> <p>Joint visibility: JP Brochure and success stories info pack were produced and disseminated, including at the project's closing event.</p> <p>UN Women: Brochures, business cards, notebooks, domain names for all the targeted women MSMEs in addition to the website that developed for the OSS business development services hub.</p>		<p>Minutes of meetings indicating commitments and other records (announcements, MOU, written agreements.)</p> <p>The actual material</p>
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iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- Report on any assessments, evaluations or studies undertaken relating to the programme and how they were used during implementation. Has there been a final project evaluation and what are the key findings? Provide reasons if no programme evaluation have been done yet?

A final evaluation was conducted by the end of the programme by an external consultant, the evaluation findings, best practices, recommendations and lessons learned were taken into consideration and built upon to develop new joint programmes at UN Women, FAO and ITC levels. For example, UN Women developed along with ILO a joint programme titled “Promoting Women’s Equal Access to Economic Opportunities and Decent Work in Palestine”, which is funded by Italy and is implemented through 2018-2019, which builds on the results of the OSS programme, and built on the holistic approach of working at the individual, institutional and policy levels especially at the level of the intervention relevance and effectiveness, the partnerships, especially engaging women as change actors and enhancing their access to economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods.

Key findings of the final evaluation:

- 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.
- The strategies the JP utilized at different levels were appropriate given the types of changes that it was trying to achieve and contribute to. 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 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.
- 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 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 MSEM. 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.
 - 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.

- “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.
- 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.

Explain challenges such as delays in programme implementation, and the nature of the constraints such as management arrangements, human resources etc. What actions were taken to mitigate these challenges? How did such challenges and actions impact on the overall achievement of results? Have any of the risks identified during the project design materialized or were there unidentified risks that came up?

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 JP; 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. However, these delays did not have much impact on the overall results of the JP. UN Participating Organizations will take this into considerations and allow for a set-up time for future programmes/projects.

Report key lessons learned and best practices that would facilitate future programme design and implementation, including issues related to management arrangements, human resources, resources, etc. Please also include experiences of failure, which often are the richest source of lessons learned.

Key lessons learned

1. Conceptualization and Design-Related Lessons

- 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.
- 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.
 - 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. 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.
 - 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

- 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.
- Formalization 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 formalization (registration) procedures, demonstrating the benefits that could be achieved as a result of formalization (access to market channels that otherwise would be untenable), providing incentives for registration can be very effective strategies in promoting the formalization of MSMEs.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

Recommendations

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.

iv) A Specific Story (Optional)

- This could be a success or human story. It does not have to be a success story – often the most interesting and useful lessons learned are from experiences that have not worked. The point is to highlight a concrete example with a story that has been important to your Programme.
- In ¼ to ½ a page, provide details on a specific achievement or lesson learned of the Programme. Attachment of supporting documents, including photos with captions, news items etc, is strongly

encouraged. The MPTF Office will select stories and photos to feature in the Consolidated Annual Report, the GATEWAY and the MPTF Office Newsletter.

Problem / Challenge faced: Describe the specific problem or challenge faced by the subject of your story (this could be a problem experienced by an individual, community or government).

Khawla H. Al-Khateeb is a Palestinian entrepreneur, and the founder of “Palestinian Women.” When her husband lost his job in late 2000, she had to find a way to support her family. At first, she was knocking at the doors of civil society organizations, being happy with any opportunity she was offered, and trying to make ends meet. However she realized how much she was being taken advantage off and she decided that it had to change. After years of hard work, she used the small savings she had and purchased her first embroidery machine to work on her own. She was now able to take more orders, and with the help of her family and close friends, her customer base rapidly increased. However, the equipment Khalwa used was not very modern which did not allow her to produce high quality products at a large scale.

<http://palestine.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2016/11/women-entrepreneurs-khawla>

Programme Interventions: How was the problem or challenged addressed through the Programme interventions?

Under the *One-Stop-Shop for Sustainable Businesses*, Khawla was able to strengthen her business and marketing skills and explore opportunities to grow her business. With the 6,000 USD grant she received, Khawla purchased a modern sewing machine. A small change that considerably helped her.

Result (if applicable): Describe the observable *change* that occurred so far as a result of the Programme interventions. For example, how did community lives change or how was the government better able to deal with the initial problem?

Purchasing the sewing machine for Khalwa had helped her by first by improving the finishing and quality of her products, and increasing her productivity and competitiveness. Khawla has now the capacity to further expand her customer base and looks forward for working more and more with private businesses.

Lessons Learned: What did you (and/or other partners) learn from this situation that has helped inform and/or improve Programme (or other) interventions?

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. Therefore, the purchase of a modern sewing machine by Khalwa has made a serious change to the way she operates her businesses allowing her to produce quality products. This was realized by Khalwa and thus her main priority for the grant was to purchase the machine.