



MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND IMPLEMENTATION FOLLOW-UP

2022 Annual Evaluation Synthesis Report

Management Response, Action Plan, Results, and Means of Verification

Date of submission of final evaluation report: August 2022
Date of finalization of management response: August 2022

Recommendation No. 1 Bring the green transition to the forefront:

When putting into practice the Strategic Plan 2022-25, pay particular attention to ensure environmental mainstreaming is considered more consistently in each ITC project, and environmental objectives are expressed explicitly in a larger number of projects.

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:

Accepted:

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

This recommendation is accepted, with the understanding that ITC's main objective is the competitiveness of MSMEs in developing countries and transition economies. ITC pursues MSME competitiveness with positive or neutral effects on the environment; ITC does not pursue environmental goals that are independent of MSME and trade development.

As indicated in the AESR 2022, its conclusions and recommendations are based on evaluations and reviews of older projects. In the past years, ITC already established mainstreaming guidelines for new projects. The project design taskforce reviews the application of development markers in new projects and a focal point in the 'Green and inclusive value chains' section is available to support project developers in applying the mainstreaming guidelines.

Compared with ITC's TRTA projects that ended in 2020 or 2021, the share of TRTA projects currently under implementation, with development markers 2 -significant contribution or 3 -principal objective, has risen from 16% to 29%

Action Plan and Responsibilities: *This recommendation is addressed to the Trade and Environment Section (Division of Sustainable and Inclusive Trade) and the Project design Taskforce (Office of the Executive Director – Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance).*

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
1) In 2022 the 'green' working group was established in ITC, consisting of staff from across all ITC divisions. Under the leadership of the 'Green and inclusive	Green working group, with members from across ITC, meet on a regular basis to steer ITC's work on environment.	DSIT/GIVC	Cross divisional working group members	Q4 2022	

<p>value chains' section (GIVC), an action plan (the Green Moonshot) reinforcing ITC's contribution to climate objectives was developed. The working group will continue to meet as a steering group for ITC's work in this space, and to develop and implement cross-cutting 'green' corporate initiatives under the framework of the green moonshot.</p>					
<p>2) A climate proofing methodology for large ITC projects is developed, piloted and supported by an online training course. A GIVC focal point will assist developers of large projects to apply the methodology in collaboration with the Project Design Taskforce.</p>	<p>Climate proofing methodology and online training course.</p>	<p>DSIT/GIVC</p>	<p>OED/SPPG-PDTF</p>	<p>Q2 2023</p>	

Recommendation No. 2: Make projects even more responsive to beneficiaries' needs through an expanded in-house toolbox:

Keep on encouraging projects to align with beneficiaries' needs, while further strengthening the toolbox available to do so. To increase the adaptability and operational simplicity of ITC needs assessment tools, and their use as project baselines, undertake a conscious and planned effort to further developing the in-house toolbox available. Provide corporate guidance for how to conduct specific needs assessments for project design, and general needs assessments on trade and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:

Accepted:

ITC's projects are designed and implemented with the needs of beneficiaries at the forefront of all our interventions. ITC has and uses client-focused needs-assessment tools at various levels. In 2021, in one of the working groups preparing inputs for ITC's Strategic Plan, the toolbox was reviewed. The fit between different tools can be further enhanced and information about available tools can be further strengthened.

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

Action Plan and Responsibilities: *This recommendation is addressed to the Division of Country Programmes in cooperation with the technical sections that focus on specific beneficiary groups.*

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
a) Develop a compendium of needs assessment tools, based on a joint template for the description of the tool and inputs from ITC’s technical and country programme divisions.	Compendium available	SPPG	DCP, DECI, DMD, DSIT	Q1 2023	
b) Determine gaps and inconsistencies, and solutions	Assessment note and proposal for moving forward	Cross-divisional working group led by DCP	SPPG	Q2 2023	

Recommendation No. 3: Optimize collaboration with co-implementing agencies in multi-partner projects:

Encourage ITC projects to plan for a systematic regular exchange with co-implementing agencies and for increased collaboration to stimulate a better use of synergies.

Management Response and Justification:

<p>The recommendation is:</p> <p>Accepted: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Partially accepted: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Rejected: <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>As the AESR 2022 documented, the opportunities for harnessing synergies among programme components implemented by different co-implementing agencies are already determined during the programme design phase, when ITC often has no influence on the decisions except for the ITC component. Also, in the implementation phase, many factors which are outside the control of ITC have an impact on the coherence of such programmes.</p> <p>ITC's own design process and project documents' templates already oblige all ITC project developers to identify and consider the objectives and initiatives of the governments and of other development agencies, as well as to integrate into the UN Country Coordination Frameworks. During project implementation, especially of larger projects, ITC draws on project steering committees to guide project workplans and coordination with stakeholders. ITC also engages in UN country teams for collaboration and coordination.</p> <p>However, the practical recommendation to seek further mechanisms for ensuring regular and trustful communication among co-implementing agencies, to maximize impact and sustainability of results, is accepted.</p>
--	---

Action Plan and Responsibilities: *This recommendation is addressed to the Project Managers of multi-agency projects in collaboration with ITC staff in the field, when possible.*

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
<p>a) For projects funded by external parties that assign project components to different agencies, ITC developers will seek a clarification of governance and coordination mechanisms between implementing agencies and its documentation in the grant agreement. During the inception phase for large projects, the practical modalities for information exchange, knowledge sharing and decision-taking with co-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project grant agreements, where feasible, and all ITC project inception reports for large multi-agency projects, specify project governance and coordination mechanisms. 	<p>DCP, DMD, DECI, DSIT - Project developers / managers</p>	<p>Project Design Taskforce reviewing project plans and inception reports.</p>	<p>Q2 2023</p>	

<p>implementors will be further developed. A documentation of these modalities will become a mandatory part of the inception report.</p>					
<p>b) In projects funded by UN multi-partner trust funds and implemented by several UN agencies, participate proactively in the design phase. The objective is to develop the project logframe, governance mechanism and workplan jointly, to ensure synergies, regular information exchange and impact-oriented project adaptation in the implementation phase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents approved by UN multi-partner trust funds and/or supporting information specify governance and coordination mechanisms. 	<p>DCP, DMD, DECI, DSIT - Project developers / managers</p>	<p>Project Design Taskforce reviewing project plans and inception reports.</p>	<p>Q2 2023</p>	

Recommendation No. 4: Continue efforts to strengthen RBM tools:

Make the RBM tools of ITC projects more robust and consistent, e.g., by offering more generic tools that can be adapted to the needs of a particular project. The overall aim should be to provide project managers with the means to select and apply an appropriate RBM approach, suited to the size, intervention area, and other characteristics of their particular project, while ensuring that projects follow a common set of client-focused and purpose-driven RBM principles. This should ensure that RBM is used as a management tool for steering, including continuous adjustment, of projects, and would be particularly important for complex projects.

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:

This recommendation is accepted.

Accepted:

Over the past years, ITC has invested significantly in RBM systems at corporate level and in improving the RBM data generated at project level. Aside from the continuous development of the ITC project portal, the further development of the corporate results framework and improvements

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

of outcome indicators, the work of the project design taskforce that provides advice to project developers and quality controls project proposals, a data management strategy has been implemented for the past 2 years. It involves the development of tools that facilitate beneficiary data collection and aggregation of beneficiary data across ITC projects.

However, more can be done. The Independent Evaluation Unit's reviews have shown, there is a significant variety of RBM approaches at project level, in particular regarding beneficiary-focused project monitoring practices. ITC will aim at ensuring more consistency in the approaches, through advice and tools that support beneficiary-focused results monitoring and related project adjustments.

Action Plan and Responsibilities: *This recommendation is addressed to the Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance Section (Office of the Executive Director).*

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing* Section(s) or partner(s)	Implementation deadline	Remarks
a) Finalize the ITC Survey Management tool for project managers and roll it out to a larger number of projects for baseline, results monitoring, and follow-up surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey Management tool available and used by an increasing number of projects (user tracking) 	ITS – Data Management team	SPPG	Q1 2023	
b) Fully roll out the single-sign-on and Events Application that captures client data and facilitates monitoring and reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events Application available and used by an increasing number of projects (participants tracking); Single-sign-on functionality set up and piloted 	ITS – Data Management team	SPPG	Q4 2022	
c) For large projects (>\$1m) that are often more complex as they have various interlinked project components, introduce minimum requirements for the definition of project's theories of change, and related data collection, monitoring and results assessment plans and responsibilities that must be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITC template for a project inception report 	SPPG - PDTF	Project managers of ongoing large projects	Q4 2022	

established during projects' inception phases.					
d) Provide guidance and templates for project monitoring and reporting in large projects (> \$1m).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance notes ITC templates for a project monitoring plan ITC templates for data collection and reporting on different client groups 	SPPG - PDTF	ITS – Data Management team	Q1 2023	

Recommendation No. 5: Collect and disseminate the VfM experience gained by some ITC projects:

Conduct an assessment of current VfM practices in ITC projects, draw lessons learned and use this knowledge to provide more structured guidance for future projects on the use of VfM techniques and M&E disciplines.

Management Response and Justification:

The recommendation is:

This recommendation is accepted and will contribute to ITC's knowledge management efforts.

Accepted:

A number of ITC projects already do or have integrated specific elements on Value for Money "VfM" principles in their design and reporting (e.g. for DFID/FCDO, KOICA). Among other elements, specific metrics used to assess VfM include SMART indicators and related baselines and targets. Some projects have used the former DFID "3 E's Framework", encompassing an assessment on Economy – are project inputs at the right price and the right quality, on Efficiency – how well does the project convert inputs into outputs, and Effectiveness - how well are the project outputs achieving the desired outcome.

Partially accepted:

Rejected:

Action Plan and Responsibilities: *This recommendation is addressed to the Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance Section (Office of the Executive Director) and the Financial Management Section (Division of Programme Support).*

Actions:	Expected Result and means of verification	Responsible office or partner	Contributing*	Implementation deadline	Remarks
-----------------	--	--------------------------------------	----------------------	--------------------------------	----------------

			Section(s) or partner(s)		
a) Review projects that have tried to generate systematic VfM information and assess the pros and cons of their approaches.	Report, presenting the cases of projects that have reported on VfM, lessons learned and their methodologies.	OED-SPPG	DPS-FM	Q1 2023	
b) Prepare a guidance note for project managers on feasible VfM approaches for diverse types of ITC projects and present the findings to ITC staff.	Guidance notes on how to apply VfM in practice and presentation to ITC staff.	OED-SPPG	DPS-FM	Q1 2023	